

Two bodies, one in custody and questions about a Mississauga man's death in Lambton

Heather Wright
The Independent

Stefan Peters had a sinking feeling when he heard his client, Lance Richardson, was missing.

He had a reason to be concerned; his client had called Peters days before, worried about how it might seem like he'd brokered a deal with police to get out of some serious drug charges. That was the last time Peters talked to him.

He learned just before Christmas Richardson had not been in contact with his partner since Dec. 23, which was unusual. By Boxing Day, she had filed a missing person report about Richardson she was so concerned.

Peters' 'sinking feelings' and the fears of Richardson's family were confirmed when Lambton OPP identified the 31 year-old as one of two people who died under suspicious circumstances in Lambton County.

Richardson, 31, was found in a home on Watson Street in Sarnia Dec. 28 a little more than an hour after Lambton OPP were called to an historic oil field in Oil Springs. There OPP said, they found human remains in a vehicle. Police linked the two deaths, however they have said little else about what might have led to the death of Richardson and the person who has yet to be identified by the OPP's forensic experts.

When police released the information Dec. 29, they said one person was in custody. It's not clear who that was, if they have been charged or even if they are still in custody.

Police released Richardson's identity Jan. 1.

By that time, Richardson's family had been raising alarm

bells for days.

And they'd called Peters, the lawyer who represented the Mississauga man in the summer after he was arrested in a police raid where drugs - including fentanyl - and guns were seized.

The charges against him were serious. "There were a number of drug trafficking offenses and firearms offenses that were the result of a police raid," says Peters.

The lawyer told Richardson's family he could face five to seven years in prison considering the seriousness of the charges, the drugs and weapons seized and his past drug convictions.

Peters tried, but couldn't get bail for Richardson after the raid.

But then unexpectedly in October, the charges against the 31 year old were dropped. Peters tells *The Independent* he believed there was "a pretty major screw up" with the warrants that led to the raid, "especially when you're talking about charges of this nature."

Peters said he didn't press the matter, satisfied his client was a free man.

Richardson's history may have lead police to be extra careful. Richardson was convicted of six charges including robbery, assault causing bodily harm and threatening to cause death in an August 2014 incident where two people near the Yorkdale subway station were attacked. He spent 15 months in custody but he maintained his innocence from the beginning.

He told police he had conversations with two people involved in the robbery on an app called Vox, according to reporting in *The Toronto Star*.

SEE MISSISSAUGA PG 2

PETROLIA'S SILVER STICK CHAMPIONS



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

There was a celebration at Petrolia's Greenwood Recreation Centre as the Petrolia Oilers' U18 Rep team took the B Division championship in the regional Silver Stick Tournament Dec. 30. The Oilers beat Lambeth 4-3 to take the title. See more coverage of on pages 8 and 9.

Lambton's MOH says schools not a risk to kids

Heather Wright
The Independent

Lambton's medical officer of health says he believes moving school online again is a mistake.

It was one of the moves announced by Premier Doug Ford Monday in an effort to "blunt" the coming "tsunami" of COVID-19 cases fuelled by the Omicron variant.

The number of people getting sick skyrocketed over Christmas. In Lambton alone, public health officials estimate there are 1,322 people ill and four more people have died. But the numbers are far from accurate at this point. Omicron is spreading rapidly and the province has limited testing to the most vulnerable and those in health care.

But, Ford said there could be between 100,000 and 200,000 cases per day and that could translate into 1,000 to 2,000 people ending up in hospitals across the province. That, in combination with health care workers getting sick themselves, will cause a crisis in health care. So Ford announced new measures.

• School will return to online learning until at least Jan. 17.

- Businesses will be restricted to 50 per cent capacity.
- Indoor dining is closed. Outdoor dining will be allowed as will takeout services.
- Indoor social gatherings are limited to five people indoors and 10 outdoors – that includes public events
- Employers are required to make people work from home if they are able
- Capacity at indoor weddings, funerals and religious services are limited to 50 per cent of their room. Outdoor services are limited to the number of people who can be two meters apart.
- Personal care services like hair salons and spas are limited to 50 per cent
- Libraries limited to 50 per cent capacity
- Concert venues, theatres and cinemas, museums, galleries, zoos, historic sites, and attractions are closed.
- Indoor sports and recreation facilities, including arenas and gyms, are open only to select professional and elite amateur sports.

The province says the measures will be in place for at least 21 days. However Ford wouldn't make any guarantees about whether students would return to the classroom on Jan. 17

SEE RANADE PG 2

ONE-OF-A-KIND, MILLENNIUM HERITAGE DEALERSHIP



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Grogan Ford Lincoln

Mississauga man had been reported missing CON'T FROM PG 1

The original investigating officer discounted the recordings saying she couldn't understand what was being said nor who was speaking.

It took four years and two lawyers convinced of Richardson's innocence to track down the voice messages which finally lead to his release on appeal in Dec. 2019. His case was labelled a wrongful conviction.

After he was released, Richardson told *The Toronto Star* he wanted to stay out of trouble, even though he was in jail facing more charges at the time.

Fast forward to the summer of 2021 and the father of a two year-old was again facing serious drug charges.

By October, they had been dropped and Richardson had voiced his concerns about how it might look, a man facing serious drug charges which would carry serious time in prison being given a pass.

In December, just before Christmas, Richardson told his partner he was going to visit friends in Sarnia for a few days before coming home for the holiday.

Peters got a call just before Christmas from Richardson's partner. She had not heard from him since Dec. 23.

Days later, they heard a body had been found in Sarnia.

