

The Independent

Serving Petrolia and Central Lambton

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CHRISTMAS JOY



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Lucy Bright, 20 months, lived up to her name, posing for a picture in the new light display at Victoria Park in Petrolia Sunday.

Marriott calls for unity as he becomes warden of Lambton

Heather Wright
The Independent

The new warden of Lambton County is calling on his peers to “put aside politics of individual municipalities and work for the good of Lambton County.”

Enniskillen Township Mayor Kevin Marriott was elected warden of Lambton County over the incumbent, Lambton Shores Mayor Bill Weber and Sarnia City/County Councillor Brian White.

The warden is the representative of the county and is elected by politicians who serve on county

council.

In an interview with *The Independent*, Marriott says it has been evident for some time that some Sarnia politicians question if the city gets “bang for its buck” being in the county system. Earlier this year, Sarnia City/County Councillor Dave Boushy asked Sarnia council to stop sending money to the county. The idea was nixed by council, but Marriott acknowledged the city feels alienated. “I recognize there is some tension there and I want to see it gone.

“As far as I’m concerned, we

all need each other to make the county system work,” Marriott says.

The new warden wants to make sure they know the benefits of being part of the county federation and says while Sarnia may contribute slightly more than it receives back, he believes the finance department at the county could produce the numbers showing the contribution is pretty close to the payout.

The rift between Sarnia and the rest of the county is only one of the issues in the next two years. Marriott, in his address

to councillors Dec. 2, called for unity in the county as it faces the economic fallout of the pandemic.

Marriott says 2020 has been a year to remember, but he worries what is ahead. Marriott says the province and the federal government have expanded the debt of the nation and that could affect Lambton County and its municipalities.

“I fear upper and lower tiers of Lambton will feel the cutbacks, probably worse than in the 1990s,” he says recalling how the provincial government downloaded the costs of things

such as ambulance services to Lambton. He called it “top down austerity.” Marriott says the cuts could be a “one-two punch” as the county needs to renew long term care, create new affordable housing units and save to buy the building which Shared Services is housed in Sarnia.

The new warden also voiced concern the province won’t address the funding problems facing rural Ontario. Cuts to the Ontario Municipal Partnership grant have hurt Lambton municipalities like Enniskillen.

SEE LAMBTON PG 2



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Dawn-Euphemia orders sewage solution

Heather Wright
The Independent

Dawn-Euphemia is taking the unusual step of ordering a new septic system be installed and the cost be placed on the homeowner’s taxes.

The township has been trying to deal with a septic issue in Edys Mills since June 2019 when neighbours reported effluent was flowing off the property and onto the road allowance. County inspectors went to look into the problem and ordered the owner of the home to have the septic tank pumped out. The owner told the county that was being done in July but when the inspector returned, it was still full.

The county then ordered the tenants of the mobile home on the property to move out in July.

But it took until July 2020 for the people to finally leave, after they had exhausted all their legal avenues and the sheriff would deliver the orders which had stopped being served during the earliest part of the pandemic.

Clerk Donna Clermont told council she’d recently talked to the owner and found he was planning to rent out the mobile home on the property again. He’s still living in another building on the property even though

the system has not been properly fixed.

So county and municipal officials recommended the township hire someone to do the work and charge back the estimated \$20,000 on the property taxes.

Clermont urged council to act quickly since the work needed to be done by Dec. 15. She said a new tank could be installed and the rest of the work, including a weeping bed, could be complete in the spring.

Councillor Leslea Williams voiced concerns that if the landowner didn’t pay the taxes which included the cost of the renovations, the township would not be able to do anything about it. Williams says it is her understanding people cannot lose their homes because of property standards problems. Township officials are looking into the matter.

And there was also concern about moving ahead now if there were no tenants on the property. Clermont says the owner continues to live there and the work has to be done for that outbuilding as well.

“It sounds like he needs a septic system no matter what,” says Councillor Mark McGuire. “\$20,000 ...sounds like a pretty good deal to me.”

“I guess he’s gonna foot the bill.”

Council agreed to move ahead on the work immediately.

Watford hall/arena project \$11.5M

Heather Wright
The Independent

Warwick Councillor Wayne Morris wants to make sure there are no surprises when it comes to the cost of the new community centre.

The township recently gave approval to move ahead on the project which will create a new community hall at the Watford arena.

There are also plans to renovate the arena at the same time. Morris is concerned people might be confused by the true cost of the project. Several reports,

including The Independent’s, said the project would be \$10 million.

Morris was concerned that wasn’t the full cost. “I didn’t want people to think that’s the number,” he says.

Township officials say that’s the cost of the new community centre only.

The arena project is another \$1.5 million, making the total cost of the project \$11.5 million.

Mayor Jackie Rombouts says there is a lot of interest in the project and the big question is how are we going to pay for it. Rombouts explains there will be fundraising and perhaps loans.

Police charge driver in cyclists death

The Independent

A St. Clair Township woman has been charged in the accident which killed a Wyoming cyclist.

Lori Neville was out riding on Petrolia Line as part of a childhood cancer fundraiser in August when she was struck just west of Bridgen Line.

There was a huge outpouring of sympathy

for Neville’s wife and child and her fundraising drive came close to raising \$14,000 as riders across the country finished Lori’s Ride.

She’d hoped to raise \$5,000.

Lambton OPP now say Melissa Miller, 36, of St. Clair Township has been arrested and charged with dangerous operation of a vehicle causing death. She’ll be in court Jan. 11.

Lambton municipalities have to work together particularly in the wake of the pandemic: Marriott

CON’T FROM PG 1

Marriott plans to address the issue with the province during annual conferences, including the Ontario Good Roads Conference, in January.

But despite the concerns around funding and cuts because of large COVID-19 pandemic deficits, Marriott says Lambton is in a unique situation to profit from some of the changes from the

COVID-19 pandemic including a migration of urban residents to the area.

“People are wanting to escape the high cost of living in Lambton County; we join many other

regions of Ontario as an alternative to the GTA.”

Marriott becomes the latest in a long line of Enniskillen leaders to wear the warden’s chain. Most recently Jim Burns, and Marriott’s

friend, the late Larry O’Neill, were Enniskillen residents who led the county. Marriott will be supported by Pt. Edward Bev Hand, who was elected as the deputy warden at the same meeting.

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Workplace outbreak declared as two Shell Corunna employees have COVID

Alex Kurial
Local Journalism Initiative

Lambton Public Health has declared an workplace outbreak.

It's the health unit's policy not to release the name of the company involved, however Shell Corunna has confirmed there have been two cases on site.

A company memo from Dec. 3 obtained by *The Independent* says an employee of the manufacturing centre notified the company they had tested positive for COVID-19 and went into self-isolation. The other employee tested positive Nov. 30.

"Further to measures taken earlier this week, face coverings in the control rooms, except when seated at workstations, is immediately mandatory," says Rima Rizkallah, with the Sarnia Manufacturing Centre's health and safety group, in a memo to staff. "Additional control measures will be completed and communicated by the production organizations as we continue to focus on care for our people and safe and reliable operations."

