

UFCW organizing Enniskillen workers

Heather Wright
The Independent

The United Food and Commercial Workers is trying to organize workers at High Park Farms.

The move comes after the cannabis operation's parent company, Tilray, launched a company-wide restructuring program which led to the loss of about 140 jobs including about 40 at the Enniskillen operation.

UFCW National Representative, Santiago Escobar says workers called the union after things began to change. He says the shifts were changed to 12 hours. A flyer handed out to employees Tuesday night said employees had been told any new people hired at the plant would be making \$14 per hour instead of the \$17.

Escobar says workers have been told by the company they

can't organize under a union because the cannabis operation is agricultural. Escobar says that while some of the workers would be classified as agricultural - and therefore could not join a union - only employees who actually care for the plant are excluded from unions.

Up to 60 people in Enniskillen who are janitors or work in the packing area, could still unionize. "We have strong support in the plant," he says. He could not say when the union would hold a vote.

High Park farms says it believes in a "direct two-way relationship with employees" but it has "absolutely not engaged in any delaying tactics" in the application process.

A statement adds the company has provided the workers with information and "encouraged them to educate themselves about their decision."



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Organizers from the United Food and Commercial Workers's Union in Toronto were talking to employees at High Park Farms. Here, the owner of the greenhouse property, Jack Greydanus, stops to ask why they are on his property as the union members walked along the road allowance.

No consultation on Inwood fire

Heather Wright
The Independent

Jamie Armstrong says the people of Inwood should have a say in its fire service.

But his fellow Brooke-Alvinston councillors say there has been enough discussion about the issue and public meeting isn't needed.

The municipality moved its equipment out of the Inwood fire hall Jan. 1 after failing to reach a lease agreement with the Inwood Fire Association.

The issue dragged on for nearly a year.

The fire trucks were taken to the Alvinston area and Mayor Dave Ferguson says there is no official fire presence in the community now.

He says it could be 2021 before some equipment returns.

Council is investigating building a bay onto the Inwood Library and scaling back the equipment used in Inwood.

Armstrong recently suggested there may not be a need for Brooke Fire Rescue to have an Inwood station, since the Alvinston station can meet provincial response times.

Thursday, Fire Chief Jeff McArthur asked council to endorse the idea of building a single bay and maintaining a presence in Inwood.

McArthur says council has been "openly undecided on the future of a fire station in Inwood" and he wanted some clarity.

But Armstrong asked council to consider holding a public meeting to talk about what the level of service should be in Inwood.

"I believe the Inwood community needs to have input," he told council.

"Its going to be a big shouting match," says Councillor Frank Nemcek who added council has been dealing with issues at the Inwood fire department for years with many residents and firefighters coming to council to voice their concerns publicly.

"We've discussed that until were blue in the face...what's this going to solve?"

"We have given them lots of time and given them lots of deadlines," says Clerk-Administrator Janet Denkers.

"It's a mess. I'm tired of it...I'd like to get progressive and do more things rather than (dealing) with the Inwood fire department."

SEE MEETING PG 2

Fertilizer worries probed by SCRCA

Heather Wright
The Independent

The St. Clair Region Conservation authority is looking into whether two biosolid piles in Central Lambton are too close to local waterways.

The issue came to light in February when Dawn-Euphemia residents complained about a "mountain" of biosolid fertilizer being piled on a field on Hale School Road. The field borders Long Creek which empties into the Sydenham River.

Residents voiced concern the fertilizer, made from human waste, might make its way into the creek if there was heavy spring rains.

Township officials could do little about that, but did tell the company, Lasalle Agri, and the person farming the field, Roger Buurma, the pile violated the township's zoning bylaws. Farmers are only allowed to pile fertilizer for the property. Buurma told staff

the massive pile would be used by the eight farm properties he rents. He has until March 20 to remove it.

The issue in Brooke-Alvinston is similar. Lasalle Agri has a large pile on Ebenezer Road which neighbours complained to Councillor Frank Nemcek about. Nemcek also owns a farm in the area.

Brooke-Alvinston has also told Lasalle Agri by letter it is in violation of the municipality's "Tidy Yards Bylaw. It didn't set a time frame for the problem to be fixed.

The pile is also near a drainage ditch which leads to the Sydenham.

Nemcek and Dawn-Euphemia Mayor Al Broad raised the issue at the conservation authority's annual meeting. Dawn-Euphemia had contacted the authority and were told there were no concerns. The councillors pressed the guardians of the watershed to investigate. And now it is.

SEE CONSERVATION PG 2



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Couple worries as biosolids pile grows

Heather Wright
The Independent

Jeff Swartz stood in the middle of Ebenezer Road in Brooke-Alvinston to stop a truck. It had just dumped its load of fertilizer made from human biosolids on a patch of ground behind a shed on the farm across the road from his home.

It wasn't new. Swartz and his wife, Sandy, have been dealing with the smells coming from the fertilizer for at least five years. It keeps them indoors and it makes it hard of Sandy to breath. Sometimes, she feels like she's having a heart attack.

She also believes whatever is coming from the fertilizer, which was approved for use by the federal government in 2007, may be the reason for problems with her tear ducts.

The piles have appeared before and the fertilizer was used, usually by the fall. Jeff Swartz never complained about it to the company supplying it - Lasalle Agri - or to the municipality, but it stopped them from going outside and forced them to close their windows.

"When I moved here, I thought it was going to be like heaven out here," he tells *The Independent*.

But in February, the trucks returned. Sandy Swartz could hear them rumbling down the road early in the morning.

The kept coming through the day and the pile kept getting bigger. Sandy was shocked

Meeting not necessary for Inwood fire service

CON'T FROM PG 1

Armstrong agreed there has been a lot of discussion with the firemen's association but "it's the actual people in Inwood that we haven't heard from."

Only Councillor Wayne Deans agreed with the idea. "This is our duty to go," he said after the mayor suggested no one wanted to walk into a meeting where people would be angry.

"We are not scared to go," Ferguson says. "We are trying to move ahead with something positive."

But while council shutdown the idea of a public meeting, it didn't endorse the chief's concept of a single bay in Inwood either.

