



New restrictions coming to combat Omicron variant

Heather Wright
The Independent

It's like deja vu all over again as provincial public health officials say more restrictions are likely to combat the new highly transmissible version of COVID-19 called Omicron.

The world learned of the variant just two weeks ago. Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Kerian Moore, said Tuesday it is likely to become the dominant strain of COVID-19 by the end of this week.

While there are reports from South Africa that the variant doesn't cause as many people to get severely sick, Moore says the sheer number of people infected by Omicron could mean more people in hospitals and intensive care units than ever before. Ontario's COVID-19 Science Table predicted there could be 10,000 cases of Omicron a day by Dec. 31.

Tuesday, the province clamped down on visitors to long term care homes and retirement homes saying everyone will have to be double vaccinated to enter, although medical exemp-

tions will still be allowed.

Moore said the Ford government's cabinet would be meeting in the next few days to look at further restrictions, although he did not give specifics.

Moore says vaccination clinics are quickly ramping up with 95,000 doses being given Monday, to help combat severe illness from the new variant.

Booster shots are now available to people over 50, although when registration opened Monday, *The Independent* found only a handful of open appointments just an hour and a half after booking started.

"But we know getting the vaccine alone isn't enough," he told reporters adding people should continue to wash their hands, wear a proper fitting mask, keep their distance from others and "reducing the number of contacts you have."

It's widely speculated the province will reduce the number of people who can gather indoors in a private setting to 10 as Chatham-Kent and London-Middlesex have done to fight the variant.

SEE OMICRON PG 3

FIREY FUN IN ALVINSTON



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

This fire performer was only one of the things which made the Alvinston Optimists Christmas Celebration exciting. The reverse parade included over 50 exhibits and eight bands. Cars lined up on River Street almost to Courtright Line at one point to see the spectacle. For more photos see page 6.

Petrolia fire chief's job changes after he went to OPP with concerns about Souch

Heather Wright
The Independent

Petrolia Mayor Brad Loosley says the fire chief's job description is changing after he went to OPP saying Councillor Marty Souch may be watching employees of the town.

Monday, council passed a bylaw, without any comment, which changed the job description of Chief Jay Arns from Chief of the Petrolia and North Enniskillen Fire Department and Director of Protective Services to the Director of Public Services.

The bylaw didn't layout what the

chief's new position entails but Loosley tells *The Independent* the change comes in the wake of the investigation by John Fleming into the incident which saw police tail Souch after a staff member went to police concerned a councillor was watching staff at work.

The investigator found no

evidence of the claim and said the staff had gone above the chief administrative officer's head when it went to the OPP.

Loosley says the bylaw clarifies Arns position. "There's a difference on his responsibilities now basically to be related to fire and crossing guards and parking tick-

ets, that type of thing. And that's where he will stop. So it won't be all the other things that ...what he was involved with - you know, that part of the idea of somebody following somebody and him getting involved with that," he says.

SEE FIRE CHIEF PG 2

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No tax increase in Petrolia after province gives extra cash

Heather Wright
The Independent

Petrolia homeowners won’t see their municipal taxes go up this year after all.

Councillor Wade Deighton called for a budget without a tax increase when council first looked at the \$7.4 million document. But council turned down the move, voicing concern services would be cut if council didn’t increase taxes by two percent or about \$120,000 in 2022.

That’s despite the fact the CAO/Treasurer, Rick Charlebois, told councillors there would be no need to slash services and that any reduction in the budget would simply mean less money would go into the working capital reserve.

It was established in 2014 and now contains \$4 million. The 2022 draft budget planned to deposit another \$1.5 million into the reserve - That’s about 20 per cent of the total budget.

Council gave preliminary approval to that budget with a two per cent tax increase. That’s about \$24 more for every \$100,000 of the assessed value of their homes.

But when it came time for council to finally approve the 2022 budget Monday, Charlebois had found a way to hold the line on taxes as Deighton had originally suggested.

Charlebois told council the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund grant was expected to come in around \$250,000. Instead the province turned over about \$852,000 for capital projects to the town.

That money can be used for roads, bridges, and water and sewer projects.

The draft budget planned to put aside \$1.2 million to help pay for a new water intake at the Petrolia Water Treatment Plant.

It’s a \$16 million project. The town is looking for a grant to complete the work. If it is approved, the town would still be responsible for \$4 million.

“After quickly analysing our draft 2022 budget given the unexpected increase to our OCIF grant for 2022, I recommended zero per cent municipal tax rate increase to council,” said Charlebois in an email, acknowledging council had not asked for the CAO/ Treasurer to make the move.

So Charlebois factored in the extra cash. He was now able to set aside \$1.75 million for the replacement of the water intake instead of \$1.4 million and spend another \$120,000 on other capital projects, eliminating the tax increase.

And Charlebois says the town will also be able to put \$1.4 million in that \$4 million working capital reserve.

He also told *The Independent* it is likely the town will have a surplus at the end of 2021 of between \$100,000 and \$200,000

which will also make its way to the ever growing reserve.

Mayor Brad Loosely was pleased with the revised budget noting a lot of capital projects will be completed because of the plan. “But the bottom line \$2.8 million is being spent on capital work (including with the water and sewage plants) in the town of Petrolia, which is great news.”

But not everyone was happy with holding the line on taxes. Councillor Don Welten wanted some kind of tax increase. “I know we got government grants and all that stuff. And I’m not saying two per cent (is needed). But I think we should at least do something in there instead of zero per cent. Looking towards the future, we’ve got a lot of money we have to spend down the road,” he told council Monday.

Councillor Joel Field also voiced concern. “I don’t like to see the zero (budget increase). And that can be taken wrong - I’ll likely be quoted wrong. But, I also see the projects that we need to do in the next couple of years. And, and I understand where the 2% initially was going to go ... we have the intake, we have a lot of infrastructure projects that I just really hope when they do come up, we have enough in those reserves.”

By the end of 2020 - the latest numbers available, the town had a total of \$7,992,400 in reserves for various projects.

Also in the budget; there is also about \$914,000 set aside to improve parts of Pearl, England, Glenview, Mutual, Kentail, Third and Valentina in 2022. The town uses two grants to offset those costs, reducing the net cost to local taxpayers to \$135,000.

The Public Works department has also set aside \$100,000 for sidewalk repair and replacement. There is also \$40,000 in the budget which had already been approved by council for a consultant to give a blueprint of which sidewalks should be replaced first and where new sidewalks should be built.

Another \$75,000 has been set aside in the budget labeled as a donation to the Parents for Parks group. It’s proposing a \$300,000 plus accessible playground in Greenwood Park. The group has raised close to \$200,000 according to Loosely and asked if the town would consider a grant.

There is also \$10,000 in the budget to help prepare the site for the new playground.

The town will be getting a splash pad. The new Petrolia Kiwanis Club offered to finance the project and the town has included it in this years budget.

The 2022 budget also includes \$50,000 for a new entrance sign on the south side of town on Oil Heritage Road. Administrators say they will continue to use the steel oil rig at the location but get rid of the dated sign.

After Fleming’s investigation, CAO Rick Charlebois, in a news release, said the actions recommended by Fleming after the two week investigation into the staff/ councillor relations problem would move forward. But the exact actions were not released, nor were the names of the staff members involved in the conflict with Souch.

Souch also hasn’t been officially named in the report, however *The Independent* spoke with the councillor about the OPP investigation a month before he approached the mayor about his concerns with staff going to the police.

Fire chief’s job changes after Fleming report

CON’T FROM PG 1

Under the Protective Services in the 2021 budget, Arns was also responsible for budgeting for policing, all bylaw enforcement and the health and safety committee.

The Independent asked the mayor if the fire chief “felt empowered” to take action in the incident because his directorship included protective services. “That’s my understanding, yes,” says Loosley.

“It was as recommended by Fleming to do that. So he was just empowered under certain areas and not everything,” says Loosley of the change.