“If you have COVID-19 symptoms and need to quarantine, the best way you can help yourself and the site is to stay at home and follow public health guidelines.”

Public health says an outbreak is declared when two or more employees test positive for COVID-19 within a reasonable timeline to suspect transmission in the workplace.

Last week, Imperial Oil officials said they had an employee with COVID-19 as well.

The news comes as Lambton has 25 people who are sick with the virus. There have been 22 new cases reported since Dec. 1 in Lambton.

Medical Officer of Health Dr. Sudit Ranade says while the numbers remain good compared to most of Ontario, which recorded 1,676 new cases and 10 deaths Tuesday, Lambton should expect to remain in the “Yellow-Protect” zone for awhile.

“Even if our numbers look good we’ll still be in yellow for a little bit of time, because it’s important to ensure that transmission is not continuing to occur broadly in the

community.”

Ranade says rules in “Green-Prevent” and “Yellow-Protect” are not that different. “People have by and large been adapting to it very well,” he says of Lambton’s elevated change last week.

There were also more than 200 intensive care unit beds in use this week – that's where officials say other hospital services become effected. Health officials have warned some operations may need to be postponed as this number grows, but Ranade says Lambton shouldn't currently be affected.

"The hospital system here is doing okay. I do not believe that they have changed their elective surgeries or anything like that for the time being," he says. "I do know that they have plans and are prepared to do so if needed. But they haven't had to go there yet."

With the holiday season arriving, Ranade discussed the province's Christmas gathering suggestions, which included not socializing with other households.

Ranade says if you do choose to visit family or friends, take precautions. "The longer you

spend with someone, the more likely it is that one of you can transmit the disease to the other... So if you're able to structure your interactions with people so that they are short durations, infrequent, and not over things like meals that make you stay for a really long time... those are ways to keep it safer.

"We acknowledge that people want to get together, there are really valid reasons for people to get together, there are ways to do it safely and we want to make sure that you do it as safely as possible," says Ranade. "Because if everybody goes out there and meets everybody else the way we're used to doing, we will see cases skyrocket very quickly."

In the Lambton Kent school system two cases linked to each other were confirmed at the Northern Collegiate Institute and Vocational School in Sarnia last week. The high school remained open though, and no outbreak was declared.

“When you would declare an outbreak with those two cases that are linked is where you reasonably

believe that transmission could have happened in the setting," Ranade says.

“There are situations where you don’t think so, and you have reason to believe that transmission occurred outside of that setting, in which case even if you have two cases that are associated with each other, or somehow linked to a setting, you may still not declare an outbreak in that setting,” Ranade says.

In addition to watching out for COVID, last week Lambton Public Health said a person in their 60s was hospitalized with influenza B. The respiratory illness can be deadly, but Ranade says precautions against influenza are already those being employed to fight COVID.

“People are worried about COVID primarily, and the things you can do to protect yourself from COVID also protect yourself from flu,” says Ranade. “We had lots of people get flu shots, that’s excellent. But we also know that the flu is now circulating in our community just like COVID.”

- *The Independent*

Controversial changes to Conservation Authorities pass as Ontario government goes on holidays

Heather Wright
The Independent

The province has gained more power over development after passing Bill 229 which significantly changes how conservation authorities do their business.

The provincial government forced the final reading of a budget bill which included a section changing the rules around conservation authorities. They included giving ministers more authority to override the decisions

of the conservation authorities which protect the watershed - even if those developments don't meet the requirements set out in the Conservation Act. Bill 229 also took away the authorities' right to appeal if they felt a project would harm the environment.

It's a move the general manager of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority, Brian McDougall, says may cause environmental problems in the long run.

"These criteria were developed to protect the lives and property of

our watershed community against flooding and other natural hazards," he said in a news release.

the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Big City Mayors, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, and more than 64 citizens and environmental organizations opposed the changes which were passed Tuesday afternoon just before the Ontario Legislature recessed until mid February.

“Our challenge, now, will be to operationalize the province’s amendments which we’re quite

certain will create additional delays and costs for municipalities, applicants and conservation authorities, themselves,” says Kim Gavine, the general manager of Conservation Ontario.

“Using an overburdened tribunal system, allowing applicants to appeal CA decisions directly to the minister and – ensuring compliance around the Minister’s permits will be some of what creates those delays and costs.”

Not everyone was opposed to the changes. Warwick Deputy Mayor

Jerry Westgate, who is on the St. Clair board, started to object at Monday's council meeting, when Mayor Jackie Rombouts interjected.

"People that I've talked to from the county say they're good changes in their opinion...that conservation authorities – this is just what I've heard – in talking with some friends trying to get things approved, even townships themselves, are having a hard time getting approved," she told councillors.



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Editorial

Sarnia and Lambton need each other

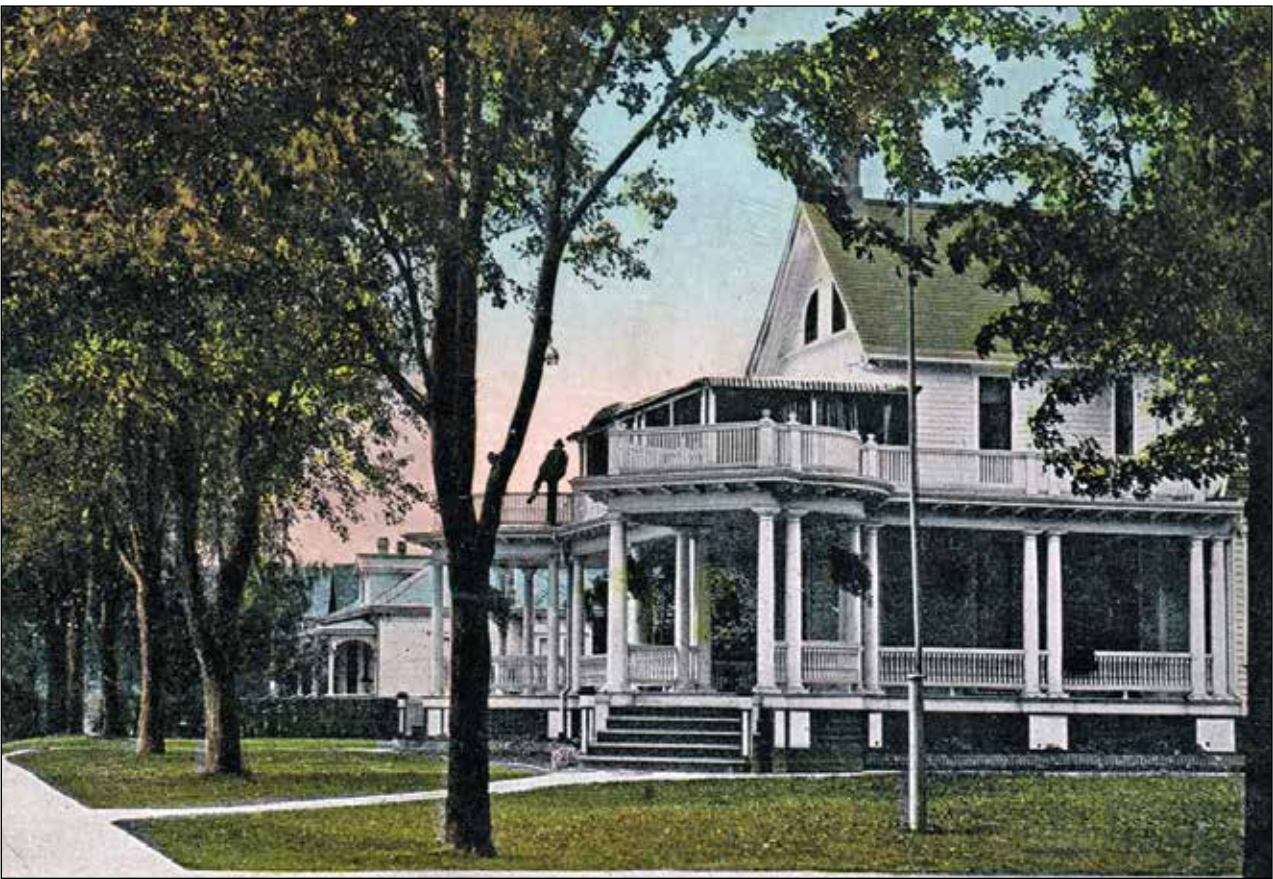
It is a challenging time for Enniskillen Mayor Kevin Marriott to take the helm of Lambton County. He's the new warden, a largely ceremonial job which includes meeting with upper levels of government and representing the county at community events. The warden is elected by the politicians who make up Lambton County Council. Getting elected is not an easy task considering the personalities of local politicians and the needs of the different communities. It was striking then, that Marriott chose to ask politicians to strive for unity when he was making his pitch to be warden. 2020 has been full of struggles and even Marriott acknowledges there are greater economic struggles ahead which could lead to the provincial and federal governments taking the money out of Lambton County's pockets - as they have in the past. He talked about that of course, too, but Marriott made sure to ask local politicians to put aside their community's political agendas. He was talking of the growing frustration by Sarnia's elected officials, who earlier this year voted on a request to stop paying its share to the county. There has always been concern on the city's behalf that it isn't getting as many services as it should considering the cash it puts in. Social media - particularly those on it uneducated about what the county level of government actually does - amplifies those concerns. So Marriott reached across the growing divide, hoping to find people ready to work together, both from the county and the city.

