

## ALL IN



BLAKE ELLIS / LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE PHOTO

The LCCVI Lancers were all in - literally during a hockey game at the Greenwood Recreation Centre. The boys team came into the game 5-0 but North Lambton held LCCVI to a 5-5 tie Feb. 8. Zach Wilson had four goals and Brayden Komineck had four assists in the game. You can see more on page 9.

## Lambton couple say criticism of LTC a matter of public interest

Heather Wright  
The Independent

A Lambton County couple says their on-line comments about long term care are fair public comment.

And they're fighting a defamation suit by a Petrolia nursing home with a relatively new legal tool.

Tom and Maria Moore were served with a \$200,000 defamation lawsuit by Fiddicks Nursing Home Oct. 21, 2020. Maria's mother, Helena Dawson, was in the Petrolia home at the time. She died a week later on Oct. 27.

In its claim, Fiddicks says "due to their misguided dissatisfaction with Fiddicks, with respect to Dawson's care, the defendants have embarked on a malicious campaign against the plaintiff by initiating defamatory falsehoods which have portrayed Fiddicks, both directly and by inference, as being both negligent and inept - all in an attempt to ignite fear, uncertainty and doubt in relation to the services provided by (Fiddicks) which has had the effect of lost business."

The Moores say their criticism of long term care, during the height of the pandemic when seniors were the most vulnerable, is a matter of public interest.

SEE ANTI-SLAPP PG 2

## Cyclist's love ones 'pay the price' as driver sentenced to 45 days

Heather Wright  
The Independent

"We serve the life sentence."

That from the widow of Lori Neville. The young Wyoming woman was out for a bike ride as part of a charity event in August 2020 when she was struck by a car and killed.

Melissa Miller pled guilty to careless driving causing death under the Highway Traffic Act in June 2022.

Miller was on the road as part of her job as a home care nurse. She had just returned from vacation and was dealing with the issues which arose while she was away. On her way back to Corunna, on Petrolia Line, Miller sent a text. While she was distracted, she crashed into Neville, killing her.

Natalie Neville and her family were in court Friday when Justice Mark Poland delivered the verdict. - 45 days in jail to be served on weekends along with a two year

driving ban.

"I went numb," Natalie Neville told *The Independent*.

"I was in disbelief and honestly so angry that mine and Lori's family and friends are left with nothing and she (Miller) loses 45 days of her regular life."

Neville says it is an "absolute disaster" that Miller will serve the time on weekends.

"Justice Poland admitted that Lori was at no fault, she was wearing all protective equipment

required plus more but she and her loved ones pay the price. We were served the life sentence."

Miller was originally charged under the Criminal Code, but Poland explained the OPP made an error when it took possession of Miller's phone at the scene. The criminal conviction would not have been successful because of the mistake.

"It is extremely frustrating and difficult to wrap our heads around how a mistake by the police took

this case from one of the higher criminal offences that could have resulted in (Miller) serving life to a highway traffic offence (with a sentence) was a slap on the wrist.

"Our justice system is failing us and charges like this don't stop people from doing the same thing," says Neville.

"I understand OPP officers are human and humans make mistakes but this was not a small mistake."

SEE SENTENCE PG 2



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## Anti-SLAPP rules can quash lawsuits

CON'T FROM PG 2

The lawsuit Fiddicks' lawyer lists 16 instances on Twitter where the pair commented on the state of long term care including retweets from experts in the field who were voicing concerns daily during the pandemic about the state of long term care.

The tweets talked about everything from the Moores' observation about staffing at the Petrolia home to the opinions of others.

One of the tweets from Dr. Amit Arya - a University of Toronto professor who works in palliative and long term care and co-founded Doctors for Justice in LTC said, "Ontario is now reporting the highest daily #COVID19 case count ever. With 44 #LTC homes also in outbreak, our government has forgotten about our seniors. There are no excuses left. The time for action is now."

The lawsuit also cites a September 2020 article in *The Independent* about an investigation done by the Ministry of Long Term Care into Dawson's care at the home.

At the time, Maria Moore relayed to the newspaper that staff at the home had told her mother to soil herself since they didn't have time to take her to the washroom. The Moores also voiced concerns about their access to Dawson saying the home's policies on visiting residents were not in line with the provinces.