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Brooke-Alvinston to ask neighbours for arena fees

Heather Wright
The Independent

Brooke-Alvinston will be asking some of its neighbouring municipalities to help pay for the operation and upkeep of the local arena. The idea is not a new one. Administrator Janet Denkers, in a report to council, says the practice is fairly common in the region. “Agreements are common in other municipalities that have an arena and are used by residents in municipalities without an arena. For example, Chatham-Kent has an agreement with Dawn-Euphemia for residents that access the Bothwell and Dresden arenas. Petrolia has an agreement with their surrounding area municipalities and charge a specified fee per registered

user from an outside municipality that does not have an arena. “The costs billed to these municipalities go towards the operation of the facility and therefore the operating costs are not borne entirely by the residents that have the facility in their municipality,” she writes in her report. “While the arena resides in Brooke-Alvinston, in reality it serves a larger catchment area. Patrons from this area use the arena for figure skating, hockey, public skating and other recreational uses. The high usage from some areas is due to decreased enrollment in hockey and players left to search other arenas (such as Brooke-Alvinston) to play,” Denkers says. Denkers found there are about 26 non-residents who are part of the local

skating club and another 33 who play hockey at the Alvinston rink. Mayor Dave Ferguson championed the idea. He says it became clear to him the municipality should ask for help after talking to a neighbouring mayor. “They don’t pay to any area for any ball that well, I’m not sure mobile games, but there is no arena. So when their kids come here to play, and we’re operating at a deficit, we’re funding their kids,” Ferguson told council. The mayor estimates tax dollars provide about \$13 per person for the use of the arena and he believes the municipality should be asking for help. “I think ... the reason nobody thinks of paying is (they’ve) never been asked,” he said. Council agreed to approach local municipalities.

Omicron may lead to more provincial restrictions

CON’T FROM PG 1

While Lambton County is seeing more cases of COVID-19, it is not in the same situation as London and Chatham-Kent, so Dr. Sudit Ranade does not see the need to order new restrictions at this time. “What we’re seeing is the virus is largely circulating in unvaccinated groups of people, and largely circulating due to social intentional contact with others,” he told reporters Dec. 8. “The key to changing the driver of transmission is in a largely unregulated and largely unregulate-able setting. And that is going to be one of the key challenges that we have moving forward, especially into the holiday season.” In the absence of any provincial restrictions, Ranade is urging people to be smart while planning holiday gatherings. “Small is better, ...that’s an important point. The other important point is you need to create an environment where everybody can talk

about what makes them comfortable, and what makes them uncomfortable. You need to create a space for people to easily bow out of those events, if they’re not feeling well, if they’re like, I woke up with a headache today. And I don’t want to disappoint anyone but I don’t think I should go. Great, no problem; we want you to stay away if you’re not feeling well in any way.” And Ranade says for the most part, people gathering together should be fully vaccinated. The MOH is also warning holiday travelling could be dicey again this year. “Anyone who might be travelling across the border, even for short trips, check what the rules are right before you go and expect that the rules might change while you’re gone.” But will Lambton residents have to watch for the pandemic rules to change here? “It’s a bit of a judgment call,” says Ranade.

“And it’s also getting to the point where the interventions that we have are actually harder, because they require a lot of cooperation for people that we had early on in the pandemic. And then I know that people are just exhausted, so their ability to sort of keep shifting and keep changing according to different rules is being tested. That’s going to be one of the considerations. “So it’s going to be about (the number of) cases, it’s going to be about what’s happening in the hospital system, it’s going to be about what do we think is people’s ability to kind of cooperate and collaborate on these additional restrictions,” he says. In Lambton as of Tuesday, there were 82 people ill with COVID-19 and five outbreaks - all but one are in elementary schools. All the schools have less than 10 cases of COVID and only John Knox Christian School has closed because of the virus. In Ontario, there were 1,429 cases.

We hope the spirit of the season fills your days with love, light and laughter!



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Editorial

In a familiar place again

A year ago, we held our breath as the pandemic reared its ugly head as we all headed indoors and celebrated a pared down Christmas.

We seem to be at the same place again. And yes, it is beyond annoying at this point, but yet, here we are.

Dr. David Colby, Chatham-Kent's medical officer of health, put restrictions on gathering limits as the number of cases in the community started to rise. But even as they came into effect, he wasn't sure if they would control the spread of the virus as the variant Omicron made its appearance.

The variant has only been on our radar for about two and a half weeks and already the fast spreading bug makes up at least 50 per cent of the COVID-19 cases in the province. That's stunning.

The observations out of South Africa, where Omicron first emerged, was it spreads fast and it doesn't seem to cause as severe illness to as many people. That seems to be the good news.

But Colby points out, since Omicron spreads so easily, a lot more people will be infected. The Ontario COVID-19 Science Table projects there could be 10,000 cases of the virus daily by Dec. 31. With that many people infected, there will still be a lot of people who get severely ill. And then, we're in the same place as we were at this time last year. It's frustrating, but it is where we are.

So, masks and vaccine passports will be around for a while. Hopefully we've learned enough about keeping each other safe that more drastic measures won't be needed. It would also be nice if the provincial government stepped away from its re-election campaign for a bit to deal with this; but we will see.

For now, we ask that you treat each other kindly and give people some extra space and grace. This has been a long haul and no matter who you are, the constant hum of the pandemic weighs on everyone's mind.

We don't have to agree on what measures should be taken or whether they're overkill. We simply have to live side by side, hopefully with a sense of peace and hope that someday COVID-19 will be in the rearview mirror.

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



STEVE MCGRAIL PHOTO

Eleven years ago this week, Lambton County was digging out from Snowmageddon. Helicopters were used to pick people stranded in their cars off Highway 402. Here, an ambulance arrives at the Wyoming Fairgrounds with a patient to be flown to hospital.

Janice the Dog wormed her way into all our hearts

Janice was supposed to be Lauren's dog.

Lauren had been talking about getting a dog for years before Barry and I finally relented. It's not that we don't like dogs; both he and I had dogs when we were kids and loved them a lot. As adults, we knew how much work a pet could be; Lauren at 10 did not.

So we waited. For Christmas 2014, I bought a ceramic bowl with bones on it, a leash and a dog hair brush and wrapped it up for Christmas.

Lauren was soon was on the internet searching for the perfect dog.

In my minds eye, I thought we'd bring home a golden lab. Lauren found this small, very black dog who came from Alabama and she knew what she wanted. She had read the description of how she was trained, didn't bark unless she needed to go outside and liked people crawling up on the lap

of the woman who was caring for her frequently.

Her name was Janice, which I also thought was weird, but it was Lauren's dog, so we said sure.

Janice was small and shy, hiding under the table and chairs for the first day or two. Lauren was nervous wondering just how many times she would have to let the dog out!? Should she watch her at all times!? What if she started barking!?

It took a little while, but soon Janice became a part of the family. She was just always there, looking up for a piece of whatever it was you were eating, going tobogganing with us, taking up room on the couch.

And, as we suspected, having Janice with us was a commitment. She was healthy and required little, but we like to go away for vacation and that meant arranging a place for Janice.

I always had a little pang when I dropped her off with friends or family. While Janice was Lauren's dog, I loved her, too. Over the past year, Janice has been aging quickly but she still brightened up when I came through the door. Janice passed away today. She was about 15 years old - we're not sure because she was a rescue dog. And while she was Lauren's dog, we all shed some tears as we laid her to rest underneath the walnut tree because she wormed her way into all of our hearts.



Heather Wright

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Publisher / Editor: **Heather Wright**
news@petrolialambtonindependent.ca

Reporters: **Alex Kurial**

Sales Associates: sales@petrolialambtonindependent.ca

Classifieds / Graphics: **Connie McFadden**
office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca

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LANCER DRIVE



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

Lance The Lancer was handing out high fives as students at LCCVI participated in the annual Christmas Food Drive. The students donated five carloads of cans and boxes for the Christmas for everyone program this week.

Petrolia Legion honours 'new' veteran

Heather Wright
The Independent

When you learn the Petrolia branch of the Royal Canadian Legion recently presented a veteran with a Special Service Medal, you might picture an old man, with gray hair and a raft of medals on his chest, shuffling to the front to be recognized for a battle long fought.

But that's not what you would have seen.

The Legion honoured Alex Billings, a veteran who served in the air movement squadron at Trenton from December 2008 to October 2014.

