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MPs 'stand with our truckers'

Heather Wright

The Independent

Marilyn Gladu says 'the whole economy will be destroyed and Canadians will have a hard time finding the food they need to eat' if the federal government doesn't end vaccine mandates for truck drivers.

The Sarnia Lambton MP and her counterpart in Lambton-Kent-Middlesex both voiced support for truck drivers whose nation-wide convoy landed in Ottawa and is occupying the downtown of the capital.

An estimated 8,000 people travelled from all over Canada, including Lambton (see page 2), to Ottawa.

Some truck drivers wanted to voice their frustration with a federal vaccine mandate for drivers heading into the United States. The US also has a vaccine mandate for truck drivers.

But as the protest movement gath-

ered steam and supporters, the rallying cry became to end all COVID-19 protocols.

There was wide spread criticism of the protest, which was still ongoing at press time. Protesters were seen carrying flags with swastikas and the Confederate Flag - a symbol of hate. Videos surfaced of protestors dancing the grave of the unknown soldier and the Terry Fox statue was dressed up as a protestor.

People living around Parliament Hill complained of being harassed when wearing a mask and businesses in the downtown closed to avoid having unmasked protestors occupying their stores. The Rideau Mall was among those which remained closed for days.

Both Gladu and Liane Rood voiced their support for the convoy but not the violence seen at the protest.

SEE CÓNVOY PG 2

Petrolia teacher guilt of sex offence

Blake Ellis

Local Journalism Initiative

"I know I have hurt your family. I think about it every day and literally will for the rest of my life," says Gillian Boere.

The former Petrolia teacher wrote these words in a Facebook message to the mother of her victim – words used as evidence as she was found guilty of taking advantage of her relationship with a teenaged boy.

"I will never forgive myself on how this has affected him, ever."

Boere was found guilty of sexual exploitation in a Sarnia court on Jan. 28 after four encounters over the summer of 2019. Sexual exploitation charges are laid when a person is a position of trust or authority to a minor according to the Criminal Code.

Boere was elementary school teacher in Petrolia but the 16 yearold male was not a student. There is a publication ban on any evidence which might identify the teen including how they knew each other.

Court heard the encounters began after the break up of Boere's marriage. The teen visited her home

and she began to cry. He asked her if she needed a hug, which last five to 10 minutes. The two then shared a kiss before the teen left. Court heard she told the teen not to say anything about the incident because she could be in trouble.

There were two other sexual encounters, one which the judge found sexual touching had taken place the other where there was intercourse.

The teen distanced himself from Boere after having sex in the 34 yearold's car in August.

Boere who had faced four charges was found guilty of the single count of sexual exploitation.

A pre-sentence report was ordered as the court prepares to decide on a punishment. The case was adjourned until March.

While the Ontario College of Teachers' has yet to hold a discipline hearing, officials with the public school board says Ontario law requires any teacher found guilty of "guilty of professional misconduct involving sexual offences face a mandatory loss of their teaching certification."

- THE INDEPENDENT

EYE ON THE PUCK



Jack Morningstar keeps his eye on the puck as he goes down during the first game for the Petrolia U18 AE team since December. The province lifted COVID restrictions which opened arenas across Ontario to play again.

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ambton residents join COVID protests, convoy to Ottawa

Heather Wright The Independent

Lambton County residents joined the nation-wide movement to rid the country of COVID-19 rules.

A Truckers' Convoy protesting vaccine mandates for drivers kicked off the protest which morphed into

a rally against all rules put in place to stop the spread of COVID-19 over the past two years.

Thursday, hundreds of people, many with Canadian flags and protest signs, were in Reece's Corners. Some were there to begin the southern Ontario leg of the Truck Convoy. Many if the

people at Reece's Corners were driving personal vehicles and others lined the road to show support. Signs protested many of the pandemic measures including lockdowns and the vaccination passports.

About two-thirds of the vehicles in Reece's Corners headed out on the highway

as part of the protest and were greeted, mostly starting in London, by people lining the overpasses showing their support.

As the protest moved to Ottawa Saturday, police estimated about 8,000 people at Parliament Hill, although by Tuesday, the number of actual transports still protesting dwindled to about 73 according to media reports. Their horns continued to blare through the downtown as the House of Commons resumed sitting.

Petrolia resident Greg Drope was one of the people supporting the convoy. He could join the truckers, so he set up an impromptu rally in front of Athena's

Restaurant. The owner had stayed open through the provincial lockdown in January and faced about \$5,000 in fines.

"It's the perfect place to support these people," he says adding he was on the street today because he is "sick of this bull sh** government." While the protest continued, Ontario's COVID-19

Science Advisory Table released new projections. "Ontario's hospitals remain under serious pressure... The bottom line – there will probably be a jump in hospitalizations as Ontario re-opens. We need to keep an eye on spread while we accelerate vaccination in every age," they wrote.



A woman climbs on her car to get a better look at the convoy while others took photos in Reece's Corners.



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

About a dozen people joined the Truckers' protested Saturday in Petrolia.

Convoy greeted by local MPs who denounce violence **CON'T FROM PG 1**

Lambton-Kent-Middlesex MP recorded a video in front of the Peace Flame before the protestors arrived.

"I stand with out truckers," she said calling them heroes in the pandemic.

"They're coming here to tell the Trudeau Liberals they will no longer be abused and have their rights and freedoms taken away...I will be here with the truckers...to stand for freedom."

When reports started surfacing of the white nationalist roots of some of the organizers and stories of some protestors bad behavior including relieving themselves in the downtown and demanding meals from a homeless shelter came to light Rood denounced them.

For her part, Gladu has been talking about the vaccine mandates for truckers for some time. In a video posted to her Facebook page, the MP voices concern that the economy will fall apart without the unvaxxed truckers.

The Canadian Trucking Association says 10 per cent of drivers have not been vaccinated. While there has been a long-standing shortage of drivers, the association said losing the drivers would not lead to shortages. Gladu however said consumers are starting to see "grocery store shelves empty."

Gladu also went down to the protest with tellow MP Candice Bergen and posted a photo of a meal the pair shared with two



Sarnia-Lambton MP Marilyn Gladu and MP Candice Bergen have dinner with two protestors.

truckers who were not identified. Of the nearly 100 comments on the social media post, only one questioned Gladu's meeting with the truckers.