The lawsuit says the statements "were false and defamatory" and "were published with express malice or reckless disregard for the truth" and "were calculated to disparage and injure (Fiddicks) reputation in southern Ontario...and "greatly injured" the home's credibility.

The defamation suit goes on to say the comments "strike right at the heart of the services provided by Fiddicks to their clients and were meant to disparage, embarrass and undermine Fiddicks to both existing and potential clients...(and) are false."

And it says the Moores statements cause "irreparable damages" to Fiddicks' reputation.

On Jan. 12, the Moore's lawyer, filed a motion under Ontario's Protection of Public Participation Act - also known as Anti-SLAPP legislation saying the action is meant to silence the couple. If it is successful, the defamation suit will be quashed by the courts.

Lawyer Denis Grigoras says the statements "related to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately impacted residents in long term care facilities like Fiddicks is a matter of public interest."

The motion says "the words complained of were fair comment and insofar as they consisted of statements of fact, the words were true."

Grigoras pointed to a number of reports from the Ministry of Long Term Care done at the Petrolia home to show the statements had merit.

It adds the opinions stated in the newspaper and on Twitter "were fair comment made in good faith and without malice on a

matter of public interest.

"The goal of the action," Grigoras wrote "is to have the Moores remove themselves from participating in public discourse and debate as well as to silence and financially damage them."

The legislation the Moores are relying on is relatively new, according to Jim Turks, the director of the Centre for Free Expression at Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University).

Ontario's Anti SLAPP legislation came into effect in 2015. Its goal is to protect free speech.

"And anybody can sue anybody for defamation, anytime, whether there's a basis for it or not," Turks tells *The Independent*.

"And if you have enough money, you can often win, not in the sense that you win your case, but that the cost of the person you're suing is so high to them, that they give up and do what you want, because they can't afford to defend themselves."

The Protection of Public Participation Act changed that, Turks says.

"The term SLAPP means strategic lawsuit against public participation. So, it's a technique that large corporations have used, and wealthy individuals have used, to silence voices that they don't want to speak,

"The whole purpose of the slap suit is to silence you."

To successfully use the Anti-SLAPP legislation, the defendants have to prove their comments are in the public interest, says Turks.

Then the plaintiff has to prove two things; there is no defense which can be made to the charges and its interests are greater than public interest or the right to freedom of expression.

Turks says six cases under the legislation have made it to the Supreme Court of Canada and in September 2020, the court upheld the legislation as constitutional.

Turks recently completed a study on anti-SLAPP legislation and Ontario's is by far the most effective to stop what some call nuisance defamation suits.

"There's Anti-SLAPP legislation in 37 jurisdictions in the world. Three of them are in Canada, Quebec, Ontario, and BC. The legislation around the world varies and how effective it is.

"We're in the next month going to publish this major report on Anti-SLAPP legislation and its effectiveness in different jurisdictions and in all the jurisdictions we're seeing this world, the good news is the best Anti-SLAPP legislation in place in the world is Ontario."

Turk says the motion to toss out the lawsuit has to be heard in 60 days. And if a defendant doesn't meet the standard and the lawsuit is thrown out, the defendant would pay all the legal fees of the case. They could also be awarded damages.

At press time, the date for a hearing for the Anti-SLAPP motion in the case between Fiddicks and the Moores had not been set.

flip side of that, he knows way more about death than any five year-old should need to know."

The loss of Lori affected more than just her son, Neville added. "My brother's kids are crushed. His younger two don't remember Lori at all, but his older two do. The oldest and Lori were best buddies and he has struggled a lot, too. He is old enough to understand everything that has gone on and it is extremely hard to watch these young kids suffer because of something that was completely preventable."

## Sentence of 45 days in jail for cyclist death

Con't from pg 1

Neville says it was extremely difficult for the family to listen to character references of the driver and her work as a home care worker through the pandemic, knowing Lori's character.

And Neville says it was very difficult to relay the news of the sentence to their son, Oliver, who is now five. She picked him up from school to explain what had happened.

"He is still so young that he doesn't understand everything," she says. "On the

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Monday, February 20, 2023

**Happy Family Day**

Our office will be closed for Family Day.

**Deadline for the Feb 23 issue will be Friday, Feb 17 @ 12 noon**

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## The Independent is now accepting applications for our new Community Journalism Course

If you want to write about your neighborhoods, civic issues, local politics, and interesting people you are invited to apply.