"We're the ones in charge of loading and unloading of personnel and, for lack of better term, cargo on and off the aircraft," he says.

Billings and his crew travelled extensively in his service, to Cyprus, Alert, NWT, and Haiti. And he was on the ground when 158 members of the Forces returned home after dying in Afghanistan.

"I was there for every single one until I left," he tells *The Independent*.

The air movement squadron played a key role in the repatriation of those who died.

"We're the ones that are kind of scuttling around behind the scenes making sure that whole repatriation ceremony goes off in a respectful manner without a hitch, so that family can have their

moment.”

Today, at the Petrolia Legion he sees the faces of those who died in service to Canada in Afghanistan pictured on the wall. It's not the soldiers he remembers. "For me, when I hear the name I see their families ... that's the side of it that impacted me."

Billings has been impacted deeply by the grief of the families of service men and women. He was with the military in Haiti helping the nation after a massive earthquake destroyed the island nation killing an estimated 160,000 people.

He was diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder after “seeing more death than anyone should ever see there.”

One of those deaths was an RCMP officer. Billings and his crew helped bring his body home. While he didn't know the officer, watching his 10 year old son cry at a memorial 10 years after the officers death hit him hard.

"You know that's his dad. He didn't get to know him, because he was just a young baby at the time. If I remember correctly, his name's Xavier. That's when it hit me, when there's that personal connection that you can make."

It's bittersweet for Billings to receive the medal, knowing his friends' lives were changed forever by their service. And he admits it does feel odd to be the veteran who tells stories of his service instead of listening to the old



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Alex Billings of Petrolia receives the Special Services Medal/Expedition from the Legion President Dennis Laker for his work with the military between 2008 and 2014 recently.

guys.

But he recognizes as the older vets pass on, people will need to hear his stories, too.

“We had one lady come up to us at the Christmas parade while we were standing there getting ready to start. And she asked us, ‘Oh, are you guys here with the cadets?’”

"No, we're here with the Legion. And she's like, 'Oh, well, it's so nice to see young people like you supporting veterans.'"

"And I actually pulled my mask down and I went 'this is the face of a veteran now.'



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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!

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It wasn't the traditional Christmas parade, but no one was complaining in Alvinston. Cars lined up for as far as the eye could see - as you can see here in this drone photo by Alvinston Authentic Photography. Hundreds of cars travelled through the reverse parade route through Alvinston Saturday to see 51 entries, 31 decorated homes, eight bands, fire performers, stilt walkers, and even some clowns. Above, Santa and Mrs Claus greeted people at the Brooke-Alvinston-Inwood Community Centre. The London Firefighters Pipe Band was performed in the cold. The puppies no doubt helped the Tanner Redick Memorial Tournament snag some top honours in the awards. Marshall and Chase were a big hit with kids. Organizers haven't given an attendance number, but over 800 Christmas dinners were sold.

HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTOS



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Warmest Wishes this Christmas season

Dear Readers;

It is hard to believe another year has flown by and we are on the doorstep of Christmas again.

For many, this is a time to reflect on the birth of Christ. For others, it is a time of family and friends, time spent outdoors or at the hockey rink watching children play in SilverStick.

For many of us, this past year has been a time of struggle or loss as this pandemic continues to affect our daily lives.

It's my prayer that we will treat each other with kindness and love this Christmas season and that it will spread into 2022 which we hope will bring new joys and adventures.

Please enjoy the pages of this Christmas edition as part of your celebrations.

Heather Wright
Editor

The Gift of Hope: Christmas is kind of like a cheese platter

By Kathy Ehman

For me, Christmas is kind of like a cheese platter. I suspect more than a few of us can relate to the comparison.

Coloured lights and decorations, songs cheery, dreary or spiritual, the inviting smells of food cooking, mulled spices, evergreen boughs covered with fresh snow, are all woven into my memories and emotions of a lifetime of Christmases. I see these moments and the feelings they're soaked in like cubes of cheese laid out on a Yule platter.

A buttery smooth bite, rich with the Spice of Life would be a memory of my children, faces bright under the rainbow lights of a living tree.

Then a lump of something awful, impossible to avoid swallowing once it's in

my mouth, a taste to be endured, which could be the memory of the song "White Christmas," painfully sweet, tiny chimes in a snow globe breaking the silence in a hospital room where my father is slipping away from us.

Joy and sadness travel the same paths in this season, but still the essence of Christmas stirs my heart every year because it is a celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Jesus, the man the baby became, lobbied for unconditional love, tolerance, empathy and compassion moment by moment in our thoughts and actions. His was a bittersweet ministry, the truth-talking rebel, speaking to people who were still a couple thousand years from the modern, global societies their countries would

become.

His suggestion that we first deal with our own faults before pointing out the flaws in others remains timely, perhaps even more so today, when social media lets us hit more targets with our personal judgments and criticisms. I often need that swift boot towards honest self-evaluation.

I did some personal evaluating of my budget before making a 2021 Christmas shopping list, bought furnace oil and price-checked in grocery stores. On Nov. 3, 2020, furnace oil cost 0.668 a litre. On Nov. 5, 2021, a litre cost 1.1410.

Prices have likewise increased on just about everything in the grocery stores, some doubled or more.

Fortunately I'm crafty and the materials I'm working with

are letter-weight. Some of the people on my list will be pleased to know a donation to the local food bank will be made on their behalf in lieu of presents. I know personally how much the gifts of food mean and the importance of the message of caring those gifts deliver.

Christmas, for all of us I think, can be a bittersweet time, maybe falling a little or a lot short of our fondest memories and expectations. Those feelings, the sweet as well as the bitter, mingle and try to make peace with one another in our hearts and minds.

There's nothing sweet about the hard things we as a country are facing this Christmas: our history, the third year of a pandemic, floods, fires, international trade disputes, inflation.

Hope, though, is the purest



sweetener and it is the birth of Hope, possibly our most precious commodity, I will again celebrate with a full and grateful heart.

- Kathy Ehman is a retired journalist and the author of short stories and children's fables. Kathy was one of the first employees of The Independent and remains a good friend, even though she currently resides in Prince Edward Island

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Mayor R. Brad Loosley, Council & Staff

Photo taken in 2019, when all could sit close together without masks indoors.

All I Want for Christmas

By Kathy Ehman

“Only 11 days until Christmas, Mr Fournier.”

The old man bit back the sharp reply that wanted to push past his clenched teeth. “Ohhhhhh,” he simply said, hoping the little girl he could hardly see under layers of coat, hat, scarf and mittens would go away and let him sit on his front porch in peace.

The sun was shining and the winds were calm and from here he could watch the whole world pass by up and down the street.

Except for Shelby Coulter, who never simply walked by if she saw him so much as poke his nose out the front door.

He didn’t encourage her, thinking that if he ignored her she’d lose interest in talking to him altogether, which he thought would suit him just fine.

What did he have to talk about with a girl her age, which he guessed to be about eight years old now, since this was the fourth year she’d been getting on the school bus that stopped right between his house and her family’s home next door. Or was it only three years? The first year her mother and older brother waited at the bus stop with her. The next year it was just her and her brother, and the next year too and this year the brother had gone off to high school on another bus. That made it four years since he’d first seen her waiting at the curb, clutching her mother’s hand tightly and then trading that hand for an iron grip on her brother’s, her little legs stretching to make it up the steps to the bus.

Four years of watching her leave in the morning, loaded with lunch box and back pack, Fall, Winter and Spring.

Until this fall, both he and his wife, Edith - his Edie - had noted her morning departure and her afternoon arrivals back home. He looked at the empty chair beside him on the porch. Edie’s chair. Hard to believe she was gone.

“What do you want for Christmas, Mr Fournier?” Shelby had both boots planted in the snow at the edge of the sidewalk, her cheeks pink from the cold, pushing at the fuzzy toque that kept slipping over her eyes. She waited patiently for his answer.

“Ohhhhhh....” he said again, not able to say more.

What he would like would be to not have to face Christmas alone in the big old house that he and Edith had lived in forever, where they’d raised their sons, raised them to be independent and now they were. It would be good to hear their voices calling back and forth to each other the way they used to. It would even be okay if they fought a bit like they always did growing up.