Staff approached two companies for estimates on the cost of what is being proposed.

Conservation authority probes biosolid concerns

CON'T FROM PG 1

"The concern that was being voiced to us and the concern that has continued to multiple areas is very specific to water quality," says Brian McDougall, general manager of the conservation authority. McDougall says the Ministry of the Environment would be responsible for water quality. "We're talking what essentially would be a spill if it should happen," he says. However, the conservation authority can look at where the piles are placed.

"A huge concern for us being if the temporary storage piles are in the flood plain, what's the risk, are they close enough that in a modest or a moderate flood we're going to see the pile being inundated.... will it have to be a hurricane hazel type of storm...it will have to be about risk.

"Our regulations are based on what flood storage is being taken up because this storage (of biosolid fertilizer) is there."

If there is a risk, McDougall says the authority could order company and farmer to remove the piles from the flood plain. It could lay charges but McDougall says the authority would rather work with the company to resolve the issue.

"My bigger concern is the fact that we

by the amount of fertilizer across the road. "There has been a pile there, but it has never been that big. Ever."

As it became obvious the trucks were going to keep coming, Jeff Swartz went onto the road and stopped the transport leaving the farm. "I wanted to talk to him. We had a civil conversation. He said its not that big of a pile, it's going to be covered and it won't be there for long."

Swartz says he was also told the biosolid fertilizer was coming from Churchill Line. Brooke-Alvinston officials had received complaints from neighbours once the fertilizer piles appeared there. Clerk-Administrator Janet Denkers sent Lasalle Agri's lawyers a letter saying they couldn't store more than they would use on that farm. So, Swartz says, they moved it to Ebenezer Road.

The trucks were still rolling into the farm's driveway Feb. 28. Sandy watched six trucks arrive in about an hour and a half.

The Swartz are worried about the spring, as the temperature rises, so does the smell of the biosolids. And Jeff worries about the wildlife now making a home in the drainage ditch. He's worried the runoff from the pile could kill the fish and snapping turtles.

Jeff planned to call the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority to voice his concerns. Sandy is just glad to be able to get away from the smell. "Thank God I can still go to work for the fresh air."

Both said the building would cost about \$200,000. That amount has been set aside in the 2020 budget for the project.

But council is facing a five per cent tax increase, and the thought of spending \$200,000 on a fire hall bay is concerning to some councillors.

"My concern is in increasing the budget," says Councillor Jeannette Douglas. I'm really rip-torn. Can we leave it until we discuss the budget to see if we can find anything else (to cut)?"

"There are significant savings over time," says the chief. "There are options for council to address the financial side."

In the end, council simply filed the chief's request without giving the one-bay option its blessing.

are seeing the frequency of the concern being raised..targeting the area for storage," he says. "Somehow we need to get to the company and ask them to be looking at more suitable location for the storage."

Meantime, Dawn-Euphemia is also turning to the province for help. It wants the province to put in some strict rules for the storage of biosolids fertilizer.

The fertilizer was approved for use in Ontario in 2007 and is regulated under the federal fertilizer laws. Dawn-Euphemia wrote the owner of Lasalle Agri - David Buurma - and his brother, Roger, who farms the land - telling them to follow the rules of storage and tarp the pile. Half is now covered.

Feb. 18, about 50 township residents asked the township to do more. Brad Goodreau wanted Dawn-Euphemia to ban the use of biosolids in the township. Council decided against that. But it is asking the province to step up and tighten storage regulations "calling upon the Provincial Government to regulate and enforce the storage and use of processed sewage products in a commercial capacity."

In the past, Agriculture Minister Ernie Hardeman has told farmer he is not about to open regulations around biosolids.



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Jeff and Sandy Swartz say the smell from the biosolids pile across the road from them keeps them indoors.

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PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

Debris litters the Highland Glen Boat Launch. Officials with the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority say this year’s high water levels and high winds have damaged the launch so much it will remain closed this year.

Highland Glen boat launch closed

Heather Wright
The Independent

Boaters and fishermen who use the Highland Glen Conservation Authority boat launch will have to find someplace else to hit the water.

The St. Clair Region Conservation Authority says there has been a lot of damage done to the steel and concrete launch during this winter’s high water and heavy winds and it is simply not safe to use anymore.

Brian McDougall, general manager of the authority, says the protection on the west side of the ramp is now gone. The steel-sheet wall in the groyne system built in the 1970s was ripped away during a storm in November. “From there, we have been struggling to get a quote for the repair,” he says.

There is also a lot of erosion around the boat ramp, with parts of the shore around its base being eaten away by the high water and heavy winds.

“It’s a mess,” he says adding more sand than normal has washed into the boat ramp area and is visible on the ramp itself.

McDougall says the board believes that makes it dangerous for the public to use.

“In a perfect world, where the water is perfectly flat, launching into standing water, you’re going to think it’s okay....coming back in, with a storm coming up, you will be almost unprotected if you’re trying to

trailer your boat,’ he says.

That could lead to boats being smashed against what is left of the steel walls and people getting hurt.

McDougall says one contractor has “gues-timated” it will take about \$300,000 to fix the boat ramp. He expects when an engineer looks at the issue, it could be more like a half million dollars.

And McDougall says that money is not available now even though the boat ramp has been user pay for a number of years.

He says the revenue generated from that is about \$10,000 a year in the last couple of years.

And while it is an issue of safety and money, McDougall has no doubt boaters will be disappointed saying, “there is almost a cult following of day users; some of those people are out there almost every single day.”

It is the only public boat launch from Sar-nia to Grand Bend.

On line, boaters were angry with the move. “They’re saying it will be closed because they need to spend some money to repair the groyne and make it safe and usable for all the people.

“Please guys, just repair it ASAP and have it open for the season or a soon as possible,” wrote Todd McNally.

McDougall doesn’t know how long it will take to repair the boat launch but it will be closed at least for 2020.

Business consultation in Lambton falls flat

It seems a public consultation launched by Sarnia Lambton Economic Development didn’t go as well as expected.

In a letter to Dawn-Euphemia, SLEP officials say the organization launched an online consultation about how the communities of Lambton could be developed. It was looking for ideas from community members on services needed and possible business opportunities to pursue. SLEP advertised only on social media, and received 151 responses across

the county.