"I had just this sinking feeling in my gut, that something was wrong. I can't even really explain it," Peters says "but between him contacting me after his release and hearing that there were

some sort of rumors going around and he was worried about that. I mean, I don't know that it had anything to do with what happened. But when I got the call, and they couldn't find him, and then like there was no, there was no activity on WhatsApp for a number of days and that wasn't like him.

"I just sort of had a sinking feeling in my gut."

Peters says he was trying "to hope for the best...

"Even when he said they found a body I was sort of holding out hope they would come back and it wasn't him but I don't know sometimes, I don't know, it's like cosmic or whatever you get a feeling and can't really explain why you're like 'okay, there is something not right here.' And that's sort of the gut feeling I had."

Peters said he had only known Richardson for a short period of time, but found him to be a gracious person.

"I went to see him for the first time, he was incredibly gracious, very soft spoken.

"When we were in court, he was very respectful.... he just comes across as very kind. And you'd be shocked to see what his record looked like, and to see what type of charges he was facing because all around he was a sweet guy, incredibly respectful."

And Peters says it was obvious he was active in his son's life adding he "just came across as a caring, loving person."

Ranade says things won't change in two weeks CON'T FROM PG 2

Dr. Sudit Ranade says the province is sending mixed messages after touting plans to make sure children would stay in the classroom, no matter what.

"For the last several months (the province) has been talking about a formula where schools are really the last to close, right - the first to open last to close - because of the significant harm to children from not being in school," he tells *The Independent*.

"And so it seems like we're willing to forego all of those benefits to children? And I'm not really sure what the benefits are on the other side?"

Ranade says there will be cases of COVID-19 in school when the children return to class and the two weeks the province has ordered people to go online won't change that. "Nothing's going to fundamentally shift between now and then the results are going to be pretty much the same."

But he says the risk to children is very low and the damage done by staying out of school is real.

"On average, the benefits to a child of being in school far outweigh the risks of COVID, even if that child were to get COVID because we know children, on average have milder disease and are far less likely to be hospitalized, whether they are vaccinated or not," says Ranade.

"Frankly, once they're vaccinated, that pushes an already low risk even lower of severe disease, right. So now if you're thinking about it like colds and flus, you have to sort of accept the fact that yes, if your child is in school, they will be exposed to COVID. But also if your child is doing anything with anyone, they might be exposed to COVID because it is going to be everywhere.

"And so once you think through that, you say, 'gosh, they need to be in school because they've been out of school for longer than any other, kids in most other North American jurisdictions, and the educational and social impact of that on their life are going to persist for several years. And so, definitely the benefits of them being in school outweigh the risks to any individual child."

Ranade says some parents will still feel it is too big of a risk to send their child into a classroom, but he says that should be a decision an individual parent makes.

The MOH says our thinking about COVID-19 has to shift with the Omicron variant and that could be tough after two years of worry.

"I think the emerging evidence is showing very much so that it's a less severe variant. The other piece, is that vaccinations have tremendously helped change the game," he adds.

In Lambton County, 76 percent of the people over five are fully vaccinated, although the number of elementary school children who have received the vaccine is much lower - just 32 per cent have received one shot and only two per cent have received two.

While Ranade, and a lot of parents, would prefer students be in the classroom, most started online school Wednesday. Elementary students in the Catholic school system were slated to begin online learning Thursday.

School board officials were expected to receive shipments of N95 masks for teachers by Tuesday and both the public and Catholic boards will be receiving 33 and 21 more HEPA filters respectively to help with air quality in the classroom when children do return to school.

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Ontario 

Concerts, plays, sports on hold

Heather Wright
The Independent

Victoria Hall in Petrolia will fall quiet for much of January after the province shuttered theatres again in the fight against COVID-19. The province has closed all theatres, meaning the Jan 22 performance by The Mudmen has to be re-scheduled to March 4, according to town officials. And, Petrolia Community has cancelled its April performance “Sandy toes

and Salty Kisses. Officials say all ticket holders will be contacted. Meantime, the Petrolia Y is also closed as of Wednesday according to the provincial orders. Membership fees will be suspended in what has been billed as a three week shutdown as COVID-19 cases surge in Ontario. And arenas across the region will also be dark as the province has also banned indoor sports for three weeks. Meantime, you won’t be

able to go to town hall to do business during that time frame either; many municipal offices will continue to operate either via electronic means and phone or by appointments made in advance. The new regulations also mean restaurants will only be offering takeout service and businesses will limit their customers to 50 per cent capacity. Long term care homes are also limiting who can enter to a single care giver at a time.

Surgeries delayed, doctors appointments virtual

Heather Wright
The Independent

Over the next few weeks, you may not be seeing your doctor in person, your surgery could be cancelled and if someone you love needs emergency care, you likely won’t be able to sit with them in the ER. All the changes are due to the rapidly increasing number of COVID-19 cases in the community because of the Omicron variant. The Central Lambton Family Health Team says not everyone will be seeing a doctor in person over the next couple of weeks. “As COVID 19 spreads through the community, we will be shifting to virtual care whenever possible to decrease risk for patients and staff,” says Sarah Milner, executive director of CLFHT in a news release. “Each appointment will be triaged to allow a limited number of patients to be assessed in office. This measure is intended to guard the safety of our most vulnerable patients, maintain our staffing and remain operational during this challenging time.” If you have an appointment booked already, you will be notified whether you will be seen in person, by phone or virtual appointment. All cataract surgeries at Charlotte Eleanor

Englehart’s Pax Mailloux Eye Centre have been cancelled in January. Bluewater Health is also delaying all non-urgent surgical cases which require in-patient hospital admissions. Provincial officials expect across the province between eight and 10,000 people will face surgical and procedure delays each week as COVID-19 puts pressures on the hospital system. And Hospitals in Lambton are seeing so many people coming to the emergency department with COVID-19 symptoms, it’s limiting who can accompany someone who is sick into the hospital. Bluewater Health says 30 per cent more patients are coming through the doors of the emergency departments in Sarnia and Petrolia right now. Hospital staff is having a hard time maintaining the proper amount of distance between people as they wait for care. So, the hospital is limiting the caregivers who can enter the ER. Officials announced Thursday they are limiting one designated care partner to children and the critically ill, disabled or cognitively challenged patients only. Anyone else will have to come into the emergency department on their own.