He struggled to come up with something to say to this little girl, who was not a stranger but not family either. Just because he would be happier if Christmas was called off this year was no reason to dampen her innocent enthusiasm.

At that moment the school bus rounded the corner and pulled up out front, red lights flashing.“Gotta go to school. You can tell me later,” she spun on her little black boots and ran up the steps onto the bus. As the bus pulled away, she waved at him from her seat by a window and he lifted a hand in a small farewell gesture.

All day her question bothered him. What did he want for Christmas? What was the point of getting all starry eyed and excited when there was nobody to share it with? Of course, the boys would call him, from thousands of miles away. Maybe one day they’d make it home for the holidays but meanwhile, what was he going to do with himself?

“Oh, Edie. I sure miss you,” he spoke into the quiet of the house.

He didn’t see Shelby get off the bus later that day. He was having a quiet little nap in front of the television set with the sound turned down. Even if he couldn’t make out what was going on, it felt a bit like having company.

Just as he was going to sit down to a plain supper of soup and crackers, the doorbell rang. He grumbled a bit as he folded his napkin and pushed the chair back from the kitchen table, still muttering as he headed down the hall to the front door.

And there she was again, Shelby, smiling up at him, and as he opened the door, she pushed a gift bag towards him. He could see cookies and a Christmas tree made of green macaroni and decorated with sparkles and coloured beads for the lights.

“Mr Fournier, if you don’t have any plans, we would like you to come and have Christmas dinner with us. You don’t have to bring anything. Mom always makes way too much food but we just thought you would be missing Ms Fournier and we know it won’t be the same but maybe you would just like the company and.....Mr Fournier? Are you...?”

Crying...he knew she could see the tears building up in his eyes.

“Shelby, there is nothing I would like better than to have Christmas with your family. Thank your Mother for me and tell her I’ll bring a pumpkin pie and whipped cream. And...Shelby? Your invitation was exactly what I wanted for Christmas.”



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Christ, and the Eternal 'gifts' of LOVE
and SALVATION that He gave us.

May JESUS immeasurable 'PEACE',
which surpasses all understanding, fill
your hearts with 'JOY' and 'HOPE'.

Merry Christmas and a Safe and
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The Perfect Christmas Gift

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”
Luke 2:11

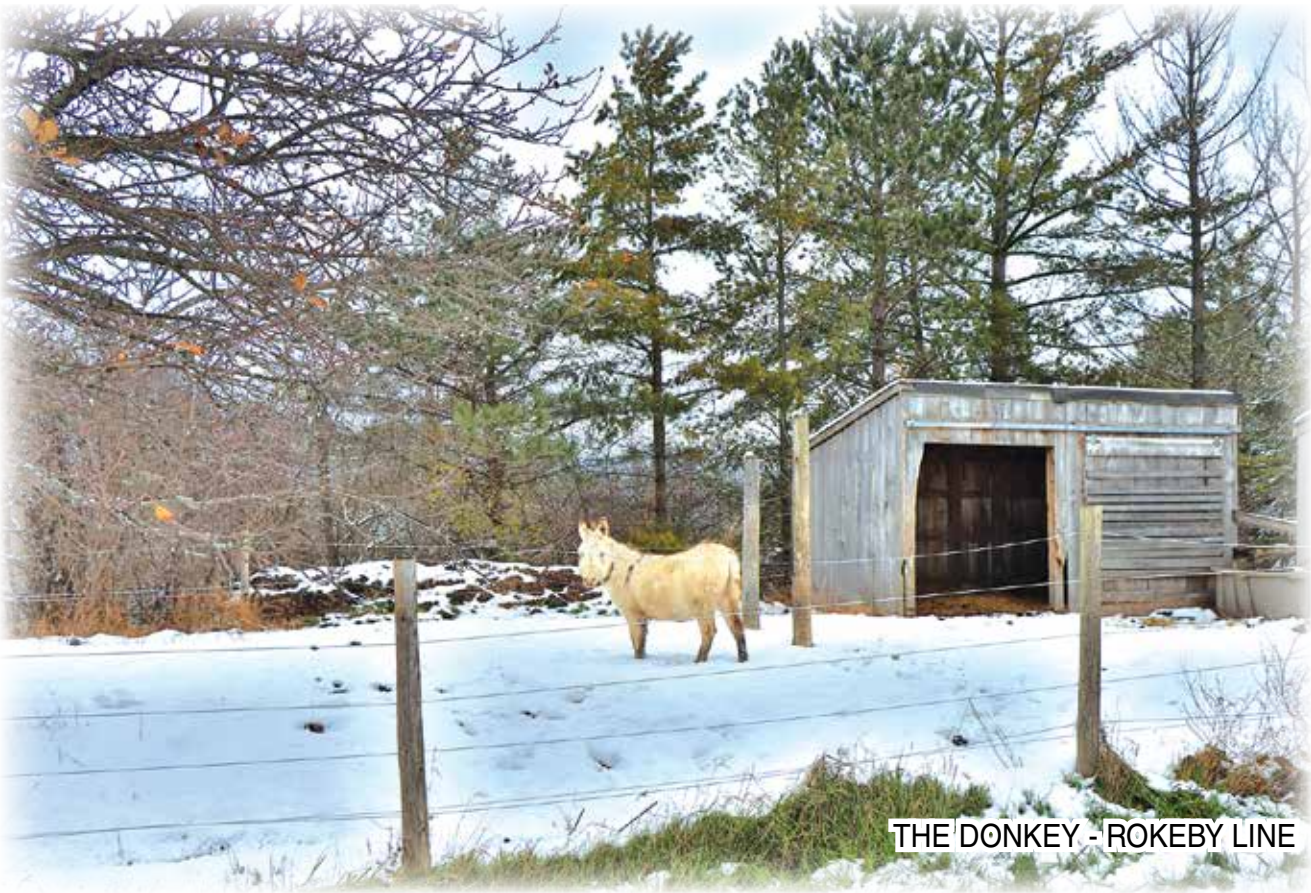
Born in a Manger, the city of David, in Bethlehem.
To redeem a lost world, came this sacrificial lamb.
The “Creator of the Universe” to a baby, He lay.
“Unleashed Power” constrained, to “deliver” the way.

To the ungodly and blasphemous, He gave Divine Love,
As the Sinless servant, He Glorified His Father above.
Amidst ruthless brutality, He was nailed to a Cross,
Forever, that trickling Blood, covers the crimson stains of the lost.

One breath separates us and Only He can see the heart,
Lives led as men pleasers, are doomed for their part.
You see, “confession” brings “forgiveness”, a new creature cleansed from sin,
Jesus gift to you is “Eternal life” and an “unquenchable peace” from within.

The Gift
Father, this Christmas, because of the sin in my life, I find myself separated from you.
I repent and invite you, Jesus, into my heart to be the Lord of all the areas of my life.
I will live for you, and “thank-you” for your forgiveness and the assurance of
an eternal home, in Heaven, with you. Amen

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THE DONKEY - ROKEBY LINE

Joseph the Carpenter and what might have been

Joseph was a carpenter. He knew that was fairly ironic, especially for Christian folk. They never seemed to tire of reminding him ‘Oh, Joseph The Carpenter; where’s your son, Jesus?’”

It always got big laughs, especially around Christmas when the ladies of the church cooked a big dinner and had the wee people of the church put on a skit of the Christmas story.

There were shepherds in bathrobes and with bath towels fashioned to make head coverings, just like the photos in the bible at the front of the church. They were carrying

their grandpa’s walking stick or a branch they picked up in the trees behind the little white church. There were angels in holiday tinsel halos, wings and white sheets. And of course, Mary, dressed in blue and looking gentle and mild and her husband, Joseph the Carpenter. This year, he sported a real DeWalt tool belt.

Joseph had overheard Benny – this year’s Joseph – arguing with Ms. Whitmore before the event. Joseph was a carpenter and he wasn’t going out without his tool belt.

Ms. Whitmore tried to explain

that it wasn’t exactly what had happened in the Bible, but little Benny was having none of it. It was Joseph with the tool belt or no Joseph at all.