No one from Dawn-Euphemia responded. Mayor Al Broad was disappointed saying his staff talked to them about using the township’s monthly newsletter to get a good response, but that didn’t happen.

But Broad wasn’t surprised because “we figured that wasn’t going to work.

“And that’s proven out with only 151 people in the whole county responding, the message didn’t get out there,” he said noting that is less than 0.01 per cent return.

Lots of trees will remain says developer

Heather Wright
The Independent

A Petrolia developer says he will be keep-ing about seven acres of trees in the next phase of Countryview Estates.

Recently, Petrolia Council agree to allow Bob Leaper to pay \$75,000 because he would be removing trees from a 25-acre wood lot. That money would be used to plant new trees in the region.

Leaper says people were left with the impression the full woodlot, which he says is 22 acres, would be gone. Instead, the

plan calls for about seven acres of trees to remain. The 27 lots will be about 210 feet deep and have 50 to 60 feet of trees along the back, providing a buffer with other houses.

Leaper says that was always in the plan, however, he and the town couldn’t find a place to replant the trees locally. That’s why council approved the move.

“People like the trees, it’s a selling feature and those lots were always designed with 50 to 60 feet of trees.”

Leaper adds he’s working with a forester to make sure the remaining trees flourish.

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TAE KWON DO

Way to go Petrolia Bluewater Taekwondo! Our students each completed 1000 kicks on Sat Feb 15 in order to raise money for our club and students. Our club would like to thank everyone who helped us exceed our fundraising hopes!

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Three photos showing Taekwondo students in white uniforms practicing sparring and a group photo of the team.

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Editorial

Biosolid fertilizer storage rules should be tightened

There is frustration everywhere over the problems of dealing with biosolids fertilizers.

The pellets made from human waste from waste water treatment plants was approved for use as a fertilizer in 2007.

Complaints about the smell of the biosolids date back to 2012 in Warwick when people were vomiting from the odour and then calling their local politicians to do something.

Then, as is the case now, they had very few tools to do anything. Public complaints led the distributors and users of the product to either stop using it or move it out of the area.

Over the last few years, one company has stockpiled the fertilizer in massive quantities in Warwick. The township was able to get the pile that was nearly three football fields long removed using a zoning bylaw. The fertilizer business was a commercial operation in an area set out only for agriculture.

Since November, when the pile was moved from Warwick, the owners of the company have been placing mountains of the fertilizer all over central Lambton, Chatham-Kent and Middlesex County. They are a business, they’re simply trying to find a way to operate.

But it doesn’t change the fact this stuff smells horrible and no homeowner wants it near them. So municipalities are writing letters, enforcing zoning bylaws and trying to keep a lid on a problem that enrages residents.

It’s not working. And it appears the constant complaints from neighbours and letters from councils are not slowing business, because there seems to be a lot of biosolids fertilizer still being used.

The province needs to step in, as Dawn-Euphemia is suggesting, and enforce the rules that are there or even better, tighten the regulations around how this material must be stored. Right now, it is exposed to the elements which increases the smell and can lead to runoff into local water ways.

If the product is approved for use, it should be stored in a way that doesn’t disturb the community.

Letters to the Editor

The Independent welcomes Letters to the Editor. Our preferred methods to receive letters are via email to news@petrolialambtonindependent.ca (please use Letter in the subject line) or through our website www.petrolialambtonindependent.ca. You can also deliver letters to *The Independent* at 4156 Petrolia Line, Petrolia or drop them in the mail at *The Independent*, Petrolia, ON, N0N 1R0. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit letters for brevity and clarity. All letters need to be signed and must have a phone number for verification.

Our Story



DAVE BURWELL POST CARD COLLECTION

Petrolia has many beautiful historic churches. This colourize post card is of the Presbyterian Church on Princess St. It still stands behind the post office and is used regularly.



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Opinion

Developer will maintain seven acres of trees

EDITOR:

I am writing this letter in response to the editorials and letters in the past issues of The Independent. Hopefully, it will help address some of the speculation and clarify this aspect of the next phases of development for Countryview subdivision.

Over the past 16 months we have been working with the Town of Petrolia, Lambton County and the (St. Clair Region) Conservation Authority regarding the next phase of development in Countryview subdivision. The original draft plan which shows 129 lots and three streets, running from south to north connecting to Joe Street. This plan was approved by the Ministry of the Environment, the town and the county in 2009.

We brought in an experienced forester, one on a list recommended by the county, to identify the number, species and size of the trees, shrub and vines.

We spent the next few months

working with the town, county and conservation authority to review all concerns and recommendations. When concerns arose about the ability of the remaining trees to survive, we brought back the forester to do a report to address the issue.

In the report, he outlined steps to be taken to help preserve the remaining trees.

It has always been our intention to leave as many trees as possible. Therefore, when the lots were designed, they were sized 210 feet deep with 50 to 60 feet of trees on the back of each lot.

After many more months and meetings, we did our best to deal with all of the issues.

However, neither the town nor us (the developers) have an area large enough to replace the trees being removed. So, as per one of the county's policies, we will pay the county \$3,00 per acre for the entire woodlot, even though over seven acres of trees will remain.

The county is in the best position to find the proper uses and projects for the funds.

The amendment to the original draft plan of subdivision by council allows us to go forward with the development as to the replacement aspect of the woodlot.

This is the only aspect council has addressed.

Prior to the meeting, I contacted all councillors individually to discuss the proposal and answer any questions they might have.

We have many other requirements to complete before we break ground, but this item was essential in our development in order to proceed.

I would like to thank all parties concerned, especially the tow staff, council and the county, in arriving at the best compromise.

Bob Leaper
Petrolia, ON

Want to be green - keep woodlots say readers

EDITOR:

We have an idea for the Green Leader Program for the Town of Petrolia.

Our idea will continue to reduce greenhouse gases, help to clean our polluted air, and continue to improve the well-being and environmental

sustainability for all living things in this community.

Don't cut down the 25 acres of forest to build more houses, period!

Pick a space that has already been cleared. Developers should not be allowed to destroy any more woodlots.