We'll choose up to six people from the communities we serve to be involved in a six weeks of online community journalism training every Thursday starting at 7 pm taught by The Independent's Publisher/Editor Heather Wright. You'll learn what is news, the difference between a news story and a feature, how to write an effective lead, and how to prepare interview questions.

With the help of the editor, you'll use those skills to find a story to tell from your community.

Those chosen for the Community Journalism Course will receive a \$250 stipend upon completion of the course along with the publication of their article. And, we hope you'll continue providing paid content about the people and events in your community.

Please submit a short resume and a paragraph or two about why you would like to become a community journalist to:  
news@petrolialambtonindependent.ca  
by March 15, 2023



# Waylon's mom wants to make daycare safer

**Heather Wright**  
The Independent

The mother of a Mooretown toddler who fell into a Petrolia pool wants unlicensed daycares to have a home inspection before they accept children into care.

Jan. 24, 20 month-old Waylon Saunders fell into an icy pool at the home of his Petrolia daycare provider. He was without a heartbeat for nearly three hours, but was revived by first responders and hospital staff before being taken to London's Children's Hospital. Waylon is at home and improving daily.

But his mom, Gillian Burnett, says she's still having panic attacks and nightmares about the incident which nearly claimed her son's life. Recently, Burnett says Lambton County building officials inspected the daycare providers home and found a number of problems around the security of the pool.

The *Independent* contacted both Lambton County - which issued the order - and the Town of Petrolia whose bylaw the county enforced but neither would provide any information on the inspection citing an investigation which is underway by the OPP.

As Burnett and her family work through the fallout of the traumatic event, she's planning to work with Sarnia-Lambton MPP Bob Bailey on ways to make unlicensed daycare operations safer.

Burnett would like to see the operators "register with the county" with officials "inspecting the house at least once" before it can accept children into care.

She'd also like to see a register of unlicensed providers where any previous charges against them would be visible.

Burnett first contacted her daycare provider on

social media. She went to the woman's Petrolia home and left with a good feeling about it since the woman had six teenage children of her own and Burnett's three year-old daughter seemed comfortable there.

"I didn't go outside and check the pool or anything. I should have. I don't know why I didn't. But I just kind of (looked) where the kids were going to be - the living room, kitchen, downstairs living room," Burnett says. "She didn't mention the pool."

And Burnett didn't think to ask about it because the blinds in the home were closed at the time.

That's where Burnett thinks a county inspection could have been helpful.

"The county should have to go into that home... they would have been able to see it right away, spot all the things that are infractions."

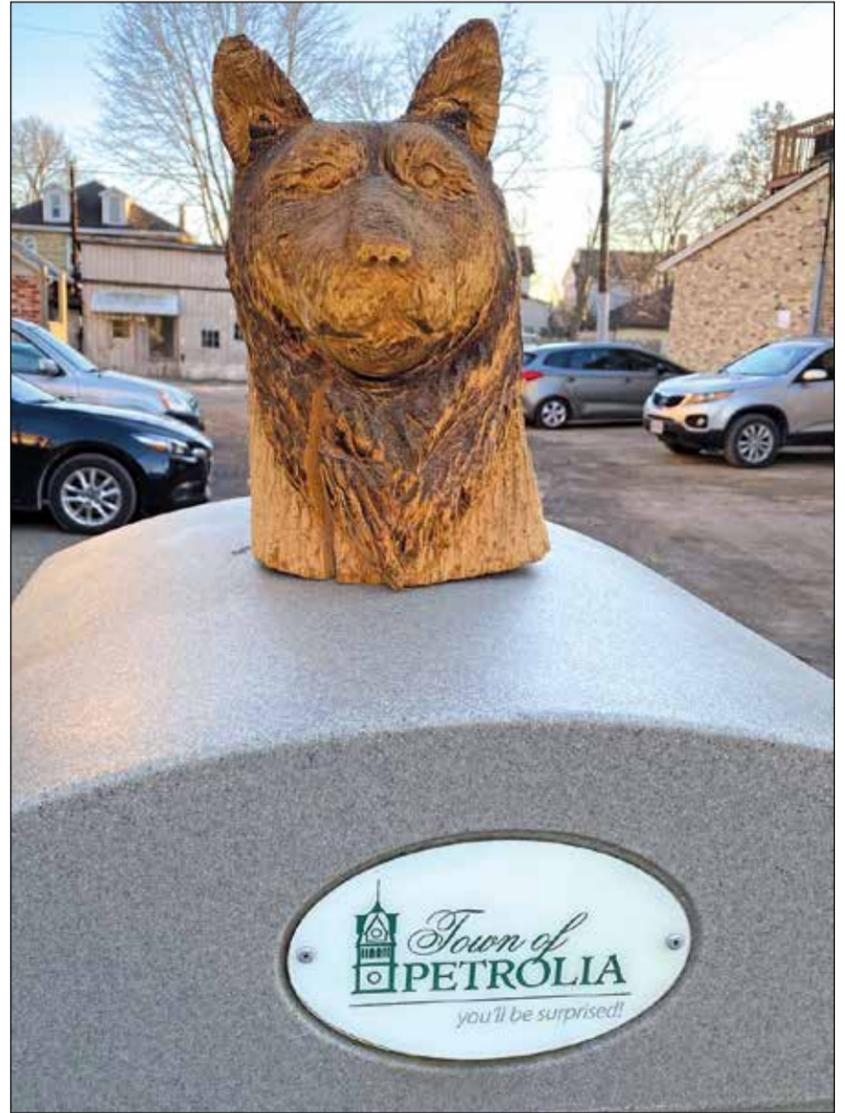
"I'm not a pool owner, I've never owned a pool. I don't know what the laws are about it. I have no idea. If they would have gone in there, they would have seen (any) infractions and they could have said 'no, your house isn't equipped to be able to watch children.'"