He's right to make this a priority. These are tough times but a rift between the city and county that would lead to infighting or even separation would make things worse. Sarnia and Lambton do function well together. The city, yes, pays a large share of the taxes, but it also uses much of the services. It's time for the county administrators to lay that out in black and white again. Hopefully, that will put the chatter to rest and others will see that we need each other and we really are better together.

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



FROM THE DAVE BURWELL POSTCARD COLLECTION

An unusual picture of Main Street West on Petrolia Line. If you look closely, you'll note someone is trying to scale the upper balcony of the beautiful home.

The Twinkle; my dad's joy was sparkling in his eyes

My dad always had a little twinkle in his eye - a sparkle of mischief that greeted the people he loved. That twinkle surfaced often - Dad was full of fun and joy - a bit of an imp really. His much-loved brothers would likely see that twinkle as Eli was telling a joke or pulling a prank. I would have liked to be a bug on the wall as the Kok boys went fishing. Fuzzy family pictures show my dad, the joker, holding himself up on his brother's shoulders to appear taller than everyone else for once. The twinkle would appear at family gatherings. During my cousin's wedding, guests were asked to find creative ways to demonstrate kissing for the bride and groom. Five-foot-six Eli, with a twinkle in his eye, came to the front, pulled up a chair, climbed up and kissed his six-foot-two Annie. People at the reception roared with laughter.

The twinkle would appear a lot at Christmas. We would play games as we waited for the neighbourhood firefighter who played Santa to appear at our home Christmas Eve. The favourite game was Mouse - nuts were strewn across the table and one was chosen as THE MOUSE when a child was out of the room. The kid would then go through the pile until finding The Mouse, and everyone would scream - MOUSE! If you watched closely, the twinkle was there in Dad's eyes as the hands reached closer to the Mouse. But the twinkle wasn't reserved for Christmas; it could be found every day around our dinner table. He would come home from work at night, as supper was being put on the table. One memorable night, he had that twinkle in his eye as entered the house. He opened the folds of his coat to reveal a little dog and then smiled broadly.

But the best time to see The Twinkle was when you came home. It was there each time you came to visit. Dad would either stand at the door, or be at the kitchen table reading a newspaper or his latest book when you arrived. He would spot you, grin and twinkle and then stand up to give you the biggest hug, growling in your ear at the same time. I'll miss that hug and the twinkle in his eyes. Dad passed away Thursday. His twinkle, I'm sure, is constant in heaven.



Heather Wright



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OPP wants to keep St. Clair office; asks for \$25k more

Heather Wright
The Independent

Lambton’s municipalities are being asked to pony up to pay for the OPP to stay in St. Clair Township.

The OPP satellite detachment on Lyndoch St. is home to uniformed officers and the Community Street Crime Unit. Under a lease agreement that runs until 2026 the police board currently pays more than \$90,000 a year in rent and around \$16,000 in cleaning fees.

But in a letter sent to the township at the end of August the board says they “will not be able to continue paying rent to St. Clair Township at the present level” after 2020. The letter cites COVID-19 -related issues, including losses of \$50-60,000 in revenue from criminal record checks now going to the provincial instead of municipal level, and increased cleaning costs.

It suggested St. Clair pick up the costs if it wanted the detachment to remain there.

But Mayor Steve Arnold pointed out the OPP sought out the building, asked the township to renovate it to their specifications and sign a 10 year lease in 2017. “It really came out of left field,” said Arnold at the time.

It seems the police services board has taken another look, sending a letter to municipalities saying the main OPP office in Petrolia can’t be expanded so “maintaining the St. Clair detachment office is recommended by the board.”

The letter, signed by the chair of the police board, says it will cost an additional \$25,000 per month to keep the office.

And it asks the member municipalities to foot the bill. In Plympton-Wyoming for example, that will cost an extra \$3,200 a month on top of its bill which already tops \$1 million. Council will discuss the issue Wednesday.

PW says no to board’s request to hire new chief

Heather Wright
The Independent

It seems Plympton-Wyoming councillors aren’t ready to hire a new fire chief yet.

Steve Clemens resigned from the post in October after three years of turmoil including the firing of three senior officers. The town and lawyers for the three are still discussing the dismissals, which the firefighters say were not justified.

While the town doesn’t discuss personnel issues, minutes from an in camera meeting show the fire executive committee sent a request to council in November asking to begin the search for a new chief.

That request, according to the minutes, was turned down and the issue sent back to the fire executive committee. It’s not clear when a new chief will be hired.

St. Clair council ponders ATV use on municipal roads

Alex Kurial
Local Journalism Initiative

Off road vehicles are on the discussion table across Lambton County as changes to the Highway Traffic Act loom.

