

CHAMPLAIN SPEAKER



March, 2004

Vol. 23, No. 6

Smile, that's winter leaving



A happy trio, camped out on the back of the sleigh at this year's Winterfest.

Wheels on demand: you drive, they own

Vrtucar is an Ottawa company that provides members with access to a growing fleet of fuel-efficient Toyota Echos located in parking spots around the city.

Vrtucar has a number of vehicles nearby Champlain Park, including cars at Holland & Wellington and the MEC, and the VrtuVan at Smirle & Wellington. But Vrtucar could be even closer if we want it.

Our family signed up with Vrtucar in September and we're impressed by how well it is run. This isn't a car-sharing club organized by a bunch of friends. It's a business, and the owners depend on it for their living, so they make sure members stay happy.

How does it work?

Once you've joined (which means paying a refundable deposit equivalent to the insurance deductible – for a couple that's a refundable \$750), you make bookings by phone or on-line.

You book a particular car, for as long as you want, in half-hour blocks of time. Bookings can be made up to a month in advance. At the time of your booking, you go to that car, use your key to open the lock-box which holds the car key, punch in the code on the car's security system, and drive away. You return the car to its parking spot within the time you've booked (we've often extended a booking when we were running late), and return the key to the lock-box.

(Continued on page 2)

And now a word or two from our Chairman

If I were to get all my information from the *Citizen*, I might believe that Ottawa residents are sick and tired of the mayor and some councillors doing back-room deals to force a three-per-cent tax increase on an unwilling population that is opposed to higher taxes at all costs.

The reality looked quite different when Coun. Shawn Little held a public meeting at Churchill Seniors Centre to consult his constituents on the budget. Speaker after speaker pleaded with Mr. Little to raise their taxes and preserve the types of programs that make our city a place of which we are proud to be a part. The words "shame," "fear" and "sadness" were regularly used to describe the reaction of residents of Kitchissippi to the budget proposal.

When Mr. Little admitted he was still in favour of a tax freeze, he was roundly booed and heckled. While there was not unanimity, as some supported the proposed budget, it was clearly evident that the majority of residents who packed the room were passionately opposed to the budget proposal and in favour of a tax increase if that is what it takes to preserve a city that has places for children to play, looks after its least fortunate and supports the arts.

The home web page for the city budget states: "Not just about dollars and cents – it's about quality of life." The majority at the meeting clearly accepted that statement but felt it was a very ironic description for the current proposal. Perhaps the city should edit the site to say: "It's all about dollars and cents – forget about the quality of life."

Jonathan Chaplan,
Chair,

Champlain Park Community Association

Community Association

Chair: Jonathan Chaplan (728-7670)

Vice-chair: Mark Cianfaglione (722-5674)

Treasurer: potter (728-4980)

Secretary: Lynne Bankier (729-0955)

Planning: Amy Kempster (722-6039)

Membership: Amy Kempster (722-6039)

Neighbourhood Watch: Michael Cheng (722-3344)

Fieldhouse co-ordinator: Laurie Fagan (728-1945)

Rink co-ordinator: Greg Doswell (722-7705)

Adopt-a-Riverbank co-ordinator: Don Monet (728-1750)

TEENS AT WORK

Jessica (babysitting) 728-8413

Morgan (yard chores) 728-6530

Kym (babysitting) 729-5439

Paul (yard chores) 728-2583

Rory (yard chores) 798-0036

Karl (yard chores) 728-7589

Miriam (babysitting) 728-7589

Nick (yard chores) 798-7652

Daniel (yard chores) 798-7652

Joey (babysitting) 728-5792

Katrina (babysitting) 725-5423

Geneviève (babysitting) 722-0454

CHAMPLAIN SPEAKER

Editor: Kelly Egan, 728-1945

lfagan@magma.ca

197 Daniel Ave. K1Y 0E1

Delivery Chief: Laura Robin

On-line project: Alexander Smith

agmsmith@rogers.com



Carriers: Kay Young, Terri

Blanchard, Sandy Milne, Philip Cutfield, Patrick Mates, Rita Palin, Laura Robin, Becky Rynor, Jim Hay, Wendy Huculak, Heather Pearl, Ann Potter, Monique Kerr, Carole Anne Copeland, Emma Morris, Linda Steele, Nancy Leigh-Smith, Benjamin Holland, Marlene Kells.

The *Speaker* is produced monthly with the generous support of the Ottawa Citizen.

Classified Stuff: Buy it, sell it



Any interest in a free classified advertisement in the *Speaker*? This would be a corner of the newsletter to advertise the sale of items or services, for buyers and sellers. For more information, call Gayle at 722-6874.