It appeared he had won.

As Benny made his appearance on stage, there were more than a few snickers and a sharp poke in his side from Albert’s elbow.

“Hey Joe; is that your tool belt?” Several of Albert’s buddies stifled snickers as Ms. Whitmore glared into the darkness, trying to figure out who was making fun of her Joseph.

SEE JOSEPH PG 11



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Holy Night**

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Danielle Edgar & all the Staff at Lambton Pharmacy




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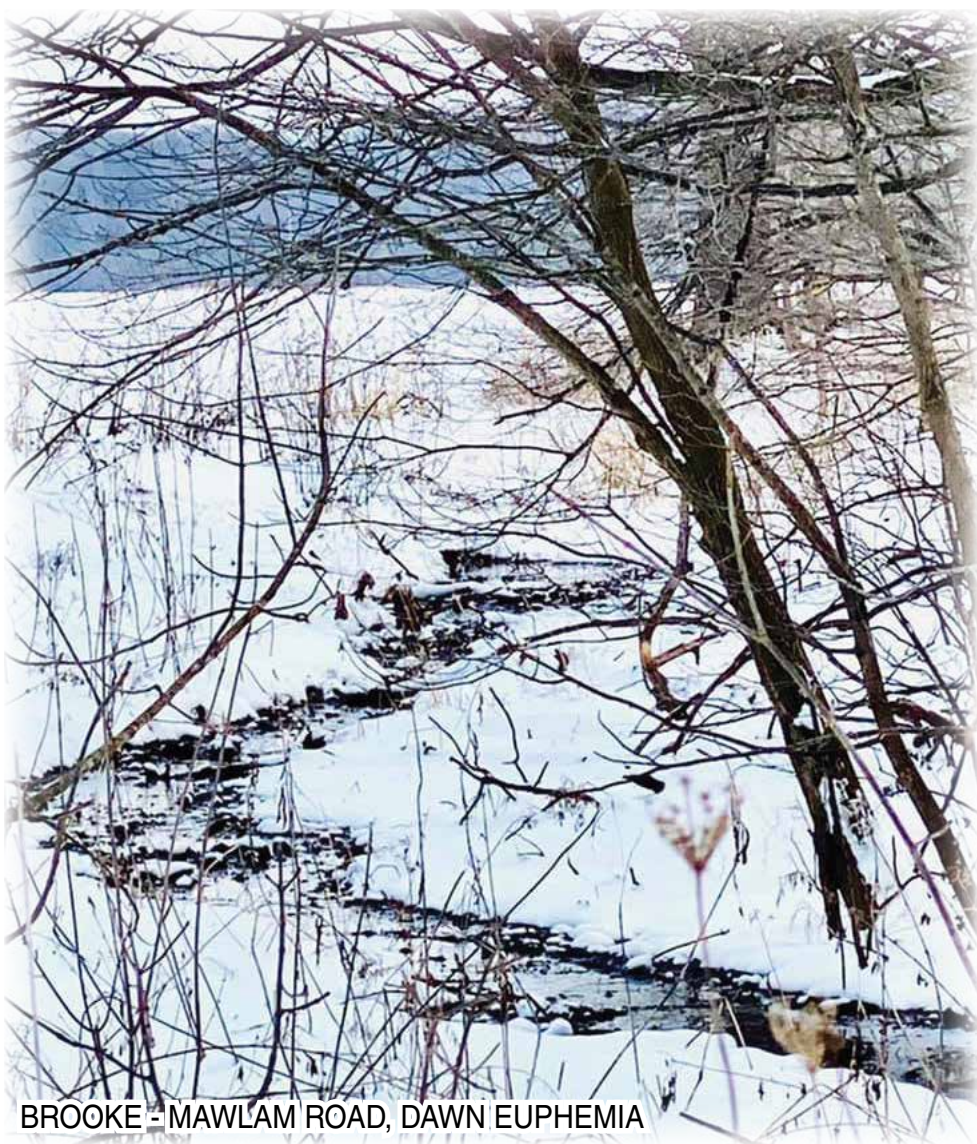
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Joseph the Carpenter and what might have been

CON'T FROM PG 10


Benny just beamed, staring at his newborn son in the box at his feet. Joseph's mind drifted off; how long had it been since he stood there with his Mary - Anne Marie - looking sweetly at that rubber doll in the makeshift manger? Twenty years – no, 27. Joseph smiled involuntarily, though no one noticed in the darkened church. Almost all of his childhood memories involved Anne-Marie. They were inseparable. Originally that Christmas, Mrs. Singer wanted Joseph to be one of the Magi. Anne-Marie kept kicking Robert, a pail skinned boy with poker straight hair. Mrs. Singer finally relented and Joseph the boy became Joseph the Carpenter and father of Jesus. Anne-Marie grinned the whole time, holding the baby Jesus upside down during the big performance. She told Mrs. Singer it was a mistake, but Joseph knew better. Anne-Marie never got to play Mary again. Even if she showed the slightest interest, in the Christmas pageant, Mrs. Singer found something else for her to do. Anne-Marie and Joseph sat in the hard pews watching those pageants for years. When we were pre-teens, we watched our brothers as they carried the precious gifts to newborn king. As teens, they largely ignored what was going on at the front and tried to figure out who would be having the best Christmas party at the end of the school year. But on their graduation year, Anne-

Marie took an interest in the little ones on the stage. She watched Mary and Joseph intently, slipping her hand into Joseph's. Later that night Anne-Marie made it clear what she was expecting as her gift - an engagement ring, a wedding and children - with him. Joseph was stunned. They were only 18 and he blanched at the thought. Anne-Marie had not been planning for college, as Joseph had. She told him she didn't know what she wanted to do with the rest of her life. But, as he sat in the pickup truck that snowy December night, Anne-Marie looking up at him expectantly, he realized he should have seen the signs. Every baby they walked past, Anne-Marie would stop and talk to the mother and coo over the baby. When they walked on, she would say 'Wasn't he so cute, Joe?' Joseph would usually mumble something and then change the subject. There in the truck, there was no escaping the conversation. He took a big gulp of air and looked right into Anne-Marie's eyes. "Uh - we have plenty of time." Anne-Marie was silent. By February, she had moved on, married in March and had Benny nine months later. And now, there he was, right in front of him, with his mom, Anne Marie smiling proudly. Did he make a mistake? Joseph wondered in the darkness. When Anne-Marie had married, his mom told him not to look back, but sitting at Christmas alone in the darkness, it was easy to travel back and wonder what might have been if that Christmas, he'd bought a ring.

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Christmas is a time for love no matter what

The McCallum house was a whirlwind of Christmas and it was not necessarily a good thing. The whole clan had gathered at Mary and Frank’s new home and as the clock ticked toward six o’clock the family was arriving to the smell of roast turkey and the sounds of children playing.

Three young McCallums were spinning from room to room with excitement fueled by sugar cookies and chocolates. Mary was in the kitchen fussing over the bird and trying unsuccessfully to block out children screaming and crashing up and down the stairs.

Mary spied her father, sitting quietly in the corner reading a paper from last week. “Dad, will you please go see what those kids are doing and find something quieter for them to do? Please.” George McCallum looked up, smiled and folded the paper and made his way to the staircase. “Hey you young hooligans,” he bellowed. “I wanted to tell you a story about a little guy I know who had some trouble at Christmas. Many years ago, there was a little boy named George.”

Now George was normally a good boy. He didn’t talk back to his mother, he worked hard at school and he was usually nice to his sister. But when Christmas came around, he was always very excited.

“George had always believed that Santa Claus brought him his special gifts but one day just before Christmas, he was playing in his fort in a tree near his parents room. He could see his mother, working away at something. George leaned a little closer to peer into his parents bedroom. On the bed was the Lego set George had been hoping for. Mom picked it up and placed it onto the wrapping paper and began wrapping it. When she realized there wasn’t any more tape, she picked up the set – and several other gifts for his brothers and sisters – and disappeared into the closet. Questions raced through his mind – What was Mom doing? Why did she have his Lego set? What happened if Santa got him another? Wouldn’t that be great – two sets! But as he sat in the tree house as the light started to fade, George began to wonder – what if Mom bought the presents, what would Santa do? And he started thinking about Christmas Eve and all the trips Santa had to make – could it be true? Was Santa real? It was all too much for poor George to think about and he was getting hungry. He climbed down and had dinner.