When the calendar flips to 2021 off road vehicles are set to become legal on all municipal roads in Ontario – provided a municipality doesn’t already have a bylaw preventing this. The impending change has brought the issue up for debate in several Lambton municipalities, including St. Clair Township.

St. Clair currently has no bylaw regarding off road vehicles, which effectively means they’re prohibited. This has not prevented people from using them on roads around the township. The local ATV association was set to talk about the idea of on-road use, but then the pandemic hit.

Council planned to wait until the public could gather again to address the issue, but with the impending rule

change they’re forced to make a decision.

Staff didn’t want wide open use of the vehicles. “There would be nothing preventing a licensed operator to ride a permitted ORV to the grocery stores in downtown Corunna, or any other use an operator deems desirable,” read the report from Clerk Jeff Baranek.

Mayor Steve Arnold says it would be nice to have a uniform rule across the county. Deputy Mayor Steve Miller agreed, suggesting waiting to see what other municipalities do.

Baranek says two clerks he’s spoken to in other municipalities told him they’d be recommending a prohibition on off road vehicles when they present their reports.

The OPP has also expressed their preference for an off road vehicle ban on municipal roads.

Council decided to have Baranek gather more information on what other Lambton municipalities are going to do. CAO John Rodey cautioned against letting the decision sit too long

though. “If we don’t pass any bylaw, they’re [ORV] permitted, and they’re permitted on every road. So if you take no action, that’s what will essentially happen on Jan. 1,” says Rodey.

Miller didn’t seem concerned. “That would give us an opportunity to find out how bad it’s going to be if we don’t have a bylaw in place,” he says.

Council will revisit the issue during their final meeting of the year on Dec. 21.

Baranek made clear no decision is set in stone, and that the off road hobby group will have their chance to make their case to council no matter what action is taken.

“Regardless of what council decides, we have promised that will still be heard once we do allow the public back in the building,” Baranek says of the delayed deputation. “Whatever council decides will be revisited, and you will have the chance to amend your own bylaw at that time.”

- The Independent

COMMUNITY CORNER



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Petrolia officials were on hand to celebrate the official opening of the Black Gold Brewery on Fletcher St. Thursday. The owners Brent and Nicole Gauthier, Carolyn and Dan Laton, Robyn and Bernie Brocklehurst, and Tara and Chris Meharg were on hand along with Mayor Brad Loosley and Councillors Don Welten and Ross O’Hara,

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Santa Visit



ALEX KURIAL PHOTOS

Kids of all ages were happy to see Santa - even if he was wearing a mask. Visiting with Santa looked a bit different this year, as kids had to socially distance from Saint Nick. But Kaylynn, Garnet and Hazel Smith still managed to let the man in the suit know what they're hoping for under the tree. Others, such as the Weyers brothers were dressed for the occasion Saturday at the Farmers Market in Petrolia.



Public board has new leader

Alex Kurial and Pam Wright
Local Journalism Initiative

The Lambton Kent District School Board will have a new chair and vice-chair as it heads into 2021.

Randy Campbell of Blenheim has been elected as chair during the school district's Annual Organization Board Meeting Dec. 3.

Derek Robertson - a Chatham Trustee - is the new vice-chair. Both positions were chosen through trustee votes.

Campbell has served as a trustee for the past 14 years, and jumps to the chair position after serving as vice-chair from 2018-20. He takes over for long-time chair, Jane Bryce of the Camlachie area who has served in the capacity many times over the years she has been on the school board. Most recently she was chair of the board from 2016 to 2020.

"I appreciate the support of the board and I look forward to the transition to the chair position," he says.

"As we continue to face unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as ongoing enrollment and financial challenges, the board will remain focused on effective governance that supports student success and well-being," says Campbell.

Robertson is a relative newcomer to the board since his 2018 election. He's gained experience on the Special Education, Negotiations, and Auditing committees.

"I am looking forward to taking on a new role as vice-chair of the board," Robertson says.

"We will continue to work together to

promote transparent, accountable and responsible governance and support the sustainability of the LKDSB moving forward."

Director of Education John Howitt says Campbell and Robertson will oversee many important projects moving forward. "I congratulate Chair Randy Campbell and Vice-Chair Derek Robertson on assuming the leadership of the Board of Trustees," he says.

"As we move forward with the implementation of the Strategic Priorities 2020-21 to 2025-26, the board will continue to focus on putting students first, and work with staff, parents/guardians and community partners to promote student achievement and well-being," says Howitt.

There will no changes in trustee leadership for the St. Clair Catholic District School Board for 2021.

At the initial board meeting held virtually Dec. 1, John Van Heck was acclaimed to the post of board chair, while Mat Roop was acclaimed vice-chair.

Both men held the same positions for 2019 and 2020.

Van Heck has been a Catholic trustee since 2006 and 2021 marks Roop's third term as vice-chair.

In a statement to the press, Van Heck said that in a Catholic system, "having hope is never a stretch.

"God always promises to be with us, and He has never given us more than we can handle if we humble ourselves and lean into Him," he said.

- The Independent and The Herald

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Warwick murder trial in April

Alex Kurial
Local Journalism Initiative

The murder trial in the killing of a father of three in Warwick two years ago has been postponed to 2021.

Tina George, 36, faces a second-degree murder charge in the death of Jesse Storr, 29. Storr was found in a house on Egremont Rd. in Warwick the afternoon of Apr. 29, 2018. Despite receiving medical treatment he later died.

George was arrested the same day and granted bail in May. Her murder trail was supposed to start this summer, but has seen a series of delays.

In Sarnia Superior Court Dec. 4, Justice Russell Raikes chose Apr. 6, 2021 to begin the nine day trial.

- THE INDEPENDENT

Driver gets second chance after Petrolia Line crash

Alex Kurial
Local Journalism Initiative

A St. Clair woman is lucky to still have her license after rear-ending a car in Petrolia last winter.

Michelle Seguin, 33, appeared in Sarnia Court Dec. 2 to plead guilty to a careless driving charge. The incident occurred Feb. 9 in the afternoon when OPP were called to a two-vehicle collision on Petrolia Line near Plowing Match Rd.

Police arrived just after 3:30 pm to find Seguin – driving a Subaru – had rear-ended another vehicle as each driver travelled west. There were no injuries and minor damage to each vehicle. When officers spoke to Seguin they noticed alcohol on her breath. She repeatedly denied consuming any alcohol, but after her story began to unravel she admitted having a drink.

Despite her admission, and unsteady walk during the exchange with police, Seguin was charged with careless driving rather than the more serious impaired driving.

