



Photo by Alex Lupul

Costly damage

A member of the Belleville Fire Department surveys property damage caused when a commercial vehicle slammed into homes on Dundas Street East on Sept. 30 during a rainstorm.

Surviving the COVID-19 crisis

By Olivia Ashopenace

During COVID-19, restrictions have made it difficult for businesses to thrive. Some have not survived, while others managed to persevere. In Belleville, several businesses have managed to pull through and triumph.

One of those businesses that has flourished is Scalliwag Toys at 302 Front St. Owned by Stuart Long and Stacey Kerr, the husband and wife duo are proud owners of a shop full of whimsy and charm. The shop sells educational toys, puzzles, board games, war games, role-playing games, etc. "The business has been in the Belleville area for 35 years, and in our current location for about 25 of those years," Long said. The previous owners were Richard and Karin Belanger. "My spouse and I purchased the store on Feb. 1 from the previous owners, who were aiming to enjoy a well-deserved retirement."

"We delayed our reopening by a couple of days as we were finishing up one phase of renovations in the store," Long said. "But once we did open, we had a serious policy of hand sanitization on entry and encouraged masks, but we did not make them mandatory until the

region did."

Another business that survived the global pandemic is Gourmet Diem, owned by Sonya deWal, at 213 Front St. The shop sells an assortment of foods and drinks such as teas, coffees, breakfast sandwiches, homemade soups, and other delectable delights. DeWal explains how they got help during the pandemic.

"So, the late spring was actually when Loyalist College phoned me, and needed to do lunches for their international students. I was going to the four hotels that they had set up once a week. That was a great thing to have happened when your door was shut, and then an hour later they phoned. So, I was grateful for that," deWal said, discussing the reopening in the spring. "It was slow, very slow, so, I was working solo myself. And, I had a couple part-time people. The summer was great, once we hit summer. We had the parklets installed from the city of Belleville."

The parklets installed by the city provided visitors and customers a place to enjoy their take-out meals and practise social distancing while visiting one another.

Although some downtown business-

es were unable to reopen when the restrictions were loosened in the spring, Scalliwag Toys and Gourmet Diem managed to climb up and conquer the obstacle that is COVID-19.

In the fight against COVID, and to make their business safe for the owners and customers, Long said they made an effort to keep it clean and sanitized.

"We had an assortment of cleaning supplies as well, trying to keep everyone safe. We had been offering curbside pick-ups and deliveries, which we technically still offer throughout the lockdown, so we were not entirely closed. As reopening began, we noticed that delivery mechanism start to trickle down." During COVID, the way businesses have treated their customers has changed according to safety methods to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. But for some businesses, like Scalliwag Toys, they have made an effort to continue to be welcoming and warm.

Long mentions how they work with their customers during COVID, "the same way we always have, by trying our best to be nice and knowledgeable and friendly. The only real difference is that we expect masks, hand cleaning, and

social distancing, which we generally don't need to enforce much. People get it."

Asked about how she works with customers during COVID-19, deWal said, "six feet apart." Inside Gourmet Diem, there is hand sanitizer positioned by the door for customers to use and a poster advising people to wear a mask when coming inside.

In light of staying open in the future, Scalliwag Toys chooses to be cautious. "Baby steps. As cases reduce, we can let more players come in. More players mean more fun in the store, and a game store without fun isn't much of a game store. For the non-player customers, I don't think anything will change on our end until masks and social distancing changes. I think one thing we will take away from all this, moving forward, is the way to solve things," Long said.

Gourmet Diem is unsure what the future may bring. "No one can see the future right now, right? So, we just go day by day."

With the possibility of a second wave, Scalliwag Toys and Gourmet Diem are ready to face COVID head on.

"We're always ready to drop back to

our curbside and delivery policy. If a second wave were to cause more closures, we've agreed we would extend our delivery range into the county and possibly add in a shipping option if necessary. Hopefully it doesn't revert back to closures," said Long.

"As for a second wave, I think as for a city, we are very small and low-case scenario compared to the other bigger cities. So, I have a positive intake on that. I really think if we keep up with what we're doing, I think we're going to win this, and hopefully it will be over and done with soon. And, we can get back to our normal lives, for everyone," deWal said.