“That night, all George could think about was the Lego set hiding in Mom and Dad’s closet. In fact it was all George could think about all week. By Friday, it was almost unbearable to know that his Lego set was in the closet and he couldn’t play with it for another two weeks.

Friday night came. Mom and Dad often invited the neighbours over to play cards Friday night. When George was tucked in bed, the playing was loud with waves of laughter drifting up the stairs. George knew this was his time. He crawled quietly to his parents room and eased open the closet door. He climbed inside and could see surprisingly well. What George didn’t know was there was an open grate in the closet which gave light from downstairs. George just opened the box and at first stared at the array of blocks and wheels.

Carefully, slowly, he pulled a few pieces out and began to build. Minutes turned to an hour and a hour turned to two. George could hear the game of cards getting rowdier but he was so engrossed in the town he was building that he ignored the

laughter and clinking glasses. Then the glasses stopped clinking and the voices started to fade. George knew he needed to get back to bed. He quickly cleaned up, holding just a few pieces in his hand to play with in his room.

“The next day, George could feel his mother’s eyes on him. She didn’t say anything. In the afternoon, Mom piled George and his brothers and sisters in the car and headed to O’Shae’s General Store.

It was a family tradition to talk to Santa at O’Shae’s. George was confused. It was clear he didn’t really need Santa – he had what he wanted. George was the last to climb up on Santa’s lap. He wasn’t really comfortable and at eight, he felt he was too big to sit on his lap.

“Well George, have you been a good boy?” Santa asked. ‘Uh yeah,’ he mumbled. ‘Really?’ ‘Yes, really Santa.’ George wasn’t sure if Santa had anything to do with his gifts so he wasn’t about to take any chances. Mom was standing very close and George felt very nervous. ‘What do you want this Christmas?’ he asked. ‘Lego,’ George said quickly. ‘Don’t you already have Lego George,’ asked Santa, looking right into his eyes. George hesitated; did he know? ‘No’ George said quietly.

The conversation didn’t last much longer. The family headed home. There were just five days until Christmas and George made up his mind – aside from the few Lego under his bed in his room - he wouldn’t visit the closet again.

“It took forever for Christmas to arrive. Finally it was Christmas Eve and everyone was gathered around the tree. George waited as patiently as he could for his named to be called. When it was, there was a note on the top of his neatly wrapped box. He looked at his mother who was watching him intently. He opened it.

Dear George: I hope you enjoy the Lego. It will be your only present since it is all you asked for. You should also remember that Santa sees you when you’re sleeping and knows when you’re awake and knows all about little boys who sneak into their parent’s closets late on a Friday night. Make sure you thank your mother because she convinced me you should have the Lego even though you were on the naughty list. Love Santa.

“George sat silently for a few moments while his brothers and sisters laughed and played with their new toys around him. He put down the note, went over to his mother and hugged her as tears streamed down his face, hidden from the rest of the family as he burrowed deep into her shoulder. He didn’t say anything for a long minute. Then when he had stopped crying, he wiped his eyes with the back of his hand and said; ‘I’m sorry Mom. Thank you.’

‘I love you George,’ she whispered in his ear ‘no matter what.’”

Grandpa had seen the wrapping paper torn from one of the presents. Now he could see Gary fidgeting. He was avoiding Grandpa’s glance as best as he could. Then he launched himself off the couch and into his unsuspecting mother’s arms as she walked in the door.

“I was just going to say dinner is served – somebody must be hungry,” she said smiling down at Gary.

“Yeah – uh, sorry we were making so much noise Mom. We’ll try to be good.”

“It’s okay Gary, it’s Christmas – everyone gets a little crazy. Besides, I love you, no matter what.”



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Sports

SILVER STICK WIN



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

The Mooretown Flags and East Lambton Eagles prevailed in the U13 B and C divisions at the annual Roy Caley regional Silver Stick tournament in Watford. Both teams went 5-0. Mooretown blanked South Huron, 2-0 in its championship contest, while East Lambton shut out Kawartha, 7-0 in its title game. The U15 portion of the Watford tournaments opens Thursday morning at 8 am. Petrolia and Mooretown are competing in the B division while East Lambton and Lambton Shores are part of the C division docket. Above, the Eagles score their sixth goal in a Saturday afternoon game against North Middlesex.

Flyers have a big week

Barry Wright
The Independent

The next three games for the Petrolia Flyers could go a long way to decide who is in and who is out of the PJHL's Stobbs Division playoffs.

The Flyers will play the two other teams they are jostling with for the final two postseason berths over the next week prior to the holiday break.

Wallaceburg holds seventh spot in the standings with eight points while the Flyers and Dresden have seven points each.

Wallaceburg visits Greenwood Thursday before the Flyers travel to Dresden on Friday.

The Kings and Flyers play a return match in Petrolia next Thursday (Dec. 23). All three games begin at 7:30.

The Flyers are coming off back-to-back losses to Wheatley and Essex last week. Petrolia's games this Thursday and next are the final opportunities for fans to bring donations in support of the food bank in Petrolia.



FLYER HOCKEY PHOTO

Cole Irwin of Oil Springs stares down a puck during the 7-1 loss against Wheatley.

Flags honouring overagers this weekend

The Independent

The Mooretown Flags drop the puck on the second half of the PJHL season Saturday against the Essex 73's.

Game time at the Moore Sports Complex is 7:30. The Flags (13-3) are six points behind Essex for second place in the division with Mooretown having three games in hand.

The Flags will be honouring their overage players from the past two seasons with sweater presentations to Jake Wilkins, Trevor Bogaert, Brock Perry, Dawson Vautour, Garrett Miller, Cade Robbins, Max Steeves, and Cam Rannie in a pregame ceremony.

Mooretown closes out the pre-Christmas portion of its schedule with road games in Amherstburg and Wheatley on Sunday and next Wednesday.

Saturday in Mooretown, the Flags scored three goals in each of the first and second periods and went on to beat Wheatley, 7-4.

Brodie Conlon and Nolan Farr both scored twice for Mooretown with one each going to Brody Genyn, Quinton Johnston, and Tristen Konrad. Luke Houle registered three assists while Ethan Kerby and Logan Gardner both contributed two assists. Conlon is now riding an 11-game point scoring streak.

Nathan King was the winning goalie making 29 saves.

Bees sting Thunder for first Super League win

The Independent

It took longer than what many had hoped for, but the Alvinston Killer Bees have finally registered their first victory in Western Ontario Super Hockey League action. They defeated the Thunder 8-5 in Tillsonburg last weekend.

Newly signed Brendan Ritchie broke a 5-all tie with eight-and-a-half minutes left in the third period, and the Bees added two more goals in short order to secure the

victory. Grant Spence led the Bees with two goals and an assist, while Ritchie, Cameron Rombouts and Sebastian Nogueira all had a goal and two assists. Sheldon Timmermans, Cody Nicholaisen and Justin Lightfoot also scored for Alvinston. Blair Derynck had four assists. Nolan Hakr turned aside 32 shots for the goaltending victory.

The Bees close out the pre-Christmas portion of its schedule with a matchup against the Fighting Irish in Stratford Saturday afternoon.

Wyoming teen wins provincial weightlifting titles

Marlowe Robinson of Point Edward's Garage Gym Weightlifting won both the Ontario Youth and Junior weightlifting championships in Peterborough. The 16 year-old LCCVI student from Wyoming won the 59 kg class with a 57-kilo snatch and 78-kilo clean and jerk, both personal bests. The decisive clean and Jerk came with about 30 seconds left on the clock.

Meantime, teammate Declan Watson of

Errol Village won the youth title in the 81 Kilo category with a total score of 191 kilos. He was third in the junior division.

Four other members of the Garage Gym team took top three honours at the event. Carson Raymond and Rowdy Fisher were second in their weight classes while Shoshanna Rogan and Joshua McLachlan were third in theirs. Garage Gym won best youth team award at the championships.