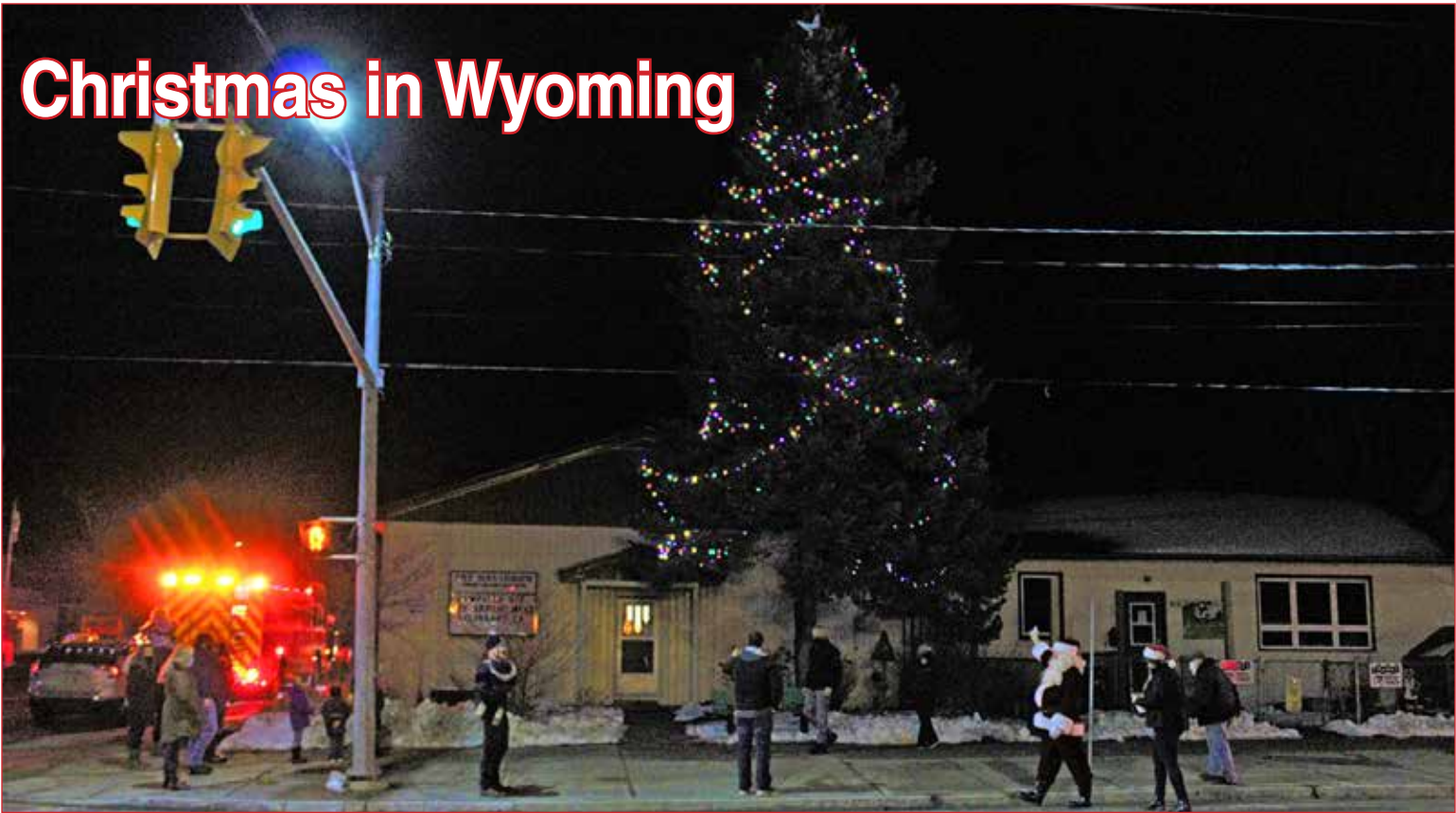
The distinction means Seguin gets to keep her license, although with heavy restrictions. For the next year she can only drive to get to and from work, or with the ignition interlock system. Seguin was also fined \$2,000.

“I’m very, very sorry,” Seguin says during sentencing.

“She has deep regret for everything that’s happened. I can tell you this entire process has had a significant impact on her,” says defense lawyer Tyler MacDonald.

“She’s had tears of embarrassment... on almost every occasion that her and I have talked in-depth about this incident,” MacDonald says.

Justice Krista Leszczynski accepted the submission also noting Seguin has already paid nearly \$3,000 in restitution to fix the vehicle she hit.



ALEX KURIAL PHOTOS

Santa lit up Wyoming Friday. First, Mr. Claus was led by firefighters and Mayor Lonny Napper around town to greet residents instead of having the usual walk from the town Christmas tree to the fire hall. He then stopped at the library to light the tree - an event shown live on social media. Children in the town also had a chance to talk to Santa via Zoom.

– ADVERTORIAL –



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For more information about Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital of Bluewater Health visit www.bluewaterhealth.ca

The holiday season is a time for thanks, and we at Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital (CEEH) of Bluewater Health want to thank the people of Petrolia for supporting us – through the COVID-19 pandemic and every day!

On behalf of the team at CEEH, Medical Director Dr. Charles Winegard says, “I wish all of Petrolia and the surrounding area a happy holiday! I know this will be a very different holiday for many. Please keep you and your loved ones safe by celebrating within your household bubble, and wearing a mask and social distancing with those outside your bubble. Together, we can continue to keep our local COVID-19 case count low. From all of us at CEEH, we wish everyone a New Year that is happy, healthy, and full of hope.”

The holiday season brings increased activity to CEEH. The busyness over the holidays is in part due to the flu season that grips the community along with limited holiday hours at community healthcare partners like doctors’ offices and walk-in clinics.

HOLIDAY HEALTHCARE PREPARATION:

1. Make sure to refill your medication prescriptions before the holidays. If you run out during the holidays, contact your family doctor in Petrolia to see if they can refill your prescription.
2. Get a flu shot to protect yourself and those around you. Flu shots are available through participating pharmacies (Hogan’s Pharmacy in Petrolia), Lambton Public Health, or your primary care provider.
3. Research alternative healthcare community resources by visiting www.erieclairhealthline.ca.
4. Reach out to agencies/organizations you regularly associate with (Canadian Mental Health Association, Alzheimer’s Society, etc.) to see what services are available.
5. Telehealth Ontario is a free, confidential service that provides health advice or information. A Registered Nurse will take your call 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-866-797-0000

Please know that despite the recent increase in COVID-19 cases in our community, CEEH remains safe for patients seeking care. The hospital takes precautions to ensure a safe environment, including patient screening, increased cleaning, personal protective equipment (PPE), and limited visitors within the hospital. We understand these visiting protocols are hard for families especially during the holiday season, however, with your help, we have had very few COVID-positive cases come through our doors since the beginning of the pandemic. Thank you to all our patients and families for your continued patience and cooperation.

The holiday season is also the time to spread the spirit of giving and help those in need. Please consider supporting the Petrolia Food Bank if you’re able.



ALEX KURIAL/LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE PHOTOS

Santa got a warm welcome Saturday morning as members of the fire department led the Jolly Ole Soul around Petrolia. The Travis family lets everybody know they're on #TeamSanta for the 2020 season (top), and children would meet Santa at every corner of the community including the children below on Catherine Street whose dad was making Santa a social media star.



Sports

Armstrong remember for integrity refereeing in NHL

Barry Wright
The Independent

A member of the National Hockey League Hall of Fame, born in the then Plympton Township has lost his battle with Parkinson’s disease and dementia.

Neil Armstrong passed away last Sunday at Marshall Gowland Manor in Sarnia at the age of 87.