A win, for crying out loud

The Independent

Petrolia’s town crier is tops in the province. Les Whiting placed first in the Ontario Guild of Town Criers Competition- it’s 20th annual event recently. Because of the pandemic, those who bellow

greetings at public events, proclaimed their news via video for the judges. Whiting, seen here at the right, went to Petrolia Discovery to present his entry. He won the Muskoka Escapades of Town Crying Trophy - the first place prize and the Best Natural setting.







JOHN KNOX

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL • WYOMING

is hosting their annual

Open House

Wednesday January 19, 2022
9:30-11:30 am and 1:00-3:00 pm

We invite all families (parents and students) interested in a Christian education at JKCS to come to the school and meet with the teachers, see classes in action, tour the facilities, look through curriculum and meet future classmates! Each potential student will enjoy some time in the classroom. Information packages will be available.

Due to Covid restrictions we politely request that families preregister. To register or for more info, please contact the office: 519-845-3112 or email info@wyomingjkcs.com

ALVINSTON CRASH



Emergency crews were called to the corner of Lorne and Lovell Streets in Alvinston Monday after a car struck a tree around 11 am. Lambton OPP, Brooke Fire and paramedics were all on the scene although it appears there were not life threatening injuries in the crash. Police were not releasing any further information by press time.

Stop the spread of germs that can make you and others sick!

Wash your hands often





Cover your coughs & sneezes



Wear a mask



Keep 6 feet of space when possible



GET YOUR VACCINE



Stay Home if you are sick



Get a COVID vaccine

Editorial

Ford waited to long

Welcome to another year of frustration.

That’s what it feels like for many as once again Ontario is in a fight with COVID-19, lives are upended when all we wanted was for 2022 to be normal.

It is undeniable the Omicron variant poses a huge threat; the fast-moving version of COVID-19 will make so many people ill, businesses are bracing for up to 30 per cent of their workforce to be off sick at one point.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford, during Monday’s announcement for the new restrictions which have many frustrated, said there could be between 100,000 to 200,000 new cases of COVID-19 daily. That would translate into 1,000 to 2,000 more people in hospital each day. And that would overwhelm hospitals, which will also be facing staff shortages as people become ill.

Something had to be done. But by waiting too long, the government had to take action in two places which damage the most people, schools and hospitals.

Ford had said schools would be the last to close however, kids are at home learning online and the mall can still have literally thousands of people shopping.

Surgeries and procedures are delayed again to make sure the 1,200 to 1,500 beds they use will be available for COVID-19 patients despite the fact professional hockey teams will still be allowed to play – albeit without fans.

And again, you’re asked not to meet with more than five people at a time.

Could have been different?

While Omicron is “a bulldozer...a steamroller” according to Chatham-Kent’s medical officer of health and would have had a huge impact in any case; we believe the current government did Ontarian’s a huge disservice by ignoring what needed to be done until after the Christmas vacation.

Scientists tasked with reading the signs of the pandemic from around the world warned this was coming. They warned action was needed immediately. But Premier Ford only made nominal changes when the Science Table assembled by the province raised the warning in mid December. Then, as Omicron was taking out health care workers leaving staff shortages, the province announced school would be delayed for two days as the Ministry of Education delivered N95 masks and more HEPA filters to schools. The premier only announced significant restrictions Monday.

While Ford and Ontario took Christmas vacation, Omicron continued its work. And so, we are here today. One can only wonder how many lives may have been saved had Premier Ford acted when scientists told him Omicron was coming and it was time to act.

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



PETROLIA HERITAGE PHOTO

With Silver Stick under our belts, we thought it would be good to look at another Petrolia hockey team. The local high school hockey squad from 1908.

Thousands will wait for their miracle as surgeries stalled

Nov. 19 changed my life, quite literally.

That was the day I had what the medical establishment terms non-emergent or elective surgery. While in the world of medicine it was not considered urgent, it was for me.

Five years ago, I noticed I was short of breath more often than normal. I didn’t think much of it, after all, working long hours meant I didn’t have the time to exercise for an hour or more a day as I had been. Looking back now, I should have known it wasn’t simply me being out of shape. I was gasping like I never had before and no matter what I did, it didn’t get better.

Two years ago, when I couldn’t walk up a flight of stairs without having to stop for several seconds to catch my breath, I knew I needed to see someone.

I saw my family doctor just before the pandemic came calling and changed health care.

As I waited for months for appoint-

ments which might give clues to whatever was bugging me, I could tell it was getting worse. I could hear myself wheezing like an old man having an afternoon nap whenever I talked. My friends would notice a noise in the room and I’d have to tell them it was me. It was frustrating and embarrassing. And I was almost always tired.

It took two years for me to see the right specialist and get into surgery for a very rare condition. Basically, there was a growth in my windpipe restricting my breathing. In 20 minutes, the specialist went in and removed it during surgery on Nov. 19 – my own little miracle.