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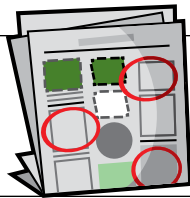
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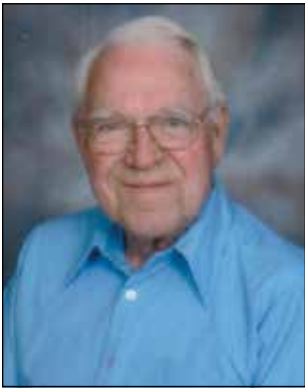
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SNYDER

Robert K. “Bob”

SNYDER, Robert K. – Passed away peacefully on **Saturday, December 11, 2021** at C.E.E. Hospital, Petrolia. Born in Windsor, Robert “Bob” Snyder, **of Petrolia**, was **90** years of age. Bob was predeceased by his wife Betty (nee Rowland)(2009). Bob is survived by his children Jim and Pam of Forest, Roy and Sheryl of Petrolia and Cathy and John Lowe of Vancouver. He was a proud Poppa to Brian and Kari Snyder, Melanie Snyder, Elaine and Andrew Plowman, Jessica and Morgan Tomlinson, Kaitlyn Snyder and Shane Marostega, David Lowe and Rachael Lowe and Poppa Great Bob to Seth, Skylar, and Faith Tomlinson, Scarlett Snyder, Logan and Wally Plowman, and Mason and Ivy Marostega. Bob was the son of the late J.C. and Edith Snyder and is survived by his siblings Barbara and Don Snyder, Joyce and Casey Kurpershoek, and Gary Snyder and the late Leona. A long time Petrolia Resident, Bob spent time in his youth with the U.S Navy where he learned instrumentation, later he spent 33 years at Dow Chemical as an instrument technician where he retired in 1986. Bob was an active member of St. Paul’s United Church. **A memorial service will be held on Saturday, December 18, 2021 at 1pm from the Needham-Jay Funeral Home, 4059 Petrolia Line, Petrolia. To attend, registration is required in advance at <https://signup.com/go/kGDCJMQ>. A private family interment will occur at a later date in Hillsdale Cemetery. A livestream can be seen at www.facebook.com/NeedhamJay.** In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Petrolia Foodbank (www.petroliafoodbank.weebly.com), Canadian Red Cross (www.redcross.ca), or St. Paul’s United Church(www.stpaulsunitedpetrolia.net).



HALL

Donna Jean



Donna Jean Hall passed away peacefully at CEE Hospital Petrolia **December 5, 2021** just short of her 83rd birthday. She is survived by her husband of 64 years Carrol, their three children, Loretta and Al Webster, Debbie and Robert Thomson, Jeff and Tracy Hall. Her precious grandchildren Derek and Kailey Webster, Anastasia and Dan Carron, Sandra Thomson and Chris Teeter, Matthew and Shannon Thomson, Amy and Dale King, and Craig and Kari Hall and 9 great-grandchildren. Also survived by brother-in-law Trevor and Eunice Hall, and sister in law Marie Hall. Predeceased by her parents Allen and Lela Walker, brother Kenny and sister Loretta. Donna devoted her life to family and friends and will be greatly missed by all. Many happy memories from Florida and the Bruce Peninsula will be shared by many. Life was blessed with the greatest gifts of love and laughter. Many thanks to all who helped with care, your kindness will always be remembered. **There will be a private family service to remember Donna.** As expressions of sympathy, memorial donations may be made to CEE Hospital Foundation (www.cee hf.ca). **Arrangements with Needham-Jay Funeral Home.**



Holiday Reminder

There will be

NO PAPER

December 30

and

The Independent Office will be closed the week of Dec. 27

Wanted: Farmland

FARMLAND - Do you want a farmer who wants and values your opinion on how to best farm your land? One who will work with you to develop a crop plan, discuss when your farm is fit to plant and harvest to minimize compaction and maximise profit for the long term? **Then call Shawn at Font Farms (519) 384-2855.**

For Sale

ANNIVERSARY BOOKS - First Baptist Church Petrolia is Celebrating 150 Years and has available now - Anniversary Books. On sale for just \$25. Phone 519-882-2480 to order.

For Sale: Auto

2005 CHEV SHORT BOX PICKUP - 2 W.D. 170,000 kms, great shape, \$7,500 as is or \$8,500 safetied. Well taken care of. **Call Rick 519-330-4823**

Wanted to Buy

Wanted to buy: **OLD & UNUSUAL STUFF** from garages, attics, and basements. **Phone Chad at (519) 639-9102.**

In Memories

In memory of a loving Husband, Father & Papa

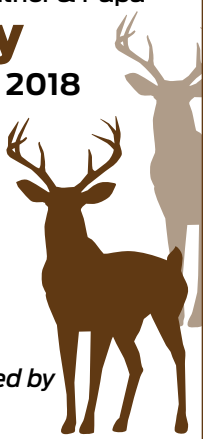
Ron Strangway

who passed away **December 17 2018**

Our hearts are full of memories
We treasure them with great care
The way you had to leave us
Will always be unfair.

Sad is the heart that loves you,
Silent the tears that fall.
Living our lives without you
Is the hardest part of all.

*Sadly missed & lovingly remembered by
Bonnie and Family*



Missing Each of You

Each of you are missed at Christmas
and each and every day.
For each of you were someone special,
who meant more than words can say.

Mom - **Sarah (Wagner) Rees** - Dec. 10, 1989
Dad - **Samuel Rees** - Oct. 5, 1977
Sister - **Delores Broad** - Dec. 23, 2009
Brother - **Gerald Rees** - Aug. 5, 2002
Brother - **Sam Jr. Rees** - Jun. 5, 2013

Luv & Hugs Geraldine Duffy

Our Loving Son

John Duffy - May 22, 2016

Of all the special gifts in life,
However great or small.
To have you “John” as our son,
Was the greatest gift of all.
A special time.
A special place.
A special son,
We can’t replace.
With an aching heart,
We whisper low,
We miss you “John”,
We love you so!!!

*Mom & Dad,
Myrna Duffy*

In loving memory
of a dear brother-in-law
and uncle

Ron Strangway

December 17 2018

*So much has changed
since you’ve been gone,
Through ups and downs
our lives move on.*

*But as time rolls by
one thing remains true,
we’ll always have good
memories of you.*

**Lovingly remembered by
Don & Mary Saunders
and families**

In Loving Memory



Kenneth Sitzes

Sept 21 1938 – Dec 20 2019


Gone are the days we
used to share
But in our hearts you’re
always there
Never more than a
thought away
Loved & remembered
every day
And never forgotten

Love Barb,
Brian & Cynthia,
Kevin & Bonnie,
Wanda & Randy
and families

Card of Thanks

Heidi’s Independent Grocer
Thank you
for everything you do for us
at Lambtonian Apartments.

A Very Merry Christmas
Lois Dennis



Church DIRECTORY

Christ Anglican Church
414 Oil Street, Petrolia

Welcome Back!
In-person Church Services
Sunday Mornings @ 11:15 am

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

St. Paul’s United Church
4169 Petrolia Line at Centre Street

In Person Services now taking place
Sunday’s @ 10:30am

Rev Carol Ferguson
Church Office: 519-882-1390
www.stpaulsunitedpetrolia.net

First Baptist Church
418 Greenfield Street, Petrolia

IN PERSON CHURCH SERVICE
Sunday Mornings 10:30am

Pastor: Alex Craig
Church Office 519-882-2480
email: fbcpetrolia@gmail.com
www.firstbaptistpetrolia.ca
www.facebook.com/First-Baptist-Church-Petrolia

Wyoming United Church
730 Second Street, Wyoming

In Person Services taking place
Sunday’s @ 9:30 am

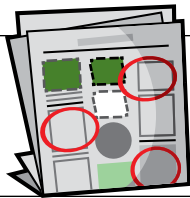
Rev. Steven Longmoore
Church Office 519-845-3963
wyoming_united@outlook.com
Find us on Facebook

St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church
416 Queen Street, Petrolia
(Behind the Post Office)

In Person Service now back Sundays
@ 10:00 a.m.