(Continued from page 1)

You also need to fill out a simple form called a trip log which tells the company how far you drove the car and how long you had it out: the paperwork takes about a minute.

Then – and this is the part I really love – you walk away from the car and it isn't yours. You don't have to shovel it out, pay for its parking, worry about it being stolen, wonder if its tires need replacing. You don't have to spend any energy either loving or hating the car. It isn't your headache.

Each month, you get a bill that looks like a phone bill, itemizing each time you've used one of the cars and what each trip cost. You pay a fixed monthly fee of \$10, \$20 or \$30 per month, depending on how frequently you'll be using the cars. On top of that, you pay for each trip based on the

length of time you use the car (technically, the length of time you booked the car) and the number of kilometres you drove. The cost of gas is included.

Vrtucar is growing and adding new cars and locations all the time. And they are very responsive to demand. If 10 people or families in Champlain Park sign up, they'll put a car in Champlain Park. That's all it takes. They'll need a place to park the car, of course.

If you'd like more information about Vrtucar, you can contact them at 798-1900, or info@vrtucar.com or www.vrtucar.com. I'd also be happy to tell you more about our family's experience as members. We're on Northwestern Avenue, at 724-2455.

— Contributed by Alex Hay

1 Spring Fling

Dinner and family entertainment at Northwestern

United Church. **Saturday, March 27th** at 5:30 p.m. Cost is \$10 each or \$30 for the family rate. Contact: **Marion Reid 722-0274**

2 The Champlain Park Garden Club meets on **Tuesday, April 13**. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the fieldhouse. **Diana Beresford-Kroeger**, author of *Arboretum Americana*, on the importance of indigenous trees. Info: 728-1945.

3 Many thanks to Don Monet for once again organizing **Winterfest** in January. Don led a team of volunteers that put on a superb event. The sleigh ride was terrific, the chili cook-off was a hit, the outdoor music was outstanding and the kitchen ran like clockwork. Well done, every-

HUSH HUSH



one.

4 Another successful year has concluded on the community rink. Thanks to **Tom and**

Buck Sauve for their continued efforts to keep us slip, sliding away. Our gratitude should also be extended to **Greg Doswell**, who took on the job of rink co-ordinator this year.

6 Explore volunteer opportunities in the beautiful Gardens and Arboretum of the Central Experimental Farm. To volunteer for weekday mornings, register for one of our Spring 2004 information sessions: Tuesdays, April 6, May 4, June 1, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. For youth volunteers (ages 14 plus), Saturday June 19, 10 a.m. to noon, Bldg. 72, Arboretum. Preregistration is required. For information, **Debra Thornington 230-3276** or volunteer@friendsofthefarm.ca.

March 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 FITNESS CLASS 6: 45-7:45 P.M. YOGA 8 TO 9:30 P.M. Black	2 PLAYGROUP 9:30-11:30 A.M.	3 BRIDGE CLUB 2 P.M. FITNESS CLASS 6:45-7:45 P.M. YOGA 8-9:30 P.M.			
7	8 FITNESS CLASS 6: 45-7:45 P.M. YOGA 8 TO 9:30 P.M. Blue	9 PLAYGROUP 9:30-11:30 A.M.	10 BRIDGE CLUB 2 P.M. FITNESS CLASS 6:45-7:45 P.M. YOGA 8-9:30 P.M.	11 PLAYGROUP 9:30-11:30 A.M.	12 ODS PLAYGROUP 9-11:30 A.M.	13
14	15 FITNESS CLASS 6: 45-7:45 P.M. YOGA 8 TO 9:30 P.M. Black	16 PLAYGROUP 9:30-11:30 A.M.	17 YOGA AT NOON BRIDGE CLUB 2 P.M. FITNESS CLASS 6:45-7:45 P.M. YOGA 8-9:30 P.M.	18 PLAYGROUP 9:30-11:30 A.M.	19 ODS PLAYGROUP 9-11:30 A.M.	20
21	22 FITNESS CLASS 6: 45-7:45 P.M. YOGA 8 TO 9:30 P.M. Blue	23 PLAYGROUP 9:30-11:30 A.M.	24 YOGA AT NOON BRIDGE CLUB 2 P.M. FITNESS CLASS 6:45-7:45 P.M. YOGA 8-9:30 P.M.	25 PLAYGROUP 9:30-11:30 A.M.	26 ODS PLAYGROUP 9-11:30 A.M.	27
28	29 FITNESS CLASS 6: 45-7:45 P.M. YOGA 8 TO 9:30 P.M. Black	30 PLAYGROUP 9:30-11:30 A.M.	31 YOGA AT NOON BRIDGE CLUB 2 P.M. FITNESS CLASS 6:45-7:45 P.M. YOGA 8-9:30 P.M.	 <p>To add items, call 728-1945 or email lfagan@magma.ca</p>		

AMY'S CORNER



by Amy Kempster
722-6039

NCC appeals, city budget under scrutiny

As expected, the NCC has appealed designations for four pieces of land and four policies in the city's new Official Plan. The pieces in question are designated **Major Open Space** (a designation allowing largely recreational uses plus small-scale commercial activities which contribute to such uses). The NCC wishes the designation to be **General Urban Area**, which allows most land uses.