But Gladu did distance herself from some of the more offensive events. "I support the original message of the trucker's protest to allow Canadian truckers to support themselves and their families, keeping stores stocked and shelves full, without the threat of their livelihood taken from them due to the vaccine mandate," she said on social media adding she supported the "peaceful truckers who came to Ottawa to spread their message - not those who came to desecrate our monuments and spread hate."

Gladu advocates the prime minister work with the US to get rid of the mandate or do as President Joe Biden has done and remove it for smaller companies and truckers who travel alone.





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Withdrawal management centre gets green light, construction takes two years

Heather Wright The Independent

After more than a decade of waiting, the province has finally approved a withdrawal management center in Lambton.

But it's not a quick fix. Officials say it is likely to take two years before construction even begins on the long awaited treatment center.

Bluewater Health officials and Sarnia-Lambton MPP Bob Bailey announced a one-time capital grant for the project up to \$12,231,200 to move into the planning, tender, and design phase of the project.

"This long-awaited news is so welcomed," says MPP Bob Bailey.

"Our community has been experiencing an addictions crisis for several years now, having been especially heightened by the impact of the pandemic over the last two years.

"I'm so proud that we are moving into the next phase of this project, and that we were able to address the community's cry for help."

Bailey added the announcement was likely delayed at least a vear because of the COVID-19 pandemic's affect on long-term planning at the provincial level.

Fifteen years ago, Lambton County councillors called for a withdrawal management centre, putting \$250,000 aside to help. There was great concern there were no facilities for people who wanted to come clean.

But the calls of Lambton politicians 15 years ago seemed to be unheard.

Three years after that, Bluewater Health started planning for a 24 bed withdrawal management treatment facility but the work was

Four years ago, Bluewater Health it will be a self-contained centre opened the first seven withdrawal management beds in existing hospital space.

Last year, the doors opened to the new temporary 12 bed withdrawal management stabilization and transitional facility, commonly known as Ryan's House.

Even with the advancements, in Bluewater Health officials said they are turning aside six to twelve requests every day from people wanting to come clean.

And that's having deadly consequences for families, according to a recent survey. Last June, public health officials say there was a 48 per cent increase in deaths from opioid overdoses, from 21 in 2019 to 40 in 2020.

Monday's announcement will see services consolidated in an unused wing of the hospital which fronts on Russell Street. Once completed

with a private entrance.

"We are very grateful for this provincial commitment and look forward to the next steps in completing a permanent Community Addictions Hub to support our community's growing needs," says Bluewater Health President and CEO, Mike Lapaine who said intense planning is underway to get construction.

"The next step of this process is really to get our architects work to put together a plan that's ready to take to tender.

"So, we would hope that in less than two years we should be under construction."

The Community Addictions Hub will include 10 withdrawal management beds, eight observation for acute withdrawal phase, and six stabilization or transitional beds.

"We've referenced this so many times in the past and it's just so exciting to finally be at this point," said Paula Reaume Zimmer, the vice president of Mental Health and Addictions at Bluewater Health, and heads up the project.

And Lori Hicks, who has been advocating for withdrawal management services since her son died of an overdose, said she could barely stop from jumping out of her chair with joy during the virtual announcement.

"I think a key with addiction is when somebody has made that decision to change their life, they need the bed now, not calling back every day for a week or two weeks," she says.

"And we're going to be able to do that. And to know that the wait is not going to be there anymore – that there's going to be a place to save a life – it's huge."

Lambton vaccine clinics open to walk-ins with MOH saying we're 'in the home stretch' the demand for vaccine is waning. are basing future schedules on the course of the nearly month wave.

The Independent

Lambton's medical officer of health says "We're in the home stretch" when it comes to vaccination.

Lambton Public Health announced today it will allow walk-ins for everyone at all COVID-19 vaccine clinics. Thursday, during a call with reporters, Dr. Sudit Ranade said Public health is making it easier to get whatever dose is needed.

"We are in the home stretch," said Ranade in a news release Monday. "We have many available appointments at the clinics in February and we're urging those who have not been vaccinated to do so now.

'We are starting to see a decline in bookings, so LPH will continue to offer clinics this month, but

demand."

Ranade says the supply of Pfizer has also stabilized so everyone is now eligible for that type of vaccine.

Meantime an outbreak at a Petrolia long term care home is over after nearly a month. Fiddick's has been dealing with an outbreak of COVID since Dec. 30. Fourteen residents and 28 staff tested positive for the virus over

long outbreak.

Despite almost all long term care residents and staff being fully vaccinated and boosted, the COVID-19 variant Omicron is highly transmissible and creeped into local homes. Ranade, says for the most part the fact the residents in homes have had vaccine has reduced the severity of the illness. But he adds long term care home residents have also died in this

There are still eight outbreaks in Lambton right now including the largest outbreak at Trillium Villa where 59 residents and 38 staff were ill and another at Watford Quality Care where 15 residents and 15 staff are ill.

Lambton Public Health says 108 people have died of COVID-19 in the region since the pandemic began – 26 of those people died in January.





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Editorial

We're weary; COVID isn't

If we needed more proof of the weariness of Canadians brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, we give you the Trucker's Convoy which rolled through southern Ontario this week on the way to Ottawa.

The original purpose, we were told, was truck drivers wanted COVID-19 mandates for those working in the US to be repealed. Those protesting, and their political supporters, said thousands of drivers had not been vaccinated and it would bring the supply chain to a screeching halt. In fact, the Canadian Trucking Association says 10 per cent of truck drivers remain unvaccinated. Ninety per cent have been working to bring you the food and consumer goods you need. Any bare shelves have nothing to do with the mandate.

There are horrible elements to this 'protest' - the fact organizers express goal was to overthrow the government and they brought their racist friends with them to dance on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and make fun of the Indigenous people of this land.

But w hile these truckers made their way from all points across the province, they were joined by supporters. You could find people from every walk of life; middle aged church ladies preparing lunches, wild-eyed twenty-somethings going on an adventures, farmers, neighbours, seniors, and children. They all had different reasons; it's the surgeries that aren't being done or families can't be together at death, it's my business being closed and then opened and then closed again. It's that damned prime minister. These are all valid issues - issues we all are weary of after almost two years of uncertainty. There is no one who wants this to continue.

But it will, even if the truck drivers and supporters stay on Parliament Hill until the next election. The politicians may be making the rules, but their hand is forced by COVID-19. People say 'we all have to get on with our lives, so drop every rule and let the chips fall where they may.' Or to put it crassly - it's survival of the fittest. Is that what we want for Canada?