To be 'Green' we need to preserve, not cut down our woodlands.

Jane Austin
Norman Barney
Petrolia, ON

SAYING GOODBYE



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Mary Jo Bryce was serving up her retirement cake at the Alvinston Library Friday. Bryce has been a familiar face at the library for 23 years, helping patrons find books, navigate the internet and learn more about their community. Bryce says she started just as computers were moving into the libraries - a move she applauded. "You have to learn, as much as we love the past, we can't live in the past." Bryce says it has drawn kids to the libraries. She also started a book club in Alvinston that first year. It is still going today and Bryce will continue to lead the discussions during her retirement.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sarnia-Lambton MP Marilyn Gladu talks with a youth supporter at the Carleton University in Ottawa in her bid to become the party’s leader.

Marilyn marches on

Ousting Trudeau is job one if Sarnia-Lambton’s MP becomes leader

Heather Wright
The Independent

Sarnia-Lambton MP Marilyn Gladu has made it past the first hurdle in her bid to become the next prime minister of Canada.

Gladu is one of six people still in the race to lead the Conservative Party to replace Andrew Scheer.

Gladu has been travelling across Canada, heading to Alberta to meet Premier Jason Kenny and his cabinet, and going up to Nunavut where the delegate base is smaller but just as important heading into the leadership convention.

By the time, Gladu makes it to Toronto in June for the big event, she will have talked to Conservatives in every part of the country. And she says they all want one thing - an end to the Trudeau government.

Gladu launched a petition calling for the minority Liberal government to be ousted and she says it will be her first order of business if she becomes the Conservatives’ leader.

“The longer Justin Trudeau is in place the more damage is done...he really has to go...I shudder to think what is going to happen if Trudeau continues.”

Candidates Peter McKay and Erin O’Toole also say they will try to bring down the government if they are the leader.

New proposals from Lecce studied by unions

Ontario’s education minister is offering to step away from increasing class sizes and giving parents the opportunity to opt out of e-learning.

Steven Lecce made the announcement at a news conference Tuesday. The province and four major teachers unions have been locked a brutal contract dispute which has seen rotating strikes across the province.

Monday, the NDP released results of the province’s parent consultations which Premier Doug Ford refused to released.

The report showed 70 per cent of the more than 7,000 people responding to the hotline said they did not want

class sizes to increase. That was one of the key issues the unions representing teachers have been talking about.

At press time, the leaders of the union were not saying a lot about Lecce’s proposal. Most say they should have been made at the bargaining table.

The head of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation said they need more details but says there is an opportunity to negotiate if the province returns to the bargaining table.

The leaders of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association also wanted time to consider Lecce’s proposal.

OECTA had planned a one-day walkout across the province for Thursday, however at press time it was not clear whether that would go ahead.

Lecce’s suggestions also include a proposal which would give teachers a pay increase. The province has been trying to impose a one-per cent increase for all public sector workers, including teachers.

All four teachers unions have gone to the Labour Board to complain about the imposition saying it denies them of their collective bargaining rights.

So far the Labour Board has yet to rule on the teachers’ complaint.



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GTA man found guilty of sex trafficking in Point Edward hotel

Pam Wright
Local Journalism Initiative

It is an eye-opening reminder that sex trafficking happens in Sarnia-Lambton.

A jury took just two hours to find a Toronto-area man guilty of exploiting two women for selling their sexual services.

Javoll Devon Blackwood was found guilty of 11 charges, three for trafficking in persons, gaining material benefits from sexual exploitation — including that of a minor — and the making of child pornography, as well as two charges of drug possession..

The names of the women involved are protected by court order.

The Crown’s case hinged on proving the defendant exploited one of the women by preying on her addiction to crack, while a 17-year-old was manipulated as the result of homelessness and poverty.

The charges stem from an arrest made by OPP in July 2018 at a Point Edward motel located in

plain view of the Sarnia jail and courthouse.

The court heard the details of a bungled, alcohol and drug-fuelled trip from the GTA to Sarnia, which occurred on Ribfest weekend.

Prosecutor Assistant Crown attorney Bianca DiBiase says police discovered the sex trafficking when one of the women called police after being locked out of her hotel room. When the OPP arrived and busted in, they found cellphones, a box of condoms and a suitcase full of lingerie.

The defendant and the younger sex trade worker were asleep at the time. Police also found cocaine and fentanyl.

When interviewed by police the defendant claimed he was coming to Sarnia to start a new life, however, the young women said the trip was made so they could escort and make money.

It was the second time Blackwood and the younger woman had made the trip. Earlier in 2018, they travelled by train to Sarnia where the young woman provided service to at least 10

clients.

Technology and Social Media played an important role in the conviction. An internet search report prepared by OPP analysts revealed text messages, social media posts and website searches from three cellphones, all of which came from phones and SIM cards linked to the accused.

Many of the messages displayed in court — as they appeared on the website LeoList — were highly suggestive—including pictures of the bodies of the two women. They included price lists for services and prohibited acts like no kissing on the lips.

Price lists for the sex work included \$140 for a half hour and \$240 for an hour.

They were plenty of messages to unnamed phone numbers, the Crown said were clients.

All told, OPP Det. Const. Vicki Bradford said there were at least 7,000 messages relating to sex trade work on an iPhone belonging to the defendant.

Blackwood said his phone had been used by one of the women to

take pictures and post photos and ads, but he never forced either to work, adding the two were always free to “come and go” as they pleased.

He denied taking any pictures of the minor or posting any ads related to the so-called dating websites saying she did it herself.

The admitted crack dealer said he knew the women were escorting, but that it was their choice, as they wanted to make money. He helped them “out of the goodness of his heart.”

But the crown painted a different picture. DiBiase pointed out the defendant had known the one of the women, who was in her twenties, for at least three years.

She was addicted to crack and the defendant was one of her suppliers. She engaged in sex trade work to pay for her habit.

The court heard that the defendant would sometimes wait next door while the escort was working. After the job was done she would slip the money to him under the door.

The jury heard the 17-year-old

met the defendant by chance at a party in the GTA.

He took her and a friend under his wing, allowing them to live with him at his rented room and providing them food.