The father of St. Louis Blues general manager Doug Armstrong worked as a linesman in the NHL from 1957 to 1978 working a record 1,744 regular season games along with more than 200 playoff games.

“Throughout his 21 year career as an NHL linesman, Neil Armstrong’s numbers spoke for themselves,” NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said in a statement.

“As one of only eight linesmen working in the league during the first half of his career, he totaled almost 2,000 regular-season and Stanley Cup Playoff games and a remarkable 18 consecutive years in the Stanley Cup Final from 1960 through 1977.

“When one reflects on Neil’s incredible impact on the game and the attributes that earned him induction into the Hockey Hall of Fame, it was the universal respect that general managers, coaches, players and his peers had for him that stood out the most.

“He brought integrity, passion and dedication to our game and his influence inspired new generations of officials long after he worked his last game in 1978.”

After retiring his striped jersey, Armstrong became a scout for the Montreal Canadiens and was a golf pro at both Sarnia Golf and Curling Club and Huron Oaks.

He was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1991.

Doug Armstrong brought the Stanley Cup to visit his dad at MGM in July 2019 after the Blues’ seven-game



Neil Armstrong with his son, Doug, and the Stanley Cup. The Plympton born referee worked as a linesman working 1,744 regular season games and over 200 playoff games.

victory against the Boston Bruins in the Stanley Cup Final.

“Being able to share the Stanley Cup with him, to share the ring with him, we did it 20 years ago and to be able to share some of the experiences I’ve been through the past two decades with him, well, that’s pretty special,” Doug Armstrong said during an October 2019 appearance at the Hall of Fame to present a championship ring.

“He gets a big smile out of it and those are few and far between for him. So it’s been great.”

It was the second time the younger Armstrong shared an NHL championship with his father. Doug Armstrong was assistant GM with the Dallas Stars when they won the Cup in 1999.

“Each of those occasions, they’ve been very meaningful to myself,” he said. “When you have children yourself and they grow, you understand all the sacrifices your parents make for you. I respect that more obviously going through what I did with my own kids now.”

In the early portion of the 1973-74 NHL season, Neil Armstrong was honored at Olympia Stadium in Detroit for officiating in his 1,314th NHL game, breaking the record previously held by George Hayes, the father of namesake and long-time Sarnia radio personality George Hayes.

Fryfogle registers hat trick for Eagles

Bayly Fryfogle recorded his first career junior hockey hat trick to lead the Northern Colorado Eagles to a 9-0 romp over the Wisconsin-based Dells Ducks Monday in United States Premier Hockey League action.

The 19 year-old blue liner scored twice within 34 seconds of each other early in the first period and then added a second period tally in the one-sided affair.

He had two assists in a 10-0 romp against the same team on Sunday.

His younger brother Brayden also had an assist in the opening contest. Bayly

Fryfogle is now second in team scoring with four goals and 12 assists in 21 games this season. He is tied for 15th place in scoring among rearguards in the league. Northern Colorado is second in the league’s Mountain Division with a record of 15-5-1. The Petrolia Oiler minor hockey had two goals and 17 assists in 51 regular season and playoff games last season with the Strathroy Rockets of the GOJHL. The previous season he played for Dresden of the PJHL.

The Eagles are coached by Sarnia’s Steve Haddon who played a handful of games with the Petrolia Squires 15 years ago.

Flyers ready for first ‘games’ of 2020

The Petrolia Flyers travel to Sarnia Thursday for a two-game scrimmage with the Sarnia Legionnaires at the Brock St. Barn.

Games are scheduled for 7:30 and 8:30 pm but due to COVID-19 restrictions, fans are not allowed into the games.

Sarnia plans on streaming the games live

on the Legionnaire Facebook page.

The franchises are scheduled to play again next Tuesday at the Greenwood Recreation Centre, again without fans. Flyers GM Dennis Meston says Petrolia does not plan on streaming its games.





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7								
		6		2	3			
	8							3
	6			1	2			
1	4	2		7				

Here's How It Works: Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Level: Intermediate

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Card of Thanks

**ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION
BRANCH 216 PETROLIA**

On behalf of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 216 Petrolia, we would like to thank the residence, service clubs and merchants of Petrolia for their generous donations to the Legion 2020 Poppy Campaign.

Unlike other years, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we had to significantly modify the Remembrance events, but this community remained strong and supported our veterans by financially supporting the Poppy campaign, wearing their poppy proudly and purchasing the take-out lunches and dinners.

Remembering those who lost their life and those whose life was forever changed in the face of war is the backbone of the Legions mandate. Thank you for the displays and act of remembrance that so honoured our fallen.

We also want to recognize and thank the volunteers that helped distribute and pick up the poppy boxes, the Antique Army Truck Corps, our piper Stu Sharpe and bugler Josh Gibson, Deacon Rudy Terpstra, the Town of Petrolia employees for the care they took in preparing the Cenotaph for our ceremony and Heather Wright and The Independent of Petrolia & Central Lambton for volunteering to broadcast the Remembrance Day Service over Facebook as well as the business that covered the costs of our advertising. You are all greatly appreciated!

Joseph Card
Poppy Chair
RCL Branch 216 Petrolia

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WANTED TO BUY - **ANYTHING OLD** including signs, bottles, canning jars, jewelery, tins, paper items, pottery, old lighters, old razors, rustic pieces, etc. Single items to entire estates. **CALL CHAD 519-639-9102.**

Coming Event


**ST. PHILIP'S CATHOLIC CHURCH**
Christmas Mass
Limited Spots
December 24, 2020 | Christmas Eve Mass | 4pm & 6pm
December 25, 2020 | Christmas Mass | 9am
Due to Covid restrictions please reserve your seat by calling 519-882-2057 ext. 20. Leave a message with your name, number of attendees, which service you are planning on attending & a phone number you can be reached at.
St. Philip's Catholic Church | 415 King Street | Petrolia

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December 13th
Happy 42nd Anniversay too!
With Love Ruth Ann



In Memory

In Memory of
SHARRON Plaine
JUNE 9, 1947
DECEMBER 4, 2004



*We lost you 16 years ago,
You are gone but never forgotten.
We still speak your name with love and pride.
We still smile with tears we cannot hide.
We thank you for the memories and the years we shared.
The love you gave and the way you cared.
Deep in our hearts you will live and always stay.
Loved and remembered everyday.*

Until we meet again
Loved Always Ace & Family

Card of Thanks

THANK YOU

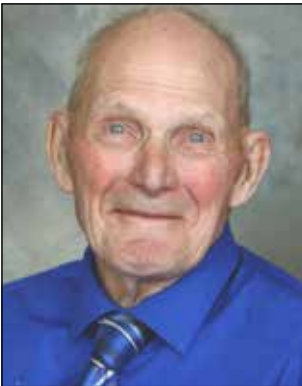
Thank you Heidi's Independent Groceries and staff. A very big thank you for all the help you have given me throughout this pandemic. All I have to do is call you on Monday and my groceries come to my door on Tuesday. This kindness is very much appreciated. Merry Christmas to you all and a very Happy New Year.