It changed everything. I could breathe again. I was amazed that I was passing people while walking in the mall instead of being passed. I could walk for an hour and never be short of breath, I could go up the stairs as many times as I wanted and my energy returned.

I have little revelations everyday about how much better my life is now.

Monday, it hit me; there are 8,000 to 10,000 people a week in this province who also need their little miracle. Knee surgery or hip surgery, a cataract removed, a CAT scan – non-urgent surgeries and procedures which won’t save lives but will be a small miracle for those who need them. They will have to wait for them because the province has once again slowed surgeries as COVID-19 threatens to overwhelm the system.

There will be a lot of pain for those waiting. And there will be pain for the families of those who will die earlier because they didn’t receive treatment on time.



Heather Wright

The Independent
Serving Petrolia and Central Lambton

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Opinion

BWH says new COVID-19 situation ‘worrisome’

EDITOR’S NOTE: *The following letter was addressed to the Lambton County Community*

Bluewater Health is our community’s hospital and these last 22 months have been unlike any other. Our situation today, however, is the most worrisome yet.

Over the past two weeks we have more than quadrupled the number of COVID-positive patients in hospital (from seven to 31) and more than half of our intensive care unit is occupied by critically-ill patients with COVID pneumonia. We had to reopen a COVID-dedicated medical unit and have shut down all surgeries except the most urgent to redeploy staff to COVID-related care areas.

Our staff, who mainly live locally, are also more impacted by increased

community infections than ever before. The combination of increased patients and stretched staffing is making it difficult to manage the clinical loads. We have almost five times the usual number of staff on sick leave and we have many working double shifts and cancelling much-needed vacations.

Our ICU is seeing younger COVID patients -- many in dire situations. Most patients with severe COVID disease are not vaccinated yet and we are having end-of-life discussions with families of patients in all age categories, not just older ages. We are experiencing an increase of upwards of 30 per cent traffic in our Emergency Departments in Sarnia and Petrolia. Our phone is ringing off the hook as people are asking us, as a trusted resource, about what to do.

We are honoured and humbled to take care of our community. We own this responsibility with humility. Our best guidance to this community, now more than ever, is to please stay at home (don’t socialize), get vaccinated/boosted as soon as possible and wear a mask in public indoor spaces. Above all, please be kind to one another as we are truly in this together. Healthcare delays affect all of us with no exceptions.

For those of you who require hospital-level care: we are here for you and always will be. We’ve got you. Please help us help the people who need us most.

Thank you and stay safe.

Mike Lapaine, President & CEO
Dr. Mike Haddad, Chief of Staff

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• **Julie Maw**
Dealer - Courtright ON,
519-384-2281

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Brigden splashpad to undergo major fix in 2022

Heather Brouwer
Local Journalism Initiative

Brigden’s splash pad will be having some major work done this spring.

St. Clair Township council agreed at its Dec. 20 meeting to spend \$76,223 to address drainage issues that have plagued the facility for four years. That cost comes under the projected budget of \$100,000.

“I just hope it’s fixed properly because it’s half the price of the cost to install it,” said Mayor Steve Arnold at the virtual meeting.

The facility, which was built in 2013 at Brigden Optimist Park, has required a number of repairs since 2017 to address safety concerns surrounding heaving compound cement.

And in 2021, staff wrote a report indicating that concrete was “moving all over the place.”

Lambton Public Health approved an additional temporary fix for the 2021 season, but now the municipality will tackle the root of the problem.

The original installer, ABC Recreation, recommended drainage be put in at the time of installation, but this work was not done.

The company has since assessed the splash pad and determined it will need to demolish the existing concrete, place granular material down, and reinstall concrete around the existing splashpad features.

It will then install drains and complete the landscaping.

The splash pad was originally funded jointly between the township and the Brigden Optimist Club, and Councillor Rose Atkins asked whether that group might have interest in helping to fund the repair.

“Unfortunately, once these things are installed, they’re the townships’ baby,” said Deputy Mayor Steve Miller. “They’re our problem.”

Council voted in favour of the staff recommendation to waive the procurement policy and have ABC Recreation complete the repair, since it was the original installer, it is familiar with the equipment, and there is a tight timeline.

The project is scheduled for completion in June.

- THE INDEPENDENT



PUBLIC NOTICE

**WARWICK TOWNSHIP
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING**

TAKE NOTICE that a Special Council meeting will take place on
Wednesday, January 19, 2022 at 6 pm
for the 2022 Budget.

The meeting will take place electronically using Zoom teleconference and will be livestreamed to the Warwick Township YouTube channel
<https://www.youtube.com/channel>

The agenda for the meeting will be available on the Township’s website at www.warwicktownship.ca

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION,
contact the Township Office at
519-849-3926 or info@warwicktownship.ca

www.warwicktownship.ca

WINTER MAINTENANCE NOTICE

Snow Removal

- Under the Highway Traffic Act Section 181 – Deposit of snow on Roadway, states that “No person shall deposit snow or ice on a roadway without permission in writing to do so from the Ministry of Transportation or the road authority responsible for the maintenance of the road.”
- This generally applies to the snow that accumulates in laneways from precipitation and from private or municipal snow plowing operations, those who insist on plowing snow from private property onto public roads can be fined

Overnight Parking

- Residents are reminded there is no overnight parking on Town streets between 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.
- This allows for the Town’s Road Crews to plow the roads safely and efficiently, we ask that you please abide by the by-law and be considerate of the road crews when they are out doing their best to keep our roads open and in safe condition

Parking on Roadway

- Under the Highway Traffic Act Section 170.
Vehicles interfering with traffic
(12) Despite the other provisions of this section, no person shall park or stand a vehicle on a highway in such a manner as to interfere with the movement of traffic or the clearing of snow from the highway.
R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8, s. 170 (12).