Eventually, the young woman began escorting, turning over her profits to the defendant.

She never received any of the money she earned which the defendant said went to pay for her share of living expenses.

The relationship between the girl and the defendant came under intense questioning from DiBiase. Blackmore says she wanted to make money escorting in order to not be a “freeloader” and to “feel good about herself.”

When confronted with the fact the younger woman was a minor, Blackmore said he was under the impression she was 19 years old. However, the court heard the defendant had taken her to get a fake ID saying she was 18.

Blackmore will be sentenced in April. He’s been in custody since 2018.

Sex trafficking common, convictions in Sarnia are not

Pam Wright
Local Journalism Initiative

“Every single day in Sarnia sex trafficking occurs,” says the Coordinator for the local Anti-Human Trafficking Project

The recent conviction in Sarnia of a man on nine charges relating to the exploitation of two women through sex trafficking — including a minor — comes as no surprise to Chantel Butterfield.

To Butterfield’s knowledge, the recent case in Point Edward marks the first time a sex trafficking charge has been successfully prosecuted in Lambton County.

Charges were laid in an unrelated case by Sarnia Police, two years ago, but were eventually dropped.

The minimum sentence for human trafficking is four years.

“There’s a high demand for sex trade work here,” says Butterfield.

“This is a blue collar, border city. There are a lot of out-of-town workers and a lot of travellers coming through.”

The laws surrounding sex trade work and human trafficking in Canada are contradictory.

It’s perfectly legal for a woman or man over the age of 18 to sell his or her body, Butterfield says, but it’s illegal to purchase services from a sex trade worker, or to exploit a worker for

money.

It’s especially serious if the exploitation concerns a minor.

But it doesn’t stop a plethora of online websites offering workers and their wares in every city in Ontario.

Recent Statistics Canada data on the multi-billion dollar sex trafficking industry report 90 percent of trafficked workers are women between 18-24.

Butterfield says some sex trade workers operate independently, but most are led by others.

It’s all about the connection, she adds. “Most sex trafficking is very relationship-based,” she says, adding traffickers (pimps) offer their victims “love, attention, affection and protection.

“Many women who become sex workers think they are helping their boyfriends,” she says. “These women can easily make \$1,000 a day.”

Butterfield says the sensationalized stereotypes surrounding sex and human trafficking need to change.

The issue is often viewed like the storyline of the movie ‘Taken’ where young immigrant women are abducted, injected with drugs and held against their will.

Other images include smuggling people in airtight containers across international borders. “That does happen.” Eighty percent of all human trafficking is domestic.

“These are people who were born

here,” Butterfield explains, adding women are groomed by their exploiters to “fall in love with an ideal partner.

“Those who prey on these young people look for holes they can fill in the that person’s life,” Butterfield says.

The needs can range from drug addiction to homelessness to simply needing to feel wanted and loved.

Their pimp introduces the young person, who can be male, female or transgender, to the sex work, and the work becomes normalized over time.

“Often they don’t even realize they’ve been trafficked,” Butterfield notes. “Even though they believe they’ve had a choice, they’ve been coerced.”

Because of the underground nature of the work and the shame often associated with it, police intervention is difficult and not the norm,” Butterfield says.

One way to help is by educating consumers, Butterfield says.

Those purchasing services from sex trade workers need to know the signs of a trafficked worker and report it.

The Anti-Human Trafficking Project operates out of the Sexual Assault Survivors Centre in Sarnia and offers help to all sex trade workers.

It can be reached toll free at 1-888-231-0536.

The federal government also has a Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline that can be reached at 1-833-900-1010.

Windsor man charged in Oil Springs accident changes lawyers

Pam Wright
Local Journalism Initiative

A Windsor man charged in connection with the deaths of three college students in a tragic accident on Oil Heritage Road last fall will be back in court April 6.

Jovanpreet Singh, 22, made a brief court appearance in Sarnia Monday,

where the court learned he had changed lawyers.

Singh is charged with three counts of dangerous operation of a vehicle causing death, dangerous operation causing bodily harm, three counts of criminal negligence causing death, criminal negligence causing bodily harm and obstructing a police officer.


The early morning accident occurred

Oct. 4, 2019

Police photographs posted on social media show the car was heading south and missed the bend in the road, heading into a triangular field between Oil Heritage, Aberfeldy and a short side road leading to Aberfeldy.

The three victims were all 19 and from the Indian state of Punjab. They were studying business in Windsor.

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Sports

Flags sink Admirals, fly into PJHL divisional final

Barry Wright
The Independent

The Mooretown Flags remain perfect in the PJHL playoffs. They improved to 8-0 Sunday with a 5-2 win over the Admirals in Amherstburg to eliminate the third-seed club in four straight in the divisional semi-finals. Mooretown has outscored its opposition in the post season, 55-11. Trailing 2-1 after two periods in game four, the Flags struck for

four unanswered goals in the final stanza including an empty net marker. Logan Gardner had the game-winning at 10:01 of the third period. Brock Perry scored twice for Mooretown, while Nolan Farr had a goal and an assist. Cameron Rombouts had the other Flags tally. Max Steeves and Cade Robbins each contributed two assists. Greg Hay, Perry, Steeves and Farr are in the top ten in PJHL

playoff scoring in the province. Garrett Miller and Cade Robbins are leading the Flags on the blue line with 15 and 10 points respectively. Jake Wilkins made 28 stops in the series-clinching contest for his 14th consecutive goaltending decision in the past two months. His last loss was a 2-1 setback in Lakeshore in early January. The veteran puck stopper has played every minute of playoff action so far for Mooretown. He has a goals against average of

1.43, a save percentage of .951 and one shutout. Mooretown has now won 18 of its last 19 games dating back to the regular season. The only loss being on the final night of the regular season when the Flags rested many of their regulars for a game against the Canadiens that meant nothing in the standings.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Jake Wilkins has played all of Mooretown's playoff games.



DAWSON CURRIE PHOTO

The Lancers were heading for the net, but Dresden's goalie was on his game and the Cardinals narrowly defeated LCCVI in the Lambton-Kent Boys Hockey final.