Lois Dennis

Obituary

CLARK
Harold Vinten

On **November 30th, 2020** Harold Vinten Clark passed peacefully into the arms of his loving Savior and Lord with his wife by his side. Harold was born October 18th, 1934 in Ravenswood, Ontario. He was a kind and thoughtful man who loved to help others and could often be seen flagging down the garbage truck with some fresh baking and cold water for the workers to thank them for the service. He respected people and loved to tell tales of his many life experiences. He is predeceased by his parents Stanley and Pearl Clark, his first wives Muriel (Pat) and Violet, brothers Freddie and John, and his sisters and their spouses Isabelle (John), Inez (Aubrey) and Irene (Walter). Harold will be deeply missed by his loving wife Juanita, Daughter Cheryl (Ken) Johnson, Son James Clark, Stepdaughter Sheryl (Bob) Guest, Grandchildren Amy (Stefan) Gyger, Lee Johnson, Great Granddaughter Kylie May Johnson and Sister-in-law Muriel. The family would like to thank



the Victorian Order of Nurses Meadowview Adult Enrichment Centre and Fiddicks Long Term Care Home for their exemplary compassion and care of Harold in the last few years. You created wonderful experiences for him. **Visitation occurred at People's Church in Wyoming on Saturday, December 5th at 1:00pm followed by a Memorial service at 2:00.** Donations to the Victorian Order of Nurses greatly appreciated. Arrangements entrusted to Life Transitions Burial and Cremation Service Inc.

Obituary

KOK
Eli

On **Dec. 3, 2020**, Eli Kok left the troubles of this world behind and ran into his Saviour's arms in eternal glory. Eli was born Nov. 19, 1935 in Holland, the fourth son for Gezinus and Hinke - the middle child of seven. He lived in Surhuisterveen through the Second World War until his family came to Canada in 1951. The Kok's landed in Zurich to work in the sugar beet fields but soon made their way to Lobo where Gezinus would start a garage. His sons, Eli, Ron, and John would all be part of George's Auto through its many decades of service to the community as would Eli's sons, John and Jerry. Eli was active in his churches, serving on church councils as elder. He was also a strong advocate of Christian Education and served on the board of the then John Calvin Christian School. He was part of a group which conceived the idea of a non-profit retirement home and brought to fruition Trillium Villa in Strathroy. Eli was a 25 year member of the Coldstream Fire Department and proudly served with his neighbours who became friends. Eli and his wife, Annie, were blessed to live in the beautiful community of Coldstream next to the two best neighbours anyone could imagine - George and Betty Parkin. The couples remained life long friends. Eli and Annie were also blessed with four children, Debbra (Eric), Jerry (Freda), Heather (Barry) and John. Many hours were spent together playing outside, tobogganing, jumping in the leaves, spending time at Stokes Bay or having a game of soccer with the neighbours on a Sunday afternoon. There was more joy as the grandchildren arrived; Michael and Nicole first,



then Jerry's children, Colin and Cassie and finally Emily, Lauren and John. Eli celebrated Nikki's marriage to Kevin and Mike's to Amanda. He saw pictures of his first great grandson, Hudson, but was never able to meet him in person. Eli was diagnosed with vascular dementia and over the years, the cruel disease robbed him of his memory and the ability to hold conversation. But even then, he gave the best hugs. The last 10 months were very difficult. Eli moved into long term care just three days before the provincial government locked nursing homes down to keep COVID-19 from harming those living inside. Unfortunately, it also kept out the people Eli most needed, his family. We thank God his family were able to be with him at the end of his life while he was in palliative care for a day. We were able to comfort him and let him know he was well loved. And We were blessed to see him hear words of comfort from Pastor Harry Zekveld telling him Jesus was waiting to welcome him to heaven as soon as he passed. With that, husband, Dad, Opa and Great Opa ran to his Saviour. All praise to our Saviour Jesus Christ for this God-fearing man who loved us and who was deeply loved.

HELP WANTED

Help Needed - Senior no longer able to remove snow at the end of the laneway placed by town plows. Can you help? **Please call 519-882-4422** will return call ASAP.

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SNOWTIRES - 4 snowtires, no rims. Used for only part of one winter. General Tire Altimax Artic 215/65R16. \$330. **519-882-3887**

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Stop in at the office 9a-5p Mon-Fri
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Death Notices

November 30 - December 6, 2020

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30 RUMBOLD, Kenneth Age 76, of St.Clair Twp. Steadman Funeral Chapels WRIGHT, Murray Age 90, of Sarnia Smith Funeral Home	BURCH, Phyllis Age 85, of Sarnia Smith Funeral Home CANTON, Ted Age 92, of Wyoming Needham-Jay Funeral Home
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1 ZAAL, Joseph Age 81, of Sarnia Smith Funeral Home BOCCANFUSO, Vincenzo Age 94, of Sarnia McKenzie & Blundy Funeral Home	FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4 DECIANTIS, Peter Age 74, of Sarnia Smith Funeral Home ROBERTSON, Geraldine Age 85, of Sarnia Smith Funeral Home DILLING, Clarence Age 93, of Sarnia Smith Funeral Home BROWN, Jean Age 96, of Sarnia Smith Funeral Home
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2 WHITE, Pauline Age 78, of Sarnia Gilpin Funeral Home BROSSARD, Jean "John" Age 92, of Sarnia McKenzie & Blundy Funeral Home COX, Mary "Winnie" Age 98, of Sarnia McCormack Funeral Home	SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5 JENKEN, Jane Age 60, of Sarnia McKenzie & Blundy Funeral Home
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3 PRIMEAU, Alfred Age 83, of Sarnia Smith Funeral Home	

This information is provided as a community service.
For detailed information, please refer to the funeral home website listing.

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9	8	7	4	5	6	1	2	3
5	6	3	8	1	2	4	7	9
1	4	2	3	7	9	5	8	6

Calendar of events

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
Dec 10	6-8p	Petrolia	Petrolia Lions Meat Raffle at Haywood's Tap & Grill	
Dec 11	6pm	Oil Springs	Lighting of the Christmas Tree with Santa at 4589 Oil Springs Line. Let us keep the Christmas Spirit alive while keeping social distancing in mind.	
Dec 12	3:30pm	Forest	Forest Legion Meat Raffle & 50/50 Draw	
Dec 12	4-6:30p	Petrolia	Petrolia Legion Ladies Auxiliary Ham & Scalloped Potato Dinner. \$20 a meal. Call in advance to order a meal and set pickup time.	
Dec 12	6-7pm	Alvinston	Alvinston Optimist Santa Clause Parade & Tour. Stop by the Alvinston Arena to meet Santa and get your map for a tour of the drive through parade.	
Dec 16	8-10pm	Petrolia	Join Michael Vanhevel for Trivia Night at Kingswell Clubhouse (4300 Garden Cres). Max Team size of 6.	
Dec 17	6-8p	Petrolia	Petrolia Lions Meat Raffle at Haywood's Tap & Grill	
Dec 19	3:30p	Forest	Forest Legion Meat Raffle & 50/50 Draw	

To have your event included in the above Calendar of Events the following information is required:

Date: _____
Time: _____
Town: _____
Event Title: _____
Phone # / website: _____

You can drop this off at our office or email the information to us at office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca

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email us at: news@petrolialambtonindependent.ca

Church DIRECTORY

Christ Church Anglican

414 Oil Street, Petrolia

Sunday Service at 11am

Please follow all Covid-19 guidelines and wear your mask.