Services also available online:
www.standrews-petrolia.ca
Pastor Katherine Hawley

Classified Deadline:
Monday @ 12 noon



Classifieds

Word Classifieds: \$10 plus tax for up to 40 words
Stop in at the office 9a-5p Mon-Fri
4156 Petrolia Line – Call 226-738-0728
or email: office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca

Church Services

Christ Anglican Church

414 Oil Street, Petrolia

Friday, December 24

Christmas Eve Service @ 6pm

Sunday, December 26

No Sunday Service

Sunday, January 2

Lessons & Carols @ 11:15 am

-- Merry Christmas to All --

St. Andrew's

Presbyterian Church

416 Queen Street, Petrolia

Tuesday, December 21

Blue Christmas @ 7 pm

Friday, December 24

Carols & Readings @ 4 pm

Sunday, December 26

Morning Service @ 10 am



Services Offered



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o: 519-542-1000
Maggie@exitsarnia.com



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jam_jo11@hotmail.com | www.protaxpetrolia.com

MUNICIPALITY OF BROOKE-ALVINSTON

COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT

The Municipality of Brooke-Alvinston is looking to fill a vacancy on the Committee of Adjustment effective **February 1, 2022**. As a member of this committee, you will review and make decisions on applications for severances and minor variances and other planning issues. The appointment is for a **three year term**.

Interested individuals should send a letter indicating their willingness to be appointed to the Committee of Adjustment. Attendance at meetings will be mandatory. You will be required to prepare for meetings on your time. Previous municipal or planning experience would be an asset.

Applications will be accepted until 12:00 pm on Friday, January 7, 2022 to the address noted below:

Municipality of Brooke-Alvinston

Attention: Janet Denkers, Secretary-Treasurer,

Committee of Adjustment

3236 River Street, P.O. Box 28

Alvinston, Ontario N0N 1A0

Email to: jdenkers@brookealvinston.com

We thank all applicants for their interest; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted. In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, personal information is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act and will be used for the purpose of candidate selection.



Answers to this week's

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

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Employment Opportunity - Township of Warwick

Proof of Vaccination Screeners

The Township of Warwick is looking to hire Proof of Vaccination Screeners for the Watford Community Arena. Screeners are responsible for reviewing and understanding all current information relevant to the screening mandate. These positions are temporary, part-time contracts with work in the evenings (after 4pm and weekends). The position will pay \$15 / hour.

Primary Responsibilities:

- Greet and screen visitors, at point of entrance into the Watford Community Arena
- Request and view COVID-19 double vaccination passports
- Other duties as assigned

Mandatory Competencies:

- Flexible, self-directed, and able to work with minimal supervision.
- Possess excellent customer service skills.
- Able to follow directions, instructions, and procedures.
- Able to maintain a polite and courteous manner in stressful situations.
- Able to communicate and provide clear instructions in an appropriate authoritative manner.
- Able to wear Personal Protective Equipment which includes masks.
- Able to physically perform the duties of the position and tasks including standing and sitting for extended periods of time.
- Reliable with excellent attendance record and able to work all shifts including weekends and holidays; afternoon and evening shifts.

If you are interested in this position, please submit your resume to the undersigned by 12:00pm NOON Wednesday, December 22, 2021.



Madie Esselment - Township of Warwick
6332 Nauvoo Road, Watford, ON N0M 2S0
Phone: 519-849-3926 Fax: 519-849-6136
Email: messelment@warwicktownship.ca

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Cash infusion for Lambton

The Independent

Christmas has come early for small and rural municipalities.

The provincial government is more than doubling the amount of cash it hands out for infrastructure to communities under 100,000 people.

In Lambton County, that means there will be a total of \$12.5 million flowing in for projects such as roads and bridges.

Petrolia is one of the big winners, it will get about \$540,000 more in 2022 than last year’s grant of \$338,441.

All the other municipalities’ grants double including St. Clair Township which will receive \$2.25 million in 2022 and Oil Springs, which now receives \$100,000 instead of \$50,000.

The Thursday announcement is part of a \$1 billion investment to help build and repair roads, bridges, water and waste water infrastructure in smaller communities. The grants can be saved up to five years to finish a major project.

Here’s the list of what municipalities received:

Petrolia; \$872,232 up from \$338,441

Plympton-Wyoming, \$722,546 up from \$356,669

Enniskillen; \$261,495 up from \$134,382

St. Clair; \$2,257,316 up from \$1,172,395

Oil Springs; \$100,000 up from \$50,000

County of Lambton; \$2,270,403 up from \$1,069.632

Vacant building bylaw delayed

The Independent

A bylaw which would make sure vacant buildings in Petrolia are kept in good shape didn’t make it to town council this week.

Laurissa Ellsworth, director of marketing, arts and communications, has been meeting with merchants in town discussing the Vacant and Under Utilized Building policy this fall. The policy would set a minimum standard for buildings, making sure windows and doors were secure, and the exterior is not left to deteriorate.

Ellsworth had expected the policy and the bylaw to go to council Monday, however that’s been delayed.

In a letter to merchants, Ellsworth says the bylaw is very detailed and staff needs more time to make sure the policy is clear and any fines are appropriate.

She adds “it is difficult for us to change a by-law once it has been passed and once the province has approved the fine structure. We want to do it right, and we want to make sure that it has ‘teeth.’”

The bylaw is now expected go to council Jan. 24.

Ontario services soon en française

The Independent

French speaking Lambton residents will soon be able to get Ontario government services in their native tongue – but it will take some time.

The province will expand French-language services in Sarnia starting in November 2024. The request came from two French language groups asked for the services. Their calls were supported by local federal, provincial and municipal government.

When Sarnia is designated under the French Language Services Act, the province must provide French language services – either by the government or a third party.

About 5,400 people declare French as their first language in Lambton – that’s about 4.2 per cent of the county’s population.

There are about 620,000 Francophones in Ontario while 1.5 million Ontarians say they speak French.

Black Gold wins beer gold

The Independent

Another Petrolia company is making its mark on the provincial stage.

Black Gold Brewery picked up two awards at the Ontario Brewing Awards in Mississauga recently.

It placed first in the British Brown Ale category with it’s ‘What the Frack’ beer and second in the European Sour category with the Berliner Weisse.

Black Gold has only been operating for a year and it’s the first time entering the awards.

Over \$100k given out in Creative County grants

The Independent

Twenty one artists and groups are getting over \$100,000 in funding from Lambton’s Creative County Committee.

The group was formed to promote the arts through grants for projects in 2013. This year, the committee encouraged projects led by or in partnership with Indigenous groups to foster reconciliation. There are eight projects in that category.

Among those getting grants are

- Lambton Fairs Association \$4,000 for their Barn Quilt Project.
- Town of Plympton-Wyoming \$6,500

for a historic plaque honouring the site of the former Mandaumin Library.

- \$2,500 to the Lambton Young Theatre Players, in support of the LYTP Collective Creation program.
- \$15,000 to Sherri DeWolf towards the Mermaids & Mariners on the St. Clair event.
- \$10,000 to the Corunna Volunteer Firefighters Association for the 1925 LaFrance Fire Truck Restoration Project.
- \$3,000 to Liana Russwurm towards the Alvinston, Stories from the Church weekly publication.
- \$2,800 to the Lambton County

Plowmen’s Association for their Telling Our History project.

- \$2,500 to Hillside School and KSPFN Education Services in support of two murals to be installed in their community centre.
- \$5,000 to the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation towards the creation of the Golden Eagles Seniors Healing Garden and Teaching Circle.
- \$12,125 in support of the Anishinaabe Thunderbird Sundance.
- \$8,845 to the Aamjiwnaang Early Learning Centre for their Anishinaabe Indigenous Food Sovereignty Initiative.

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.....

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DEC	DEC	DEC	DEC	DEC	DEC	DEC	DEC	DEC	DEC	JAN	JAN
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
8am-9pm	8am-9pm	7am-5pm	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	8am-9pm	8am-9pm	8am-9pm	8am-9pm	7am-6pm	CLOSED



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