Lancers out after a close LK title match

Statistically, all signs pointed to a victory for the LCCVI Lancers in the Lambton-Kent A-AA Hockey final last week against Dresden's Lambton Kent Composite in Petrolia. The Lancers were 6-2 on the regular season and steamrolled John McGregor in the semi-final, while the Dresden school struggled to 2-4 mark in the other division and had to score in overtime against Great Lakes to make it to the championship contest.

But, in the end, it was Lambton Kent Composite that raised the hardware with a 3-2 victory over the Lancers. Andrew Jaques had both goals for LCCVI with Ethan Kerby and Daniel Gibson drawing assists on both tallies. The Lancers were unsuccessful on a penalty shot in the third period. It's the third time in the last four seasons LCCVI has lost the championship contest. All have been by one goal with two being decided in a shootout.



The County of Lambton is an urban-rural area in southwestern Ontario that is home to over 126,000 residents. The Corporation's seven divisions operate programs and services for the residents of Lambton County such as land ambulance, provincial offences court, three Long-Term Care Homes, 25 library branches, two museums, an art gallery, archives, local roadways, public health services, housing services, social services, building services and planning and development services.

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Lambton Meadowview Villa is currently seeking to fill the Medical Director's role. The successful applicant must be in good standing with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and have completed or be willing to complete the Ontario Long-Term Care Clinicians' Medical Director Course within two years of assuming the role. The Medical Director will have the following responsibilities and duties, part of which is set out in s. 214(3) of the Long-Term Care Homes Act:

- Development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of medical services.
- Advising on clinical policies and procedures, where appropriate.
- Communication of expectations to attending physicians, registered staff.
- Addressing issues relating to resident care, after-hours coverage and on-call coverage.
- Participation in interdisciplinary committees and quality improvement activities.

If you are a qualified physician who would be interested in pursuing such an opportunity with the County of Lambton, please apply using the contact information below.

Inquiries can be directed to Dulcie Lindo, Administrator, Lambton Meadowview Villa, 3958 Petrolia Line, Petrolia, ON N0N 1R0 E-mail: dulcie.lindo@county-lambton.on.ca Phone: 519-882-1470. Interested applicants must apply in writing, clearly stating Medical Director Posting, by 12:00 noon on March 12, 2020 to: Executive Assistant, Long-Term Care Division, 789 Broadway Street, Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0 Phone: 519-845-0801 E-mail: ashley.aalten@county-lambton.on.ca

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MARCH BREAK

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kids are off Monday, March 16 to Friday, March 20, 2019

UP ENDED



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

The Petrolia Oilers Midget Rep team will host Simcoe Wednesday (March 4) at 8:40 at Greenwood in game four of their six-point OMHA semi-final series. Victor Tang upended one of the Simcoe players Saturday in Petrolia. The Oilers lead the series, four points to two. Petrolia took the opening two games of the series before bowing in overtime on the road Sunday. The Midget game will be preceded by the Petrolia Bantams against Ayr at 7 p.m. The Oilers are down four points to none in that series and need a victory to extend it.. And, the Petrolia Midget AE's lost 2-0 at home Monday and were eliminated from their semi-final, six points to two to the Ayr Flames. The series was very tight with the Flames winning games 1-0 and 2-0 while two other contests ended in a tie.

Legionnaires bow out of playoffs

The Independent

The 2019-20 campaign is over for the Sarnia Legionnaires. The curtain came down Sunday after a 4-1 loss to the London Nationals. The regular season conference champion Nationals won the series in four straight games but the series was much closer than the final result would indicate. Sarnia led the opening game after two periods before falling by two goals with the final marker going into an empty net. They lost in double overtime in game two, only trailed 2-1 after two stanzas in game three and were tied at 1 through 40 minutes Sunday night. The goal differential in the series was only nine goals, with the Nationals outscoring the Legionnaires, 10-0 in third periods and overtime throughout the best-of-seven series. Jake Vince had the lone goal in game four for Sarnia. Carson Peer drew and assist. The Oil City native ended his first full season in the GOJHL with seven goals and 15 points in 53 regular season and playoff contests. Nolan DeKoning made 28 saves in the Legionnaire net. Meantime, Strathroy is down 2-0 in its quarter-final series to St. Marys. Game three was last night (Tues) in St. Marys but the score was not available prior to our press time. The Rockets roster includes Petrolia Minor Hockey grads Carson Perry, Bayly Fryfogle and Blake Hull.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Mooretown Atom Reps are waiting for an opponent in the finals after beating Simcoe to advance to the finals Saturday.


Atom Flags going for the Red Hats

The Mooretown Flags are heading to the OMHA Atom B finals. The Flags punched their ticket with a 2-1 win at Simcoe Saturday afternoon to sweep the Warriors in three straight games in the semi-finals. Max Gauvin and Ewan Snedden scored for the Flags who have now won nine straight games, including six straight in

OMHA play. Mooretown has won 13 of its last 14 games dating back to the regional Silver Stick tournament in Alvinston in late December. Mooretown will play either Penetang or Kincardine for the Red Hats. That series is tied at two points and will be decided this weekend.

Two East Lambton teams clinch

The East Lambton Atom and Atom AE teams have both advanced to the OMHA finals with series-clinching victories over the weekend. Meantime, the Bantams lost 6-4 in Hagersville Monday, but still lead their semi-final series, four points to two. Game four is Friday in Alvinston at 7 pm. The Pee Wee are at home to Six Nations in Alvinston on Wednesday at 7, also with a chance to advance to the final.



But, the OMHA dream has ended for the East Lambton Midgets. They were eliminated on the weekend.



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Card of Thanks

Thank You

Thank you to everyone who attended my retirement open house at the Alvinston Library. Your best wishes, kind words, cards and hugs meant so much to me. Many friendships were made over the years that I will cherish.