Sidewalks


- Under By-Law Business owners are required to maintain the front area of their storefront, this includes the removal of snow
- The Sidewalk Plow will make its way through Town once permissible, Roads are priority for Works Crew once they are clear Sidewalks


Sporting Equipment

- Please ensure all sporting equipment ie: hockey nets, basketball nets are removed from the curb & roadway

Your co-operation is appreciated

Mike Thompson
Director of Operations





PUBLIC NOTICE
Town of Plympton-Wyoming

Please be advised that the
**Town of Plympton-Wyoming
2022 Draft Budget** and the
Water/Sewer Rates By-law
will be considered for adoption at the

Special Budget Council Meeting
to be held
Wednesday, January 19th 2022 at 5 p.m.



If needed, a second date for further consideration
will be on **Wednesday, January 26th 2022 at 5 p.m.**
before the regular scheduled Council Meeting.

Please monitor the Town's website for updates.

Members of the public are welcome to attend virtually.
Log-in information will be made available online
on the Towns website
www.plympton-wyoming.com
under **Public Notices** and at the top of the
Agenda which will be found at this link once published
<https://plympton-wyoming.civicweb.net/Portal/>

Copies of the draft Budget and By-law
will be made available upon request.

For any questions or additional information,
please contact: Erin Kwarciak, Clerk
Town of Plympton-Wyoming
(519) 845-3939 · ekwarciak@plympton-wyoming.ca



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(Left) The Buttery family was among those drawn to the shores of Lake Huron to say farewell to summer at Lamrecton Park Sept. 2 In the centre, St. Clair Township firefighters appeared to be trying to put out a fire on the sun during training Monday in Mooretown along the St. Clair River in July. And at the right, Janessa O'Hara, who grew up in Brooke-Alvinston, reaches into one of the cars at the Brooke-Alvinston COVID-19 drive thru testing centre at the arena in Alvinston after an outbreak at Brooke Central School in March.

A Year in Photos ~ 2021

A LOOK BACK WITH PHOTOS FROM PAGES OF THE INDEPENDENT



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO
Sports were welcomed back, cautiously during 2021. Austin Wilkins of the Wyoming Wranglers River League Team tags Landon Weir of the Camlachie Cougars (left) at Petrolia's Greenwood Park. (Centre) Mike Bush throws some shade at his sparring partner from the Ripley Wolves during the Petrolia Squires home opener. (Right) Michael Robertson of Petrolia practices his moves on ice on the north side of Bridgeview in January.