Are you willing to let your elderly mother or little child become gravely ill with the virus? Perhaps they'll live or live with lifelong disabilities. Or perhaps they'll die. Maybe it won't be COVID. Maybe, because there are so many people in the hospital with a virus gone wild, they won't have their cancer surgery. Our guess is no.

Letters to the Editor

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You can also deliver letters to *The Independent* at 4156 Petrolia Line, Petrolia or drop them in the mail at *The* Independent, Petrolia, ON, NON 1R0.

The Independent reserves the right to edit letters for brevity

All letters need to be signed and must have a phone number for verification.

Our Story



This postcard from Petrolia Heritage and the Bradshaw Collection shows team of horses pulls the rig shack to the next spot to be drilled. The structure is on skids.

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'We all have much to learn' about PTSD

EDITOR: We are writing to you regarding the article 'Lambton EMS mourns loss of one of their own' by Heather Wright.

As the union representing Lambton County EMS workers, we are disappointed with some of the statements in the article which are attributed to a Deputy Manager at Lambton County EMS about the death of one of their own.

More than one in four first responders will suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Roughly 27 percent of all paramedics will develop PTSD, and sadly some will lose their battle. Neil Harvey, a beloved paramedic from Lambton County EMS, tragically was one of the 27 percent.

Neil's passing troubled his coworkers in immeasurable ways and also triggered anger in others as they try to come to terms with his death. While managing this loss and leaning on each other, the comments about how Neil died and the fact that his PTSD was treated – as though it had been in the past - were hurtful.

"The paramedic died suddenly just before Christmas of a drug overdose. Brooks, the Lambton EMS deputy manager, said he'd struggled with PTSD from his work but had been treated. He also struggled with addiction.'

It is difficult to understand what may have prompted Jeff Brooks, Lambton EMS deputy manager, to present his

speculation as fact in your newspaper. Perhaps the comments were taken out of context, or perhaps, also made in a state of grief. Nonetheless, they did have a serious impact on those who knew and loved Neil.

This article shows that we all have much to learn about the effects of PTSD on paramedics and we owe to Neil and many others to do better.

Commemoration, support, and education should be the driving force following tragedies such as Neil's, especially at a time when so many other frontline workers are facing similar battles.

> Laurie Chapman Union Representative, **SEIŪ** Healthcare

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Plympton-Wyoming increases town taxes two per cent

Heather Wright

The Independent

Plympton-Wyoming homeowners will be shelling out another two per cent for municipal taxes.

Councillors got their first look at the budget Jan. 19. Treasurer Norma Roddick-Preece says the proposed \$24 million operating and capital budget with a proposed four per cent tax increase. The administrative proposal drew heavily on the municipality's savings. About \$5.7 million is recommended to be taken out of reserve to complete projects. "Future budgets will need to start to rebuild depleted reserves," she said at the time.

But councillors were not prepared to raise taxes at the current rate of inflation. "Everybody is getting hit hard and we thought it was a good opportunity to come in as low as we could," says Mayor Lonny Napper.

"It would have been a little dangerous to go down below two per cent because I think the rate of inflation was five (per cent) or something like that. And we have obligations here that we got to keep up with. So we sent it back and thought we could live with a two per cent increase."

Councillor Mike Vasey agreed. "Especially with the COVID factor, everybody is feeling the pincher email. So if we can keep the budget, down to what I say a reasonable number, it helps everybody out. Because your food bills are going up, everything else is going up," he says

"I don't believe in zero ever because then you're losing ground and we're losing ground at two per cent. But our reserves are such that we can afford a little bit of leeway here and save everybody on taxes a little bit, and this is a good year to do it.'

Vasey adds it is difficult however, since a lot of the big

ticket items the municipality has to put money in are also

Included in the 2022 is \$250,000 set aside for Highland Glen - a park the municipality is currently in negotiations to take over from the St. Clair Parkway Commission. Plympton-Wyoming requested the regional park be turned over because the authority was taking a lot of time trying to decide whether to rebuild an ice-damaged boat ramp and the erosion ravaged shoreline.

Originally, \$1 million was set aside by staff, however councillors didn't expect they would be able to spend that much in 2022, considering the town doesn't even own the park yet. Conservation authority figures pin the cost of refurbishing the ramp and repairing the shoreline damage at about \$3 million over a number of years.

There is also money set aside in the PW budget to reinforce the slope of Hillcrest Road, which has been failing for a couple of years, and the reconstruction of Queen Street between Fleming Road and Windcliff Lane. The area is ripe with new housing developments.

As it stands, the capital budget is up \$1.3 million from 2021 and the operating budget has increased \$1.1 million

The largest increase comes in the general government portion of the budget with spending going up 13.2 per cent. But staff continue to point out the town is falling further

behind maintaining the assets it already has. If the town were to adequately maintain all it's assets, Roddick-Preece says taxes would need to go up 72 per cent or \$6 million.

With the changes made by council and with housing prices in Lambton averaging at \$475,000 this year, that would amount to about \$63 more a year.

Warwick decides against increasing taxes due to 'extraordinary times'

Heather Wright The Independent

Warwick Township homeowners won't be paying more for municipal taxes this year.

That's a shift from recent years as Treasurer Trevor Jarrett urged council to slowly but steadily raise taxes to fully pay for operating costs. The township had been using some of the tipping fees generated by Waste Management for operations in the past.

The proposed 2022 budget built in a 2.5 per cent increase which would have brought in about \$65,000 more in taxes. But councillors decided against

The 2022 budget has \$11,799,000 in spending. In 2021, the township budgeted about \$11,200,000 but spent according to the budget documents

\$8.1 million. That's despite spending over \$800,000 more than planned in the general government area in 2021. The public got its first look at what

the new administration building in Watford will cost. The 2022 budget maps out \$190,842

in spending for the leased building, including \$108,000 for the first year's lease. That money will come out of the

There will be \$7.24 million in capital spending funded in large part by the revenue generated Waste Management. They amounted to over \$2 million in 2020. The township will also take \$2.3 million from reserves to fund some of the projects.

In a presentation to council, Jarrett says the biggest building project, the \$11.5 million East Lambton Community Centre, will be paid through a low interest loan from Infrastructure Ontario. He adds staff is still looking for grant funding for the project.