"If we closed the door, and just did curbside and delivery, I am confident we would lose money versus the same time in previous years (that was the case during the last lockdown)," said Long. "But if it's what we need to do to nail this virus down, we'll do what we have to. In the grand scheme of it all, Stacey and I have been firm believers that we just need to keep doing what we do. Give back to the community, help where we can help, and know that the community will help us too."

(For photos, see pages 2-3)

Community comes together through music

By Saddman Zaman

On Sept. 26, one of the most popular music festivals of Belleville known as Porchfest was cancelled just days before the event.

As COVID-19 cases started to rise once again, the Ontario's government most recent rules about social distancing mandated that social gatherings couldn't exceed more than 25 people publicly and 10 people indoors. This new law made it difficult to host big events such as the Porchfest.

Alnoor Ladhani the owner of 116 Bistro, came up with an idea. According to Ladhani, the new rules made it difficult to make active participation for live entertainment, yet he wanted to bring the community together.

Therefore, he came up with the idea of hosting a musical event and named it Belleville Music Fest. During the interview, he spoke about the benefits of hosting such events. Ladhani not only wanted to bring the community together on a social platform, but also wanted to contribute to the society through donating food and clothes to the less fortunate people.

He noted it is necessary to maintain safety precaution while hosting such events. He said that tents and tables have been set up outside for people to enjoy food while maintaining social distance from one another. As well, masks are mandatory for everyone while entering the Bistro.

The weekend event started at noon and lasted until 10 p.m. There were about 20 performances altogether. *The Stirling J Birds* and *Versatile Rock* were among the musicians there to rock the night with their music.



Photo by Saddman Zaman

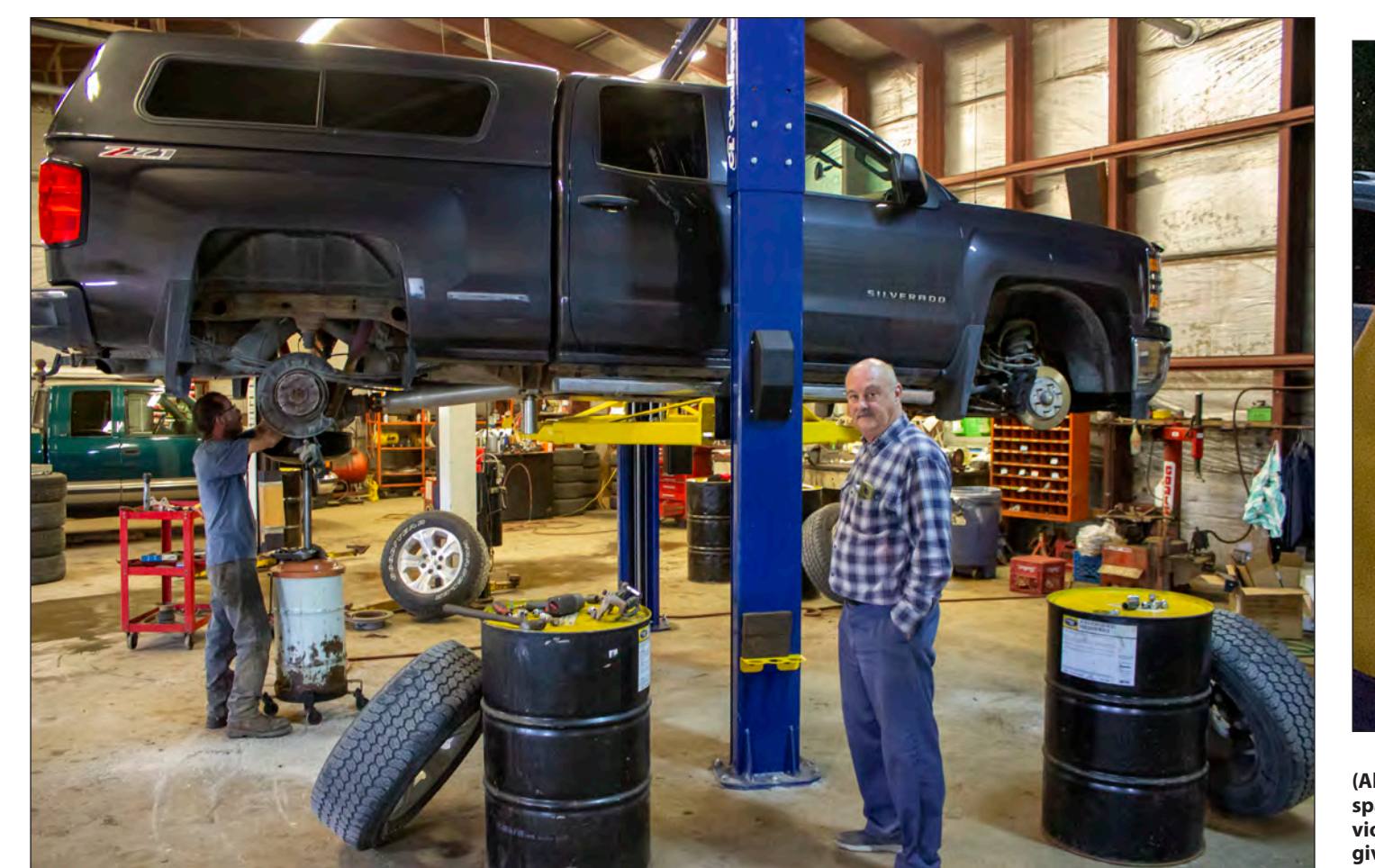
The Stirling J Birds perform on stage during the Belleville Music Fest on Sept. 26. The private festival replaced Porchfest, which was cancelled due to the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Ontario. Restrictions were placed on how many people can gather.