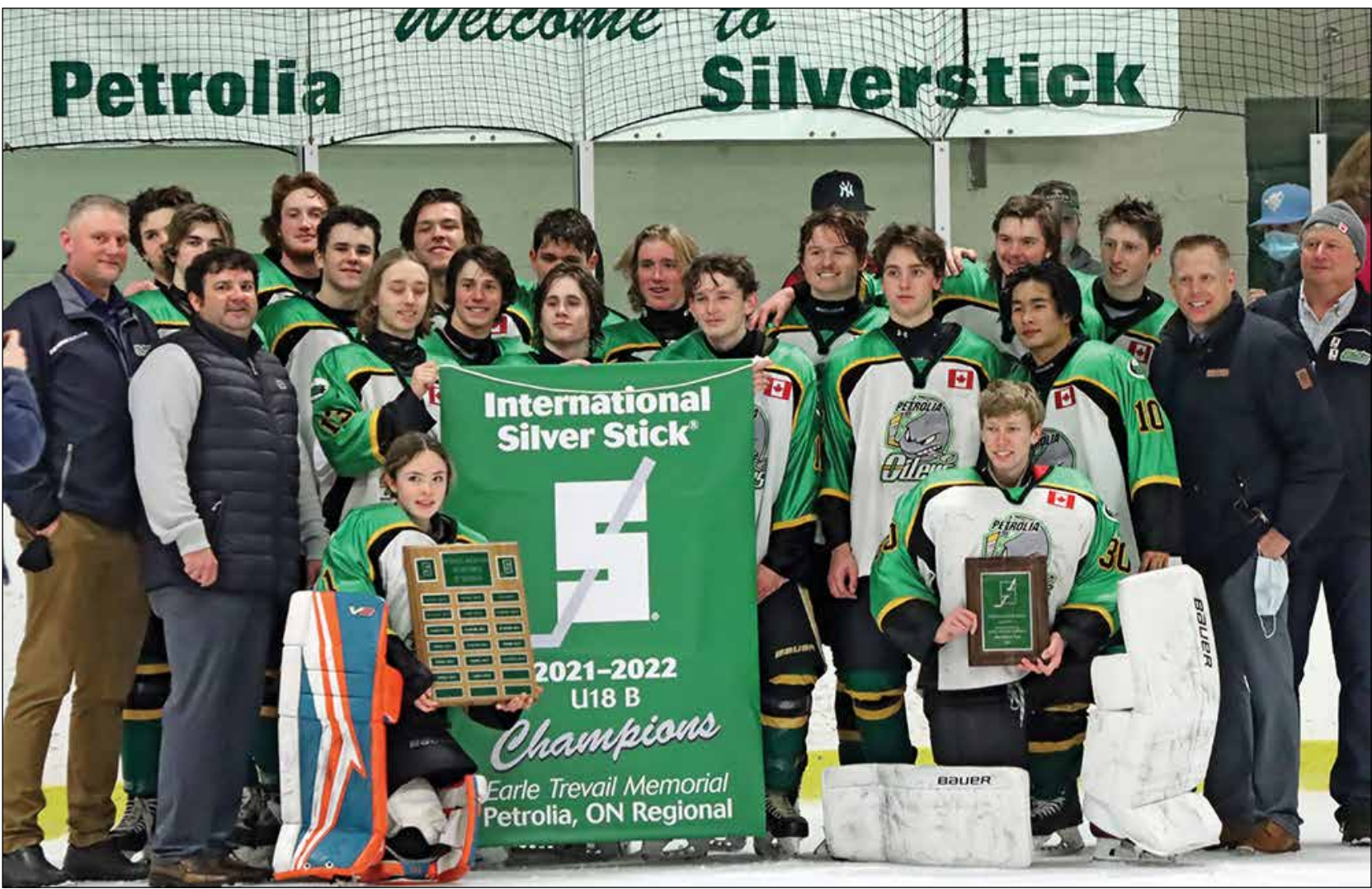


HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Service clubs, agriculture societies and community groups made sure there were still fun things to do in a year of restrictions. From let to right, The fire performer was on hand for the massive Alvinston Optimist Christmas Celebration. Harper Rattinga, 1, had an emotion filled first visit with Santa during Wyoming's Christmas in the Village. Charlotte Nicholaisen, five months, competed at the Petrolia Enniskillen Fall Fair Baby show. Members of the Leitch family were a colourful part of the Brooke-Alvinston-Watford Fall Fair parade. And Veronica and Leo Bechard of Petrolia get an egg from the Easter Bunny during the Petrolia Lion's event.



PETROLIA U18 B DIVISION
SILVERSTICK CHAMPIONS



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTOS
The Greenwood Recreation Centre was at capacity as the U18 Oilers took on Lambeth in the B Division Finals on Dec. 30. The Petrolia Oiler U18 Reps are the Petrolia Regional Silver Stick champs. The Reps beat Lambeth 4-3 in a tightly fought battle. Zak Wilson scored twice for the Oilers. Chelsea Denniss was in net for the win. The Reps were perfect throughout the tournament.



Sports

The girl behind the mask: U18 Rep’s Denniss

Heather Wright
The Independent

When the Petrolia Oiler Rep clinched the Petrolia Regional Silver Stick B championship Chelsea Denniss was in net.

Denniss of St. Thomas one of two goalies playing for the U18 Rep team and the only female on the team which defeated the Lambeth Lancers Dec. 30 to take the B Division crown. While young women are increasingly joining teams in the boys leagues to keep their skills sharp, it isn’t something which happens very often in Petrolia where girls have their own league – The Lambton Attack.

Denniss has been playing girls hockey since kindergarten. When she didn’t make a team in the girls division this year, she decided to try to play for a boys’ team. When things didn’t work out with a boys’ team in Sarnia, one of the parents suggested the family look to Petrolia.

Denniss made the U18 Rep team and has been on the ice with the Oilers since October where the team has racked up a 9-7-6 record. Petrolia also claimed gold at the Beaverloch Farms Hockey Tournament in November.

Denniss loves playing in Petrolia. “I chose to come to boys hockey just for my development, because it’s a much faster game and they obviously shoot a lot harder,” she tells *The Independent*. “I came over and they were so welcoming and accepting.”

Denniss started in figure skating at the age of four and after being goalie for her big brother



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Chelsea Denniss of St. Thomas backstopped the Petrolia Oilers U18 Rep team to wins in both the Silver Stick semi final and final this year.

at that tender age, her parents signed her up for hockey and she started in net.

“I was just always drawn to the position. I don’t really have a distinct reason, I just always remember being drawn to the net.”

Being in goal, she says, requires a lot of “mental strength.

“You really got to hold yourself in those games even when you’re not playing your best. You just have to learn to pull yourself together. And just really be out there for your team.”

OILER SHAMROCK MVP



BONNIE STEVENSON PHOTO

One of the last games on ice was the Shamrock Hockey League All-Star Game at Mooretown. Petrolia had two players in the Major League game - Hugh Graham and Liam Crummy - and four from Mooretown, Matty Anderson, Graham Armstrong, Kelly Johnson, and Jack Samson who played on the Green Central team. The Black North/South Team consisted of players from the Lucan Irish, the Lambton Shores Predators, Wallaceburg, Lambeth, and Dresden. Graham was named the MVP of the Major game which ended with a score of 6-6. In the minor game, Team Black topped Team Green 3-2.

Eagles Silver Stick finalists

The Independent

The East Lambton Eagles U11 and U18 teams both were finalists in the Christmas Silver Stick Tournaments in Petrolia and Alvinston.

The U11 team suffered a heartbreaking loss to the Lambton Shores Predators where the final score was 8-0. On way to the championship the Eagles beat Dresden 3-0, the Lucan Irish 8-0 and tied North Middlesex at 2.

In the U18 championship, the Eagles fell to Lucan 6-3 in the C finals after beating the Hagersville Hawks 3-1 and the Petrolia Oilers 7-0.



Lucan moves in for a shot during the U18 final.

Arenas shutdown again because of COVID

The Independent

New restrictions to blunt the effect of the latest COVID-19 wave will put a damper on most sports.

The Town of Petrolia says the Greenwood Recreation Centre will be closed until at least Jan. 27 - when the provincial government’s

restrictions on indoor sports facilities may ease. The same is true at arenas across Central Lambton.