The township will also spend \$30,000 on studies for wayfaring signs and marketing for the township.
Council agreed to spend \$350,000 on

the Watford fire hall.

After hearing the budget presentation, Councillor Todd White said "given the year we've gone through, do you think we could forego an increase this year?"

Jarrett said that was the route other municipalities were going, considering the cost pressures people are facing. Jarrett said \$65,000 would come out of revenues however there is likely to be extra income because of growth.

Councillor Wayne Morris says he normally would want to continue with small increases but these are "extraordinary times - let it go."



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Family, union wants better PTSD help

Neil Harvey's struggled to get treatment before his death

Heather Wright

The Independent

Nick Cake says Lambton County EMS needs to do more to help paramedics with post traumatic stress disorder.

The Sarnia lawyer's brother, Neil Harvey, died suddenly before Christmas. He had been diagnosed with PTSD in June 2020 and Cake says it was a real struggle to get help, despite an employee assistance plan available for paramedics.

Cake says Harvey became a volunteer firefighter in Ilderton when he was just 17. He was one of the only high school student carrying a pager to school. "He was a first responder from the second he could be a first responder."

He was a volunteer firefighter and trainer for years where he dealt first hand with serious traumas. Then he became a paramedic in Lambton. "I think things really hit home when he was on full time basis as a paramedic," says Cake adding his PTSD likely came from an "accumulation of everything he'd seen."

Cake says Harvey was constantly ready to help in an emergency, once helping to save a man having a massive heart attack in the Lambton Mall while he was on break. He'd also helped family members in medical emergencies. "I never heard a story of one direct incident. I think there's a multitude of incidents and I'm sure that there was one that was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back, but it could have been any one of them."

Laurie Chapman, a union rep for SEIU Healthcare representing Lambton Paramedics, says PTSD is not uncommon in first responders. Twenty-seven per cent are diagnosed with the mental health issue.

PTSD is caused when people witness or involved traumatic events - a daily occurrence for first responders.

People with PTSD can have flashbacks and nightmares. Left untreated, they start withdrawing from family and begin to feel hopeless. People with PTSD can have trouble sleeping and concentrating, become angry and aggressive when they weren't before, close relationships - like marriages - strain and fall apart. Often, people with PTSD have self destructive behaviours like drinking or doing drugs.

With the right help, people can learn to cope with PTSD. But help for the illness is not easy to come by.

Cake says Harvey was frustrated as he tried on his own to navigate the system set up for the paramedics.

In Lambton, the Employee Assistance Program provides care to paramedics who are on the job. But that care becomes fragmented when they have to leave work because of the PTSD.

Chapman says the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board recognizes and pays for treatment for PTSD, but you have to use their approved providers. That can lead to long wait times.

"We have people who are off and they continue to be off. PTSD is not something you just recover from, it's an ongoing every-day battle for them... (Treatment is about) how do you cope and a lot of that involves aftercare," she says.

When paramedics end up on waiting lists while on WSIB, they start looking for alternatives. That's what Harvey's family was doing, when he died of an overdose.

"I know that Neil was frustrated with it (trying to find help)," says Cake.

"But that was a fight that he had to undertake on his own. You can't have your mom or dad call up HR - your brother or your sister call up HR - when you're a grown man. We want to pick up the phone, but ultimately that was a fight that he had to have. And I know that it was difficult."

Cake says once Harvey left work because of his PTSD, he was left to fend for himself.

"There should be ways in which the county is going to facilitate access to those programs or you just were lost in the woods."

Cake says when "Neil went off of work, because of PTSD, the (Employee Assistance Plan) lapsed because he wasn't at work. And then he had to start the process all over again of going through WSIB and the psychologists that the province employs.

"You acquire PTSD through your employment, from an employer that you've done nothing but been loyal to - who says all the time they're 'gonna have your back' and 'we support you' - and then you're kind of left in the woods."

Cake says the family stepped in vowing to find and pay for psychologists privately to get Harvey the help he needed.

"We didn't have the opportunity to have counselling long term because Neil passed away tragically before I think we consider anything long term."

Cake contacted *The Independent* after an article appeared about Harvey's death. In it, the deputy manager of Lambton EMS, Jeff Brooks, explained Harvey had PTSD and had been treated. And he told *The Independent* Harvey had died of a drug overdose.

Cake says that hit family and the paramedic community hard. They felt Brooks' explanation showed a lack of understanding about PTSD and gave the impression the county actively helped Harvey. "The treatment was sought by his family. The treatment was sought by Neil trying to find resources."

He says even things such as treatment for addictions - which are part PTSD - were not paid for by the employer. Cake says many of the trades in Sarnia-Lambton will help cover the cost of addiction treatment for their workers, while first responders' employers don't.

Mental health help for paramedics has been an issue for some time. In 2015, paramedics protested in front of the Lambton County building saying there was not enough support for those with PTSD. They wanted a peer support group formed to help. It became a contract issue, one the union at the time said it had achieved.

Chapman says Lambton has developed a very good peer support program for people. "We're in the process of making that more robust if we can and trying to work with the employer to do that," she says.

But, she admits dealing with PTSD is a life-long struggle and once a paramedic goes off work to deal with the issue, there is an attitude of when paramedic moves to WSIB system, "'we don't have to deal with it anymore.' And that's not only Lambton, that's every employer going."

Often, she says, the union tries to intervene with employers to get the paramedics the help they need.

For the family's part, Cake says they want the county to truly understand the serious life-long battle people with PTSD face and provide help so "you don't have to jump through 1,000 hoops when you when you open up and when you're brave enough to admit that there's something going," he says. "My hope is that your employer has your back and doesn't just leave you to fend for yourself."

Ajax teen second victim in double murder

Heather Wright

The Independent

Lambton OPP has identified a teen from Ajax - who had a love for basketball - as the person found south of Oil Springs in a double murder.

On. Dec 28, around 2:30 pm, OPP were called to Crooked Road in Enniskillen Township, south of the village. Police say human remains were found. Shortly after, police searched a home on Watson St in Sarnia and found another man dead.

Forensic investigators and the coroner have been trying to positively identify the person found in Enniskillen. Today, they say Jelani Byer-Coates, 18, of Ajax has been identified as the second victim. The teen's social media feed was dominated with people associated with basketball.