(Above) Husband and wife team Stacey Kerr and Stuart Long stand in front of their business, Scalliwag Toys. They took the downtown store over this spring. They are among a number of local businesses that are managing to survive the pandemic.
Photo by Olivia Ashopenace



(Above) Drew Downs and Dawn Laing, owners of the Mustang Drive-In, sit inside of the vintage bus that serves as their box office, in Bloomfield. The new owners have brought a number of special events to the theatre, including a music festival and a fundraiser, alongside pairings of new and classic films. The drive-in's season will conclude on Oct. 31 with a special Halloween event.
Photo by Alex Lupul



(Left) Pat Murphy, owner of Pat's Garage in Roslin, overlooks his employee doing some rear axle work on a Silverado. With such a spacious interior and enclosed setting away from customers, the business hasn't been as impacted compared to many other businesses across Ontario.
Photo by James McAlpine



(Above) Originally from Oshawa, Meghan Fox has always had a love for art and community. The Quick Brown Fox, Fox's art supplies store in Brighton, quickly became a favourite for local artists and youth with a passion for art. After taking ownership of local ice cream business during the pandemic, The Tin Roof, Fox has been supplying Brighton's finest with paints, ice cream and smiles.
Photo by Natalie Cummings

(Left) Gourmet Diem, owned by Sonya deWal, at 213 Front St., sells an assortment of foods and drinks such as teas, coffees, breakfast sandwiches, homemade soups, and other treats.
Photo by Olivia Ashopenace



(Above) Katelin Dickson, owner of EduKate daycare, is shown at her house in Bowmanville. Having previously worked as an early childhood educator in the Durham region, Dickson decided to open a home daycare in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Having an 18-month old daughter at home who needs looking after as well as seeing the difficulty of returning to school during COVID-19, Dickson decided to remain home and open her own business. Turning the terrible pandemic into something positive is something Dickson feels very passionate about - now she gets to take care of other people's children and ensure they are in a safe environment.
Photo by Alex Bowman



Ron and Joanna Masotti have owned KKP Kingston - Design, Print and Business Solutions for just over five years. "We for sure have been affected by the pandemic," he says. "It's about adapting and being creative, figuring out how the business is evolving and staying on top of that." The business has grown every year they have owned it but most of the months since the pandemic they have seen a decline in business. "With the pandemic, we're now selling these acrylic shields and we've made hundreds of them," he says. They have had to be quick and make some tough decisions but "the businesses that went into this strong probably are going to come out of this strong."
Photo by Daniel Geleyn



(Above) Lion Larry Beeler passes spaghetti dinners to Lion Doreen Dath to give out to passing supporters in their biannual spaghetti supper in Trenton. Since the beginning of the pandemic, they haven't been able to raise enough money as they have previous years, so everyone was glad people were still coming out to support the Lions Club. Every spaghetti supper, the Lions Club gives the money donated from the event to places and organizations that need it.
Photo by Madison Ladouceur