High school sports will similarly be stalled as students return to on-line learning without sports until at least Jan. 17.

Only elite athletes and teams will be permitted to play.

5

TIPS FOR SHOVELING SNOW SAFELY

Shoveling snow is hard work, stay safe!

1 Keep up with the storm

2 Push don't lift or throw

3 Bend your knees

4 Pick the right shovel

5 Watch for ice

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Dr. Kevin Storozuk



Dr. Derek Martyniuk



www.lambtonchiropractic.ca

“A trophy carries dust. Memories last forever.”

- Mary Lou Retton

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2022

dog tags

2021 tags expire December 31, 2021

INTRODUCING ONLINE RENEWAL!

http://town.petroli.a.on.ca/town-hall/forms/

first tag \$30

second tag \$60

After January 31 \$45 1st; \$90 2nd

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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

In Memory

In loving memory of a dear husband, father, grandfather and friend.

Antonio Libreiro
May 28, 1942 - January 6, 1992
*In Spirit, Heart and Memory
Love Lives Forever.*

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by Bea Joe, Bernadine, Tony, Emma & Jesse Mike, Maria & Alyssa

In loving memory of a dear husband, dad, grandfather & brother in-law

ROBERT “BOB” D. ELLIOTT

November 11, 1936 - January 6, 2020

*Those whom we love go out of sight,
but never out of mind.*

*They are cherished in the hearts of those
they left behind.*

Margaret Elliott,
Greg & Colleen Elliott and Family,
Janice & Chris Francis and Family,
Dorothy Vogt

Wanted to Buy

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

Notice

BLUEWATER ANGLERS - **GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING** set for Tuesday January 11th, 2022 has been **CANCELLED.**

Cards of Thanks

The family of the late Marjorie Elda Fleck wish to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to our family, neighbours and friends for the flowers, food, cards and support given to us at the passing of our dear, Mom and Mimi. We offer our special thanks to Elaine Walker for the beautiful service you gave to us all. Thank you to Steven at Needham-Jay Funeral Home. Thank you to Dr. Borek and Dr Taylor for the care you provided over the years.

Thank you to the Staff on Victoria Way at Fiddick's for their care and compassion. To all, your thoughtfulness will never be forgotten.

Jane & Tony Straatman
Kevin, Tyler, Kyle and families



Thank you!

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks for all the love and thoughtfulness shown to our family in the recent loss of our beloved mother, Miriam Hord.

We would also like to thank the staff of Meadowview Villa for the exceptional care and the kindness shown to Mum and our family.

Janice and Rob Cassells
Susan and Wayne Arnold
and family

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.**

Obituaries

STEWART

John Stephen

We are devastated to announce the sudden passing of **JOHN STEPHEN STEWART (1951-2021)**, in his **71st year** at C.E.E. Hospital, Petrolia on **Monday, December 20, 2021**. A long-time resident of **Wyoming**, John is survived by his loving and caring partner Darlene Keates (Lumley). John will be deeply missed by his daughter Janelle and her husband Alan Hull of Kitchener, his daughter Jelissa and her husband Ross Buchanan of Waterdown, and his son Jordan and his wife Lindsay of Breslau. He was a proud Grandpa to Owen, Ryan, Gavin and Evan Hull, Carter, Presley, and Reagan Buchanan, and Jackson and Bryson Stewart. John was the son of the late Howard (1979) and Verna (nee O'Hara)(2006) Stewart and brother to the late James (1968) and Dorothy (2019). John successfully operated Stewart Electric for many years out of Wyoming and serviced much of Lambton County. He was also a devoted Lion and member of the Wyoming Lions Club. In 2017 he was awarded the Melvin Jones Fellow award for his many years of service and dedication with the Wyoming Lions. Additionally, in 2018 John was also presented with the Mayor's Community Appreciation Award. John worked passionately to make a difference in his community and was happiest when socializing with great friends and family. **Due to covid restrictions a private service was held on Wednesday, December 29, 2021 and a celebration of life will be at a later date. A livestream of the service was on www.facebook.com/NeedhamJay at 1:00 p.m.** As expressions of sympathy, memorial donations may be made to Lions Eyes Right (www.lionseyesright.ca). **Arrangements by Needham-Jay Funeral Home www.needhamjay.com.**




BROWN

Adeline Audrey Julianna (n Molzan)