Police didn't make a connection between Byer-Coates and the first victim Police identified the first victim, Lance Richardson, 31, of Mississauga on Jan. 1. Richardson, who had a criminal record which dated back over ten years, had been arrested in a summer drug raid in Toronto. Peters said those charges could have netted his client a heavy prison sentence considering his lengthy criminal record and the amount of drugs and weapons found in the raid.

But in October he was released after the crown dropped the charges. Peters believed there was an issue with the search warrant, however he didn't inquire about the official reason, content his client would not face charges.

Richardson was in Lambton visiting friends before Christmas according to his lawyer, Stefan Peters. His partner was expecting Richardson would spend Christmas with her and their two year-old son, but he never returned home.

Peters says Richardson had recently called him, concerned about rumours he had traded information about other drug dealers in return for the trafficking charges being dropped. Peters says that wasn't the case.

A 42 year-old man is facing second degree murder charges. Matthew Theriault, of Sarnia and a native of Oil Springs, had been charged with two counts of second degree murder and two counts of indignity to a dead body.

PW's CAO injured in Oil Heritage Line crash

Lambton OPP say one person was injured in a single car accident on Oil Heritage Line in Plympton-Wyoming.

Lambton OPP Media Relations Officer Const. Jamie Bydeley said the accident occurred Thursday evening. One person was taken to hospital. The Independent has confirmed Plympton-Wyoming CAO Carolyn Tripp was injured in the accident. Mayor Lonny Napper says the family has asked for privacy in the wake of the accident. Napper adds Treasurer Norma Roddick-Preece will stand in for Tripp as long as necessary.



Guild Chocolates

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LTC minister noncommittal on not-for-profit care as new build gets OK

Heather Wright

The Independent

Ontario Minister of Long Term Care is being vague about whether the province plans to use non-profit care providers in nursing homes instead of for-profit companies.

It was a recommendation made by the Ontario Long Term Care Commission in April 2021.

Paul Callandra was part of a virtual announcement for a new long term care home in Sarnia Friday. Revera Canada will replace the 100-bed Sumac Lodge and add another 156 beds to the home which will be near Sarnia's industrial park on London Line.

Revera Canada President JP Cadeau said the new home is a major milestone in the forprofit company's "journey to redevelop our older long term care homes" including more single bed rooms.

Older homes with ward rooms are a breading ground for COVID-19. Sumac Lodge has been struggling with an Omicron outbreak since Dec. 31. Over one-third of the 100 residents and 36 staff members have tested positive for the virus.

The age of homes was one of the many issues raised by the Ontario Long Term Care Commission which looked at why nearly 4,000 long-term care residents and 11 staff died of COVID-19 in the first year of the pandemic.

The commission said while private

companies could be involved in the building of the infrastructure for long term care, notfor-profit care organizations should be taking care of the people in the homes, instead of for-profit entities.

Since the report was released in April 2021, the province has been awarding 30 year long term care home licenses to large for-profit companies like Revera and Chartwell. Health care advocates have protested, saying for-profits had a much higher death rate than non-profit homes during the pandemic. Revera had the fourth highest death rate from COVID per 100 beds in Ontario.

Callandra was evasive when asked Friday if the provincial government would start following the recommendation.

"We're going to continue to work with all partners in the long term care system; we all share the same goal of ensuring that we have the highest quality of care for the residents in long term care," he said. The minister added the province is committed to four hours of care per resident and has plans to train and hire 27,000 more personal support workers.

"There is a lot of work being done to ensure that we have the highest quality of care for registered to long term care working with our partners. And I think we're very much on the right track."

But a man who identified himself only as Eric who said he works with the staff at Sumac Lodge was skeptical.

He told Callandra he was pleased there will be more beds but "we're having issues staffing 100 beds at this point time."

He also asked Callandra when all long term care employees would be getting wage increases. There was no firm answer to that question although the minister said the province was working to improve working conditions, including building new homes.

Meantime, the minister said he was reviewing the current restrictions at long term care homes. The province has lifted some gathering restrictions as of Monday however long term care residents are being locked down as the COVID-19 virus continues to move within the homes.

When there is one COVID-19 positive test, the home is locked down with residents confined to their rooms. The number of family members allowed into the homes is restricted to just two essential care givers.

Residents with a spouse and multiple children are cut off from some of their immediate family.

Thursday, the Health Standards Organization released its draft of National Standards for Long Term care, which included giving residents more autonomy to take risks, allowing more family members to visit them, even in an outbreak.

Asked when the province might allow that, the minister responded. "I'm reviewing that right now."

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54 YEARS' EXPERIENCE PRIVATE APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE House calls also Available



Petrolia gears up for family fun Feb. 21

The Independent

Petrolia is planning some fun for Family Day both virtually and in person

The annual Snow Sculpture contest runs from Feb. 1 to 21, with a twist; there is snow at least for a while. The theme is Silly, Scary, Goofy Snow Monsters.

You can email your photos of your submissions to twagner@petrolia.ca by 4 pm Feb. 21.

Petrolia Discovery his open for tours on Saturday of the Family Day weekend. There will be self-guided tours and specialty coffee, hot chocolate and cookies will be served inside Watson's Mill on the site.

Families can also get a Family Fun Pack Saturday from 10 to 2 pm at the Farmers Market. There will be 400 kits which will include a \$5 discount card for participating Petrolia merchants and restaurants – donated by the local service clubs. The kit also includes a free streaming coupon for Tom and Jerry The Movie.

There will also be free skating both Saturday and Monday, following pandemic protocols.

And New Life Church will be giving away a free take out breakfast between 9 am and 10 am Monday.

Corunna electricity compound damaged

A 51 year-old Sarnia man is facing seven charges after an electricity compound in Corunna was damaged.

Friday, around 1:40 pm, Lambton OPP were called by a resident on Hill Street saying someone was inside the compound.

Police arrived to see a man fleeing. Other officers joined the search and the man was found

a short time later. He tried to flee, but police made the arrest.

Steven Cottrelle, 51, of Sarnia faces charges of break and enter, possession of break in instruments, two counts of theft and three counts of mischief related to destroying or damaging property.

He'll be back in court March 7.





Teacher 'lost a career I loved'

Local Journalism Initiative

A Sarnia high school teacher who was found guilty sex charges after a relationship with his student says he lost "the thing he was meant to do."

Tyler Shaw was found guilty of sexual assault and sexual exploitation in November.