Mary-Jo Bryce

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Obituary



McLACHLAN
Patricia

Patricia died peacefully at St. Joseph's Hospice, Sarnia on **Wednesday February 19, 2020.** PATRICIA McLACHLAN (nee McCorkindale), of Petrolia, was **81** years of age. She was the loving wife of the late Jim (2008). She will be missed by her sons Harold and Shelagh McLachlan and Clayton and Lisa McLachlan, her grandchildren Ryan and Christina McLachlan, Kaitlyn McLachlan and Adam Lundy, Tyson McLachlan and Jen Dufault, and Tyler McLachlan, and her great grandchildren Jackson, Zoey, and Sadie. She is survived by a brother Norris McCorkindale and a sister Ila Sawyer. She was predeceased by sisters Katherine McDonald, Laura Barnes, Marlene Blackstock, Isabelle Barnes, and June Shephard and her brothers John, Allan, Lorne, Archie, Christie, and Mike McCorkindale. **Cremation has taken place and interment will be in Wyoming Cemetery.** As expressions of sympathy memorial donations may be made to C.E.E. Hospital Foundation (www.ceehf.ca) and St. Joseph's Hospice (www.stjosephhospice.ca). Memories and condolences may be shared online at www.needhamjay.com.

Card of Thanks

Special thanks to my sister, Sharen Nantais for the beautiful surprise birthday party. The luncheon was held at Golden Palace in Corunna. Thank you to all my cousins, friends and family who attended. Your gifts, cards and laughter made my day. We had a great time, thank you Sharen for your Kindness.

Love Sister
Carel Guerette

Obituary



MAJOR
PENNY

With saddened hearts, the family of Penny Elizabeth Major (nee Cameron), **62**, announce her passing at C.E.E. Hospital of Bluewater Health, Petrolia. Beloved wife to John for 40 years. Loving mother to Sarah (Bob) Daniels and Cameron (Annette) Major. Cherished grandmother to Ethan, Ian, Cole, Eli, Wyatt and Aurora. Loved sister to Deborah (Harvey) King, Cindy (Ross) Bingley, Sandra Cameron and dear sister-in-law to Francis (Wayne) Prance, Kathy (Nelson) Bilyea, Janice (Bill) Stauttener, and Jean (Jim) Barber. She is the daughter of the late Keith and June Cameron. Penny will be remembered by many nieces and nephews. Penny was a devoted grandmother and loved spending summers at the family cottage on Lake Matinenda. She and John loved to travel south to various tropical resorts and relaxing and spending time by the pool. **Visitors were received by the family on Wednesday March 4, 2020 from 2-4 and 6-8 p.m. at the Wyoming Chapel, 650 Broadway St. Wyoming. A memorial service will take place at Wyoming Baptist Church, on Thursday March 5, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. Interment in Wyoming Cemetery.** As an expression of sympathy, memorial donations may be made to Heart and Stroke Foundation (www.heartandstroke.ca). Memories and condolences may be shared online at www.needhamjay.com

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28

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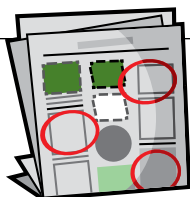
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Calendar

PLEASE CALL AHEAD TO CONFIRM DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Events are listed FREE for non-profit groups in Petrolia and Lambton County (space permitting). To be included in this listing email the required information to office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca Subject: FREE EVENT LISTING.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	START TIME	LOCATION	EVENT	CONTACT INFO
Mar 5	12 Noon	Port Lambton	Lambton Elderly Outreach Diners Club at the Port Lambton Community Centre. \$10/person	519-845-1353 Ext 258
Mar 6		Sarnia	Sarnia Lambton Parkinson's Care Partner Support Group Meeting at the Strangway Center	519-336-3286
Mar 6	1pm	Petrolia	World Day of Prayer at St. Paul's United Church. Wheelchair accessible.	519-882-1390
Mar 6	2pm	Wyoming	World Day of Prayer Service at the Wyoming United Church (730 Secord St.)	519-845-3618
Mar 6	6-11pm	Wyoming	First Friday at Wyoming Legion feat. Demi Krall.	519-845-0072
Mar 6	7pm	Petrolia	St. Philips Parish Card Parties	519-882-4840
Mar 7	12Noon	Alvinston	Alvinston Legion Br 249 Euchre Tournament. All Welcome.	
Mar 8	1-3pm	Sarnia	JNAAG: Family Sunday Drop In - Threaded Collage	jnaag.ca
Mar 10	12 Noon	Alvinston	Lambton Elderly Outreach Diners Club at the Alvinston Legion. \$10/person	519-845-1353 Ext 258
Mar 10	7pm	Inwood	Shiloh-Inwood United Church Eucher Card Party at the Inwood United Church. Light Lunch. Funds to: Canadian Food Grains Bank	
Mar 11	12 Noon	Petrolia	Lambton Elderly Outreach Diners Club at the Lambton Meadowview Villa. \$10/person	519-845-1353 Ext 258
Mar 13	4:30-6:30pm	Petrolia	Fish Dinner at St. Philip Parish Hall hosted by Knights of Columbus. \$20 pp+ 12-5 years \$10 + under 5 FREE	519-882-0961
Mar 13	7:30pm	Sarnia	The Sarnia Rock & Fossil Club's Meeting at Twin Lakes terrace Retirement Home. Speaker: May Hong.	519-869-2003
Mar 14	3:30pm	Alvinston	Alvinston Legion Br 249 Meat Raffle in support of the Alvinston Ice Angels. Followed by Catch the Ace at 6pm.	
Mar 14	1pm	Petrolia	Euchre at St. Paul's United Church from 1-4pm \$5/person. Door prizes and light lunch.	
Mar 15	1-3pm	Sarnia	JNAAG: Family Sunday Drop In - Personal Polaroids	jnaag.ca
Mar 15	5-7pm	Oil Springs	Oil Springs United Church St. Patrick's Celebration "Irish Stew" and home made biscuits. Free Will Offering.	519-834-2207
Mar 18	9:30am	Camlachie	Bible Study Group at the Camlachie United Church. No registration required. Discusses about The Book of James	519-899-4720
Mar 18	12 Noon	Corunna	Lambton Elderly Outreach Diners Club at the at Wellings of Corunna (180 Bunker Ave). \$10/person	519-845-1353 Ext 258
Mar 20	7pm	Petrolia	St. Philips Parish Card Parties	519-882-4840
Mar 21	10am-4pm	Point Edward	Bluewater Anglers Hatchery Open House. Under the Bridge. See how we raise fish. We are well stocked this year with Rainbow, Brown trout and Salmon.	519-330-6515
Mar 21	12 Noon	Alvinston	Alvinston Legion Br 249 Pool Tournament. All Welcome. Followed by Catch the Ace at 6pm	