Rev. Michelle Collins-Wongkee
Church Office 519-882-1430
christchurchpetrolia@gmail.com

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

416 Queen Street, Petrolia
(Behind the Post Office)

In this time of Social distancing we invite you to join a virtual congregation and watch the Sunday morning worship at St. Andrew's.
10am Service - Live

www.standrews-petrolia.ca

St. Paul's United Church

4169 Petrolia Line at Centre Street

St. Paul's United Church is now open to the public for Sunday Services. New protocols will be in place for everyone's safety.

10:30am Service
Rev. Carey Wagner
Church Office: 519-882-1390
stpaulsunitedpetrolia.net

First Baptist Church

418 Greenfield Street, Petrolia

SERVICE SUSPENDED until further notice
in compliance with Ontario Corona Virus meeting guidelines

Pastor: Alex Craig
Church Office 519-882-2480
email: fbcpetrolia@gmail.com
www.firstbaptistpetrolia.ca

Find us on Facebook!
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Wyoming United Church

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Michigan driver to be deported

Alex Kurial
Local Journalism Initiative

A Michigan man who led Ontario police on a search across three cities will be deported.

Justin Lamarte will be sent to the United States but not until he serves 90 days jail for a series of vehicle crimes earlier this year.

The 23 year-old led police on a search of three cities in 24 hours in October after he crossed the Ambassador Bridge and blew through the Canada border checkpoint. Lamarte disappeared on the 401 in a dark grey Ford sedan.

He made the unorthodox entry into Canada Oct. 19, and during the next day spent time in Toronto and London. At 11 pm Oct. 20 the vehicle was spotted in Sarnia at Northgate Mall. Despite the darkness the car had no lights on, and also no license plate.

The sedan – driven by Lamarte – sped down Exmouth St. and refused to stop for police. When Lamarte reached Murphy Road he made a U-turn and began speeding the opposite way. Police called off the chase for public safety. But the pursuit was just getting started.

A half an hour later, Lamarte was spotted at the Colborne and Rosedale Ave. intersection. He sped away down Michigan Ave., and again the chase was called off.

An hour later police found the sedan at Amsterdam Court. This time Lamarte accelerated full speed toward police, barely missing a marked car and once more forcing officers to abandon the chase.

The 100 minute pursuit finally came to an end at 12:40 am Oct. 21 when Lamarte was found at the Petro Can gas station on Indian Road. Noticing

police, he took off south going through several stop signs and turning east on London Rd.

This time Lamarte lost control of the car, striking a curb before smashing into a hydro pole.

After Lamarte was arrested, a search of the car showed it was stolen. The Ford was destroyed.

“I take full responsibility for my actions. I’m sorry for what I’ve done and sorry for wasting your time,” Lamarte says to Sarnia Court during his Dec. 2 sentencing.

Defense lawyer Robert McFadden says his client struggles with bipolar disorder, and has been in and out of mental health centers in Michigan. McFadden hopes his client will receive better help when he returns home.

The three offenses – dangerous driving, evading an officer, and possessing stolen property – were Lamarte’s first crimes in Canada, although he does have a criminal record in Michigan.

Justice Krista Leszczynski agreed to a joint submission of three months jail. Lamarte has 25 days left after pre-sentence custody.

He is also banned from driving in Canada for three years.

Leszczynski says Lamarte’s conduct was “very dangerous and caused significant risk to this community and the public...”

“I also consider as aggravating the fact that your vehicle almost collided head-on... with a police officer engaged in the execution of their duty,” she says.

When he finishes his time in Sarnia Jail, Lamarte will be escorted back to the United States and handed over to Homeland Security. From there he’ll be taken to Kent County in Michigan to face outstanding warrants.

the drive to Petrolia OPP he informed officers he would fail the breath test since he was “way over the limit.” Wolfe’s prediction was correct, as he blew a .237 blood alcohol rate – nearly triple the legal limit.

Crown attorney Suzanne LaSha asked for a \$2,500 fine and one year driving ban. She cited the high readings and many people in the area, but also noted Wolfe’s lack of a criminal record.

But Wolfe did not agree with all the facts of the case. Representing himself, he says “I did not drive over my lawn. I did not drive erratically.” Wolfe also says he took pedestrian safety into account, and claimed there weren’t that many people around anyway.

Justice Deborah Austin says this viewpoint is formed by the massive amount of alcohol in his system that night. “When you have more than double the legal limit of alcohol in your system, what you think you’re doing safely isn’t safe.”

Wolfe did admit he has an alcohol problem, and says he is seeking treatment so he can be a better role model for his family members. Austin was pleased with his awareness.

Austin reduced Wolfe’s fine to \$1,800 and put him on probation until he completes addiction treatment.

“Thankfully, nothing bad happened,” she said. “Hopefully we’ll never see you in this kind of situation again.”

Labour Day drinking leads to suspension

Alex Kurial
Local Journalism Initiative

Peter Wolfe plead guilty to drunk driving after showing up to a Labour Day weekend fireworks show at nearly triple the legal alcohol limit. But his appearance in Sarnia Court Dec. 1 showed he still hasn’t fully processed the gravity of his offense.

Anishinabek Police were closing off Lake Rd. in Kettle Point Sept. 5 ahead of the fireworks when they noticed a vehicle with no license plate driving erratically along the road before cutting across the front lawn of a house.

The driver got out of the grey Buick sedan holding a bottle of whiskey.

The road was full of people who came to see the fireworks, and most lights had been turned off for better visibility during the show.

Police stayed to monitor the vehicle and make sure it didn’t return to the road. During the show the car had several men inside yelling, playing loud music and revving the car engine, which continued after the fireworks ended.

The Buick soon returned to the road and police pursued and pulled it over Wolfe was found driving the car with a male passenger. There was a strong smell of alcohol. Wolfe said he had “a few shots” when asked if he had been drinking, and was arrested. On

This holiday season needs to be different.

The safest way to celebrate indoors is only with the people who live in your home. People who live alone can get together only with one other home.

Gatherings with friends and extended family can carry an increased risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. Consider celebrating outdoors or virtually with others that are not part of your household.

Know the gathering limits in your area before you choose to entertain with family and friends indoors. Indoor gatherings are not permitted in regions in Grey-Lockdown.

For all gatherings with anyone you do not live with:

- maintain 2 metres physical distance
- wear a face covering
- avoid potlucks or shared utensils
- ensure everyone washes hands regularly, including before and after meals

Self-isolate if you are sick, even if your symptoms are mild and ask guests to stay home if they feel unwell.

Follow provincial and local public health advice to keep you and your loved ones safe this holiday.

Stopping the spread, starts with you.

Visit ontario.ca/celebratesafely to learn more.

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