Between April and July of 2020, Shaw, 36, and the student, who was 17 at the time, met in his car, his home and the girl's home. His defense lawyer, Phillip Millar, said Shaw's behaviour involved hand holding, cuddling and kissing and was "on the low end of the spectrum" for sexual assault and sexual exploitation.

Shaw was in court Jan. 26 for a sentencing hearing before Justice Kevin McHugh. While Assistant Crown Attorney Aniko Coughlan called for a 12 to 18 months in jail followed by two years of probation, Millar wanted 90 days in jail for his client, with the possibility of it being served on weekends or on house arrest.

"He admits he broke the rules," says Millar. "He admits he made a bad decision and he is dealing with the

consequences."

Shaw apologized to the court and accepted responsibility, saying he had "shame, remorse and regret.

"I lost my career, a career I love and the one thing I was meant to do," he said, adding he expected to be fired once the court proceedings were done. There is a complaint filed against him at the Ontario College of Teachers which will also be heard after the sentencing.

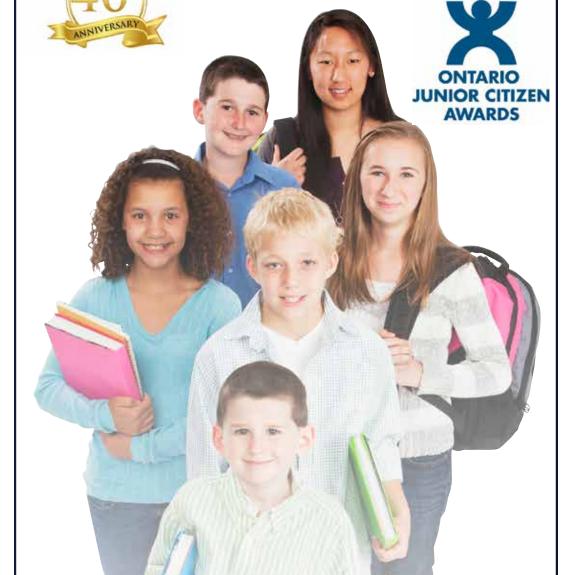
Shaw added his actions had destroyed his family and his reputation. He's also been threatened.

But the assistant crown attorney says Shaw's minimizing his role in the 'relationship' shows a lack of understanding which may impact his rehabilitation. He abused his position of trust, says Coughlan, and it will have an impact on the community.

"Schools are a place where students learn and develop as young people," Coughlin said. "Parents should not have to worry about teachers who engage in relationships like this."

Justice McHugh will make a decision on the sentencing in February.

- THE INDEPENDENT



NOMINATIONS WANTED!

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DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 11, 2022

Nomination forms are available from this newspaper, and at www.ocna.org/juniorcitizen. Email jr.citizen@ocna.org for more information.

Brought to you by:



Mom guilty of weapons charges after teen fight

Blake Ellis

Local Journalism Initiative

A Walpole Island mother who kept a loaded 12-gauge shotgun under her dresser has been placed on probation for a year.

"It is concerning what led to the search warrant," said Justice Krista Leszczynski, as she gave Melissa Jacobs a conditional discharge and a year of probation.

Police were called to the home last January because a gun had been fired during a fight between two teens.

A search warrant was issued and the next day, a loaded 12-gauge shotgun was found under a dresser in a

The judge emphasized even though

Jacobs was not present during the fight, it was her responsibility as a gun owner to make sure her shotgun doesn't get into the hands of those who shouldn't have it.

Jacobs pled guilty in a Sarnia court on Jan. 27 to not having a gun license and not storing the gun properly. One of the requirements of probation is to take a firearms safety and storage course, while not possessing weapons for five years, except in the case of hunting to provide for her family.

Jacobs is a mother of four. One of her children was the victim in the fight. Charges from the fight and the firing of the gun have yet to be dealt with in

- THE INDEPENDENT

Two charged in Walpole drug raid

The Independent

Two people are facing a raft of charges after a drug raid on Walpole Island First Nation.

Lambton OPP have been working with the Walpole Island Police Service for a number of months after the First Nation declared a state of emergency over the opioid epidemic. Friday morning, Lambton OPP, the TRU team, Canine Unit, the Emergency Response Team, the Walpole Island Police and Chatham-Kent Police went into a home on Peters Road.

OPP say fentanyl, methamphetamine and hydromorphone were seized by

police. They also found a loaded firearm and ammunition.

Police arrested two people; Clarissa Shipman, 30, of Windsor is charged with two counts of possession of a controlled substance, uttering threats and assaulting a peace officer.

Cameron Johnson, 41, of Walpole Island First Nation faces 14 charges including two counts of possession of a controlled substance for the purpose of trafficking.

Shipman has been released from custody and is scheduled to appear before in Sarnia on a later date. Johnson has been held in custody following a bail hearing.

PW backhoe operator charged with impaired

The Independent

An 83 year-old man is facing impaired driving charges after a backhoe fell into a ditch.

Lambton OPP were called to an accident on Michigan Line in Plympton-Wyoming Sunday around 7

They found a backhoe had fallen off

a laneway culvert into a deep ditch. Police pulled the driver from the overturned cab. It became apparent the driver had consumed alcohol.

The driver was given a roadside test and arrested on two impaired driving

An 83 year-old man was taken to hospital as a precaution. He'll be in court March 7.

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Sports Flyers, Habs to open PJHL's second act

Barry Wright

The Independent

The Petrolia Flyers take on the top-ranked and unbeaten Lakeshore Canadiens Thursday to raise the curtain on the revised portion of the 32-game PJHL regular season schedule.

Game time is 7:30.

It's the first of six home contests of 10 games remaining for the Flyers.

Petrolia is currently in seventh place in the Stobbs Division four points clear of Wallaceburg and Dresden.

The Thunderhawks and Junior Kings both have games in hand. Petrolia visits Dresden on Friday night at 7:30.

Wallaceburg is on the road for first two games of its restart. The Hawks visit Lakeshore

and Mooretown Friday and Saturday night respectively.



Flags open 13 game stretch against Wheatley

The Independent

The Mooretown Flags begin a gruelling stretch of 13 games in 31 days with a tilt in Wheatley to complete the 2021-22 PJHL regular season schedule.

Game time is 7:30.

The Sharks beat the Flags, 4-3 just before

Christmas.

Mooretown is at home to Wallaceburg on Saturday at 7:30 at the Moore Sports Complex and then take on the Blades in Blenheim on Sunday at 7 pm.