CLUBS AND REGULAR EVENTS

DAY	START TIME	LOCATION	EVENT	CONTACT INFO
Mondays	1:15p	Oil Springs	Social/Euchre @ Oil Springs United	226-307-0929
Mondays	7:00p	Watford	Watford Legion - Fun Darts	519-876-2360
2nd Mon	7:00p	Petrolia	Margaret Stokes Chapter IODE Meeting	519-882-2073
Tuesdays	4:30p	Petrolia	TOPS Weight Loss Support @ Meadowview Villa	
Tuesdays	7:00p	Watford	Watford Legion - Progressive Euchre	519-876-2360
Tuesdays	7:00p	Petrolia	Petrolia Toast Masters @ St.Andrews	519-882-0946
2nd Tues	7:00p	Petrolia	Meadowview Villa Card Party	519-845-1198
E/O Tues	12noon	Wyoming	P-W Agricultural Society Lunch & Euchre	519-845-3661
Weds	7:30p	Oakdale	IOOF Euchre Card Parties @ Oakdale Hall	
3rd Wed	1-4pm	Petrolia	Kenny J & Friends Musical Jumboree @Pet Legion	519-882-1557
Thursdays	11am	Sarnia	Parkinson's Exercises @ Strangway Centre	519-337-5330
Thursdays	5:30p	Petrolia	Lions Meat Raffle @ Haywood's	519-882-8728
Thursdays	6:00p	Petrolia	Optimists Meat Raffle @ Crabby Joe's	519-882-1255
Thursdays	6:30p	Petrolia	Petrolia Legion - Dart Night	519-882-1557
Thursdays	7:00p	Watford	Watford Legion - Cribbage	519-876-2360
1st Thurs	11am	Sarnia	Parkinson's Support Group @Strangway Centre	519-336-3286
3rd Thurs	7:00p	Oil Springs	Optimists Meat Bingo @ The Youth Centre	519-834-2152
Fridays	9:00a	Brigden	Brigden United Church - Mom & Tots Drop In	519-892-3151
Fridays	6:00p	Watford	Watford Legion - Meat Raffle & Catch the Ace	519-876-2360
2nd Fri	Noon	Wyoming	Wyoming Burns Lodge - Mens Card Parties	519-899-2264
4th Fri	Noon	Wyoming	Wyoming Rebekah Lodge - Womens Card Parties	519-899-2264
E/O Fri	7pm	Oil Springs	Srs. Card Parties @ United Church	519-882-4697
3rd Sat	1-4pm	Sarnia	Sarnia Legion "Jam at the Legion" Open To All	519-328-0964

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Church DIRECTORY

Christ Church Anglican

414 Oil Street, Petrolia
Service at 11am
Coffee & Fellowship after 11am service, All are welcome!
Rev. Michelle Collins-Wongkee
Church Office 519-882-1430
christchurchpetrolia@gmail.com

St. Andrew's Prebyterian Church

416 Queen Street, Petrolia
(Behind the Post Office)
10:00 am - Worship
Church School • Nursery
Coffee & Fellowship After Service
www.standrews-petrolia.ca

Wyoming United Church

730 Second Street, Wyoming
Join Us for Worship - All are Welcome
Sunday Worship 11am
Sunday School 11am
Church Office 519-845-3963

First Baptist Church

418 Greenfield Street, Petrolia
10:30 am Church Service
Pastor: Alex Craig
Church Office 519-882-2480
email: fbcpetrolia@gmail.com
www.firstbaptistpetrolia.ca
Find us on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/First-Baptist-Church-Petrolia

St. Paul's United Church

4169 Petrolia Line at Centre Street
Rev. Susan Cameron
10:30am Service
Nursery • Sunday School
Church Office: 519-882-1390
stpaulsunitedpetrolia.net

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Chantal DeVlugt has been named one of the OCAA volleyball All-Stars.

LCCVI grad wins bronze

Chantal DeVlugt and her Windsor-based St. Clair College Saints beat Durham in straight sets, 25-23, 25-19 and 25-23 to take the bronze medal at the OCAA volleyball provincials in North Bay.

The Wyoming product had nine kills, two service aces and six digs for the Saints in the third-place match.

The Saints blanked Ottawa-Algonquin, three sets to none in the quarter-finals before losing 3-1 to the eventual champions from Fanshawe in the semi-finals.

During her rookie season, DeVlugt was ninth the province in kills and 12th in overall scoring.

North Lambton alum cracks top five at Pan Am cross country event

Connor Black of Forest was the first Canadian to cross the finish line and was fifth overall at the Pan Am Cross Country Championships in Victoria, BC last weekend.

The North Lambton and University of Guelph grad finished in a time of 33:25.

He was 35 seconds behind the winner from Brazil.

COMMUNITY CORNER



PHOTO CREDIT

On Feb. 25, the second annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper was held at Trinity Anglican Church in Watford. About 150 people can out to enjoy pancakes, sausage and homemade pies. Maple syrup was provided by Tim Morgan of Watford - who also helped flip some pancakes with Ivan Bryce - and the Gilliard Brothers of Forest.

Florence wrestlers competing at high school provincials

Riley Crummer is competing this week at the Ontario high school wrestling championships in Sault Ste. Marie.

The Florence product had qualified for the provincials with a gold medal in his weight class at SWOSSA in Windsor late last month.

Crummer, who attends Ursuline College in

Chatham, also won a silver in his weight class at the Ontario Winter Games in Orillia last weekend.

Eduardo Olaya of LCCVI is also competing at the high school provincial event in the Soo.

Eduardo Olaya won the 61 kilogram weight class and was

named the Outstanding Male Athlete at the Lambton Kent Wrestling Championship in Forest.

Megan Jaques also won in Lambton-Kent and competed at the SWOSSA event but did not advance.



Riley Crummer with Kayla Smith

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