July 5, 1939 - December 21, 2021

In Loving Memory of **Adeline Audrey Julianna (Molzan) Brown** - Age **82 of Brigden** (Petrolia), went to heaven peacefully on **Tuesday, December 21, 2021** surrounded by love in her daughter's home. Beloved wife of the late Eldon Brown for 44 years. Loving mother of Krista (Peter Mueller), Petrolia and Timothy (Lynette) Brown of Brigden. Dear grandma of Marissa and Mattias Mueller, Julianna, Brooklyn and Campbell Brown. Survived by her sister, Eleanor (late Gerald) Wilkinson and sister-in-law Eugenie (late Robert) Molzan. Beloved Aunt Adeline to many nieces and nephews. Predeceased by her parents, Ronald and Adele (Zitner) Molzan, and siblings Edward Molzan, Edna (Edward) Baker. Adeline went to Althouse Teachers College and began teaching in a one room schoolhouse (Walnut) at the age of 18. Her heart was always with missions and she worked with troubled youth in the inner city of Detroit. Most of the young men went away to war and never returned, but had prayed to receive Christ. Adeline loved her time as a missionary in Germany and recently in the Ukraine. She was a faithful Sunday School teacher, Junior Church instructor and Kids' Club leader at Voice of Truth (Oil Heritage Family Church) and the church pianist for over 25 years. Adeline became the first ESL (English as a second language) teacher in Lambton County and fought against the social injustice of immigrant families. Adeline was an avid gardener and wonderful cook. She had a real passion for distributing God's word through the Gideons and loved her son's Wisdom from the Farm videos. She was a woman devoted to prayer for New Life Assembly, Oil Heritage Family Church, her community, missions and her family. She was called many things, but "Gramma" was her favourite. Special thank you to long time family physician, Dr. Susan Mather, Anastasia Carron, Deb Bezanson, Dr. Maddison and the palliative team for their professionalism and compassion. We are so grateful for the love, prayers and support of our family, friends, church family and community. **Family and friends were received at New Life Assembly Church, 421 Oozloffsky Street, Petrolia on Monday, December 27, 2021 from 2-4 and 7-9pm. Funeral service was held at New Life Assembly Church on Tuesday, December 28, 2021 at 1:30 pm. The funeral service will be streamed online at: <https://vimeo.com/659720827/e9615691e0> - A private family interment to follow at Bear Creek Cemetery.** Sympathy may be expressed through donations to Share Word Global (formerly Gideons) (www.sharewordglobal.com). Memories and condolences may be sent online at www.steadmanbrothers.ca. **Arrangements entrusted to STEADMAN BROTHERS FUNERAL CHAPELS, Brigden 519-864-1193.**




Obituaries

KMETIC

Tony


Tony Kmetic, of Petrolia, passed away peacefully on **Friday, December 24, 2021** at Lambton Meadowview Villa, Petrolia in his **89th year**. Tony is survived by his wife of 68 years Anna (nee Zink) and his sons Rudy and his wife Patricia Kmetic and Paul Kmetic. Tony is survived by a brother Joe in his native Slovenia. Tony was a retired carpenter with Local 1256. **A private service will be held with interment in Hillsdale Cemetery, Petrolia.** As expressions of sympathy, memorial donations may be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation (www.heartandstroke.ca) or Alzheimer Society of (www.alzheimer.ca). **Arrangements by Needham-Jay Funeral Home www.needhamjay.com.**



POOL

Hijlke Ralph

Ralph Pool - on **Tuesday, December 21, 2021** God opened his arms and welcomed home our loving husband, father and grandfather, **Hijlke Ralph** at the age of **77**. He will be deeply missed and forever remembered by Willy, his wife of 51 years, and their children: Tammy and Jim and their children Victoria, Nicole, Robert and Samantha, Lisa and Jose and their son Jack, and Jose's children Josh, Sarah and Emma, Amanda and Dave and their children Ian and Mya, and Christopher and Laura and their children Alyssa, Nolan and Katelyn. Also mourning him are his sisters Anna and Rita, brothers and sisters-in-law Albert and Margaret, and Jenny and Bob, and many nieces and nephews. Predeceased by parents Klaas and Antine, brothers and sisters-in-law Minnert and Jean, William and Alice, Wietse and Nellie, Jack, and Jim. Ralph had a great love for his family, his friends and farming. Memorial donations to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (www.foodgrainsbank.ca) or the Canadian Cancer Society (www.cancer.ca) would be appreciated. Due to Covid there will be no visitation. **A private service was held for immediate family only. Service was available to be viewed on YouTube at Wyoming CRC on Wednesday, December 29, 2021 at 10:30 am.** Arrangements by Needham-Jay Funeral Home www.needhamjay.com.



PARKER

Mildred

Peacefully after a short illness, **Mildred Parker (Weigel) of Watford**, Ontario passed away on **Friday, December 31, 2021** at Bluewater Health Sarnia. Predeceased by her husband Harold Parker in 2003. Survived by her son Robert Parker of Waterloo, brother David Weigel (late Lucy), sisters Helen Brown (Weigel) (late Jack) and Norma Dunham (John) all of Elmira and many nieces and nephews. Predeceased by her parents Norman and Helen (Nellie) Weigel. Predeceased by her brother-in-law David and sister-in-law Dorothy Parker. Mildred and her husband Harold owned and operated H.S. Parker Hardware and Gift store in Alvinston from 1951 to 1986. Mildred also operated the Ontario Motor Vehicle Licence Office from their store for more than 20 years. She was active with her husband in the Alvinston Rotary Club for almost 50 years and an active member of Guthrie Presbyterian Church, Alvinston for nearly 70 years where she had many friends. Their cottage in McCosh Grove at Bruce Beach, Ontario was a very special place for her where she had many special friends for more than 70 years. Remember her for her cooking, baking and smile. **Visitation was held at the Van Heck Funeral Home, Alvinston on Tuesday, January 4th from 2-4pm. Funeral Service Wednesday, January 5, 2022 at 1pm from Guthrie Presbyterian Church, Alvinston. Due to COVID restrictions, attendance is limited. Only those with an appointment will be allowed in. Pre-registration is required for visitation and service for EVERYONE. Masks and social distancing from the family and those around them is also required. Private interment Ripley Cemetery.** Memorial donations may be made to C.E.E. Hospital Petrolia, South Bruce Grey Health Center, Kincardine or Guthrie Presbyterian Church, Alvinston. Special thanks to the C.E.E Petrolia ER staff and Dr. Kim and Palliative Care staff at Bluewater Health Sarnia. **To register for visitation, funeral service, join Livestream of service or to leave online condolences or memorial donations, please visit www.vanheckfuneralhome.ca**



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