The Flags are in third place in the Stobbs Division with 30 points. They are six points behind Essex with five games in hand.

Squires wait for playoffs second round

The Independent

The Western Ontario Athletic Association has announced that a bestof-three qualifying series between Milverton and Creemore will begin this weekend. Creemore will host game one on Saturday with the series shifting to Milverton for the second game on Sunday afternoon. If a third game is required, it'll be in Creemore on Saturday, Feb. 12.

The winner takes on the Petrolia Squires in the semi-finals, likely beginning on Feb. 18. Petrolia received a first-round by in the playoffs. The other semi-final for the "A" division crown involves Lucknow and Shallow Lake. It begins Feb. 12 at Lucknow.

Harper rejoins Legionnaires for second season

The Independent

The Sarnia Legionnaires is hoping that a restart of the GOJHL season will mean a reboot for the fortunes of the team.

Going into a contest with St. Marys Thursday at the Sarnia Arena at 7:10, the Legion is in last place in the league's Western Conference with 15 points.

They are five points back of St. Thomas for the final playoff spot and six points behind seventh place Strathroy. Sarnia has games in hand on the Stars and Rockets.

The Legionnaires have a trio of contests left against the two teams, all on the road. Two games are at the West Middlesex Arena in Strathroy and the other is at the Joe

Thornton barn in St. Thomas.

Plympton-Wyoming's Austin Harper will return to the Legionnaires following a fivegame stint with the Sting.

"Harps (Harper) will go back to the Legionnaires," said Sting coach Alan Letang in postgame comments following a loss to Kitchener last Sunday. "He'll use his speed and work on his wall play," said Letang who wants the Lambton Junior Sting grad to take the intensity from the experience with the Sting back to the Legionnaires.

Letang expects Harper to dominate at the Junior B level. Harper, who will celebrate his 18th birthday Friday, had 29 points in 26 games with the Legionnaires prior to his promotion to the Sting.

Alvinston Killer Bees back in action this weekend

The Alvinston Killer Bees visiting the Thunder in Tillsonburg Saturday night as the Super League is back in action.

Alvinston's one and only victory this

season came in Tillsonburg in mid-December. The Bees' next home game is against Stratford on Saturday, Feb. 12 at



The penguin waddle helps you keep a centre of gravity over the front leg as you step, instead of split between the legs. Short strides also help keep your centre of gravity, which help avoid falls. Don't keep your hands in your pockets! Walk slowly, with short strides and try to land your steps with

KEEP WALKWAYS CLEAR

Shovel snow and scrape ice as soon as possible. Liberally sprinkle ice melt product or sand onto walkways to provide foot traction and to make sure surfaces don't turn to ice. This is not only protects you and your family, but also postal carries and others when they're walking around your property. Where possible install or use handrails for extra support.

TAKE ALL PRECAUTIONS

Be extra cautious walking after a storm. Tap your foot on partially icy areas to see if it is slippery. Hold a railing while walking on icy steps. Stay steady by wearing proper winter footwear. lightweight boots with a thick, non-slip tread sole will provide good traction on ice. If a sidewalk is icy down the missile, walk on the snow beside it to avoid slips.



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Classifieds



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

Obituary

MILLER, Mona Monteith (née McIntyre) - (1931-2022) - Sadly, we announce the death of our mother, Mona Miller, on January 29th, in her 91st year. Fifty years ago, when we lost our father, Mom promised to do everything possible to stay in good health so that we would have at least one parent. She kept her promise, but it was time for us to let her go. After a fall on Wednesday that resulted in tremendous pain, she was mercifully gone by Saturday night. Left to grieve in her absence are Jamie (Sharon), Linda, Jane (Scott), and grandchildren lan (Courtney), Jade, Sarah, Kate and Sam, as well as 3 greatgrandchildren, Colin, Liam, and Owen. She was predeceased by her first husband, Walter (1972), and then by her second husband, Jim (2008), as well as eight sisters. Also mourning, are her stepchildren, David (Anita), Brad (Bev), Sue (Rob), Melanie, and Lisa (Al). Prior to moving to Whitby, Mom lived and worked in the town where she was born, Petrolia, Ontario. After moving to the GTA, she worked for many years in fundraising at both Sick Kids and Princess Margaret Hospitals. We will always remember how special she made our Christmases and how she kept the cottage for us to enjoy all these years. And we will take to heart a message she left us, hoping that we would learn this great life lesson: There is a crack, a crack in everything - That's how the light gets in (Leonard Cohen). Bye, Mom

Obituary



With broken hearts we announce the passing of our beloved daughter, mother, sister and friend Krista Clark, on Monday, January 3, 2022, at St Joseph's Hospice. Cherished mother of twin sons Jett and Jagger (9), Jack (7) and the late Jaylyn (November 2019). Treasured daughter of David and Tammy Clark. Loving sister of Bradley (Nancy) Clark and aunt to Emily and Maddison. Remembered by Errol and Barbara Clark, David and Doris Carey and Ray and Arlene Gilmore, and their families. Missed by Terry and Nissa Andrew and their children Kelby and Cordae.

Krista played baseball on multiple teams, enjoyed live country and rock concerts, was a licensed pilot and enjoyed painting. She was a loving and devoted mother who will be remembered for her strength and integrity, especially when caring for Jaylyn during her seven years of cancer treatments. Krista will be deeply missed by all those lives she touched.

Krista's battle began in 2020, at the start of Covid, and treatments were delayed due to Covid. She underwent multiple types of Chemo and Radiation in Sarnia and London. All treatments proved to be unsuccessful.

Krista remained in her home with her boys, but by late fall of 2021 her health had declined. She was still determined to fight she pushed on with the care of the VON, the Palliative Staff and soon her parents moved in to help care for her.

Krista had many wishes. She had chosen guardianship of her boys to her brother Brad and wife Nancy. Her sons were welcomed into their home. Krista's big wish was "One More Christmas". With Christmas only a few weeks away, her pain increased. She had hoped to join her boys on Christmas eve for a sleepover, to be with them Christmas morning. On Christmas eve her pain was out of control, it looked like her wish might not happen. She decided against going. Her father determined to make her wish happen. Early Christmas morning a plan was in motion, gathering up all that was needed to make her comfortable. It was still dark when Krista arrived at her brothers' home, before the kids awoke Krista was made comfortable on the sofa. The tree and the Christmas lights turned on, imagine their little faces when they were greeted tree side by their MOM. Later that day she was transported to another small family Christmas. "SHE GOT HER WISH"

That evening her pain became unbearable, by morning the decision of hospice was decided. It took a couple of days for the wonderful staff of St. Joseph's Hospice to get her pain under control, but they managed to make Krista comfortable. Krista chose hospice so she could spend her last days surrounded by family and friends. One week after arriving she peacefully passed away.