The land closest to our community is west and north of Mapelawn, fronting on Richmond Road. If the NCC wins the appeal, they could then ask for a zoning amendment to allow development. Their appeal states this parcel is not deemed to form part of the "National Interest Land Mass," which suggests the NCC could declare it surplus, if they have not yet done so. In his campaign literature, our councillor suggested he would ask the city to obtain the Mapelawn field (Rochester field) for a park, so perhaps he knew it was in danger of disposal by the NCC.

The policies the NCC has appealed relate to the city's acquisition policy, and the postponement of consideration of development applications on privately held land. (Many of us thought the land the NCC owns was public land, but not according to the NCC!)

If you feel strongly about the position of the NCC on these matters, I suggest you write to our councillor and the

Planning Department and Committee, saying you support the Official Plan and would like to be informed of any public hearing on this matter. As well, you might write to our acting MP, Marlene Catterall, indicating your unhappiness with the NCC's handling of publicly owned greenspace.

City Budget

A public meeting on Feb. 28 proved to be rather different than budget meetings in previous years, which usually saw a mere handful attending. The hall at the Churchill Centre was full. The majority of the participants were unhappy with the proposed service cuts and there seemed to be a consensus that a tax increase was preferable to losing such services as outdoor rinks, Dovercourt, libraries, grants to the arts, etc.

"Where will the tax money go?" You may ask. This is not so easy to find out. The document at the meeting had no breakdown of the operating budget. It did list new or increased fees. For a breakdown of the total operating budget, one must visit the website, any branch of the library or a client centre. For your information, here is a percentage breakdown of the total estimated net departmental expenditures supported by tax revenues. People Services: 24 per cent; Transportation, Utilities & Public Works: 23 per cent; Corporate Services: 18 per cent; Police: 17 per cent; Emergency & Protective Services: 12 per cent; Library: two per cent; Human Resources: two per cent; Mayor, Council, audit and city manager: one per cent; Planning and development: Less than one per cent.

Other information indicates that tax revenue also supports part of the capital budget and reserves in the Pay as You Go process. This takes about 14 per cent of your taxes.

You might note that, prior to the release of the budget, a graph was available on the website showing the amounts spent for various municipal services (deleting provincially mandated costs) out of a total of \$2,346, the

amount of taxes an average homeowner would pay on a \$200,000 house.

This shows a big slice (\$408 or 17.4 per cent) went for transit (but what would the traffic be like without it?); the next biggest amount (\$339 or 14.4 per cent) for capital funding (payments on debt and building up reserves for the future); \$317 or 13.5 per cent for police and \$314 or 13.4 per cent for social services and health (might we be better off if these last two amounts were switched?); legal/administrative/other takes \$248 or 10.6 per cent (perhaps some efficiencies here?); fire \$200 or 8.5 per cent; roads/traffic/parks \$165 or 7 per cent and facilities management \$120 or 5.1 per cent.

Recreation/grants and child care took \$92 or 3.9 per cent, library \$44 or 1.9 per cent; solid waste \$42 or 1.8 per cent; ambulance \$38 or 1.6 per cent; and development, which includes environmental management, \$19 or .8 per cent. This last is mentioned because of its importance for the future of the city. The city in the budget has trimmed the administration costs through reorganisation and efficiencies and increased the fees in several areas. Unfortunately, a breakdown on the same basis was not readily available for the actual budget for 2004 for comparison.

Note that the recent federal budget and possible developments at the provincial level could also affect the situation. The federal budget GST rebate has been allocated to the capital rather than the operating budget. At the provincial level, because the property tax assessment increases are a complicating factor, the city has asked the province to look at the assessment system.

Presentations to committees can be made in the first two weeks of March. You can also call your councillor to ask him to save your favourite service which has been cut, such as our hockey rink grant; our wading pool hours etc. and tell him whether you are willing to pay more taxes to ensure our services remain.

I am concerned about most of the cuts, except the city reorganisation and efficiencies found, which we should applaud. Particularly worrying are the cuts to the environmental planning staff which amount to very few dollars but would pay dividends in the future.