The generosity of the family, friends, community at large and the fundraising efforts enabled her to remain in her home for as long as possible.



David, Tammy Clark Brad, Nancy Clark Emily and Maddison Jett, Jagger and Jack

Don't Delay Book Today

Weekly Ad Booking Deadline is Monday @ 12 noon

Obituary



RANDALL Margaret / Jeanne

Margaret (Joanne)

Margaret "Joanne" Randall passed away peacefully on January 25, 2022 at Lambton Meadowview Villa. She would have been celebrating her 87th birthday on January 29, 2022. She is survived by her loving husband William Randall, her daughter Coralie (Bill) Garrett and her son Dan (Kim) Randall. Joanne will be very missed by her grandchildren Katie, Rachel, and Jodi Garrett; and Rebecca, Matthew, and Michael Randall; and four great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by her siblings Gerald (Mildred) Mitchell, Jean (Bill) Cascaden, Evelyn (Al) Adams, Vivian (Ray) Gasco, and Raymond Mitchell. Joanne was a devoted member of the United Church, the Rebekah Lodge, Oil Springs Legion, the United Church Women, Red Hat Society, a former Brownie leader, and a Sunday School teacher. Up until her death, Joanne still maintained her sense of humour, wit, sarcasm, and kept us on our toes. We will greatly miss her and will always have her in our hearts. A special thank you to Lambton Meadowview Villa for their compassionate care. Family and friends were received at STEADMAN BROTH-ERS FUNERAL HOME in Brigden on Friday January 28. A private family funeral service took place at STEADMAN BROTHERS FUNER-AL HOME, Brigden on Saturday January 29 at 10 am. Sympathy may be expressed through donations made by cheque to Oil Springs United Church or Oil Springs Legion. Memories and condolences may be sent online at www.steadmanbrothers.ca.

Steadman Brothers 519-864-1193.

In Memory

In Memory Of

Dupuis Dupuis

May 9, 1923 - Feb 8, 2002

We can't bring the old days back
When we were all together,
But many memories and tresaured thoughts
Will live with us forever.

Love Always, Lois & Family

Card of Thanks

On behalf of the Ravenhorst family, we are grateful for the love and support from friends, family (Canada, US and the Netherlands) and neighbours. We would like thank everyone for the cards, phone calls, personal and funeral visits, food, donations and flowers in honour of John (husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather). Thank you to Needham-Jay Funeral Home and to Lambton Meadowview Day Away Program. Frances and family would like to thank everyone for your support during this difficult time.



Church DIRECTORY

Christ Anglican Church 414 Oil Street, Petrolia

Due to Covid-19 we will be closed until further notice.

Stay Safe Everyone

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 will resume Sunday Feb. 20 @ 10:30 a.m



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

First Baptist Church

418 Greenfield Street, Petrolia

IN PERSON CHURCH SERVICE Sunday Mornings @ 10:30 a.m.

> 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 suspended at this time. Please contact our office at wyoming_united@outlook.com to be sent the Zoom link to join us for our 10am live service.

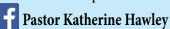
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Notices: Coming Events

Lambton County Science Fair

Open to students Grades 3-12

Projects ready for judging April 4

For information and to register www.lambtoncountysciencefair.ca Register by March 25.







All proceeds go to local youth

Lambton County Branch - "A Sister Found" - Join us Tuesday February



8, 2022 at 7:00pm for "A Sister Found". Told by two local women, Beth Atkinson and Penny McDonald tell the story of how they found their sister without the use the use of DNA or the Internet. This event will be hosted over Zoom. To register, please email lambton@ogs.on.ca



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Death Notices Sat Jan 22 - Mon Jan 31 2022

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22

MUISE, Dianna E. (n Forrest)

Age 78, of Alvinston Van Heck Funeral Home - Alvinston

SUNDAY, JANUARY 23

BENTLEY, Elliott douglas

D.J. Robb Funeral Home

MONDAY, JANUARY 24 ARMSTRONG, Thomas

Raymond

Age 84 McCormack Funeral Home

BUNTING-JOHNSON, Joan

Age 88 McKenzie & Blundy Funeral Home

GOTTFRIED, George Steve

Age 92 McKenzie & Blundy Funeral Home

HRYCAK, Philip Aleksander

McKenzie & Blundy Funeral Home

TARABORRELLI, Antonio McKenzie & Blundy Funeral Home

TUESDAY, JANUARY 25

CAPES, Mary Margaret

(n Brown) Age 90, of Sarnia Steadman Brothers Funeral Home

PAGE, Catherine "Joyce" (n McCoy) Age 90, formerly of Brigden

Steadman Brothers Funeral Home **RAMSEY**, Donna Bernice

Smith Funeral Home

RANDALL, Margaret 'Joanne' (n Mitchell)

Age 86, formerly of Oil Springs Steadman Brothers Funeral Home

SMITH, Frederick Age 91

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26

COX, Leonard "Lenny" John Manford

Age 58 Smith Funeral Home

HARTLEY, Barbara Joan Age 65

Denning's of Forest

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27

HAFFEN, Earl Cameron

Smith Funeral Home

MOTT SYLVAH, Nancy Margaret Mary

(n Bennett) Smith Funeral Home

STATHIS, Lazaros

Age 95 Smith Funeral Home

WILLIAMSON, Frederick Donald

Age 66 Smith Funeral Home

FRIDAY, JANUARY 28

ROGERS, Charles Howard

Smith Funeral Home

VENHUIZEN, Tina Age 85

Smith Funeral Home **SATURDAY, JANUARY 29**

BOWSER, Lawrence "Larry"

Philip Paul Age 65 Smith Funeral Home

HUBBS, Frederick Price

Age 81 D.J. Robb Funeral Home

SUNDAY, JANUARY 30

ROBINSON, Barry Wayne Age 77

Smith Funeral Home

MONDAY, JANUARY 31

MORNINGSTAR, Larry Warner

Age 75, of Brigden Steadman Brothers Funeral Home

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