Since Waylon's accident, Burnett has been asked a number of times why she didn't have the kids in licensed daycare. That's easier said than done, she said, noting she's been on a waiting list for licensed care for two years.

For now, Burnett will stay at home with her children. "There's absolutely no way I will ever trust somebody with my children again, unless it's like my mom or you know, a close family member. There's no way I'll ever trust somebody again."

And she says, by working with the local MP, she hopes to spare other families from what they've gone through. "I want to tell Waylon story so what we learned can save somebody's life."

## HEAD TURNER



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Pedestrians in downtown Petrolia were doing a double take on the main street. A carving of head of what appeared to be a dog or a wolf was sitting on top of a garbage bin near Crabby Joe's Sunday afternoon. Town of Petrolia officials were notified. The town has a number of carvings in Bridgeview Park however none had been decapitated. Laurissa Ellsworth, director of marketing, arts and communications, speculated the carving may have come from a home in town. Ellsworth says when officials went to find the item, the head was already gone.

# The Independent nominated as best newspaper

The Independent

For the fifth time since 2016, *The Independent of Petrolia and Central Lambton* has been nominated as one of the best small newspapers in Ontario. The Ontario Community Newspaper Association announced the nominees in the Better Newspaper Awards Tuesday. *The Independent*

faces *The Haliburton County Echo* and *The Listowel Banner* for best newspaper in its class. Heather Wright was also nominated in the Best Sport Photo category for a picture from the Alvinston Pro Rodeo. And Wright and sports reporter Barry Wright are nominated for Best Sports story for a feature on racism in hockey. The awards will be handed out this spring.



**The Village of Oil Springs**  
**Public Works and Roads Department**

Invites Application for the Position of

### Summer Student Employment

The Village of Oil Springs will be accepting applications for summer student employment with the Village. (40 hours/week including weekends)

The position is subject to receiving student funding therefore applicants must be returning to post-secondary school for the fall of 2023. A Valid G or G2 Driver's License is required. The employment opportunity is from **May 8 to August 25 (may be subject to change)**.

Interested applicants may **submit their resumes with a cover letter March 24, 2023**, to the attention of:

**Martha Gawley, Clerk-Treasurer**  
clerk@oilsprings.ca

**Village of Oil Springs**  
4591 Oil Springs Line, Box 22  
Oil Springs, ON N0N 1P0  
519-834-2939

The successful candidate will be required to provide proof of double COVID-19 vaccination, a satisfactory Driver's Abstract and Police Background check and must provide their own safety footwear.

*The Village of Oil Springs is committed to providing accommodations for people with disabilities and will make accommodations if required. We thank all applicants for their interest, however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted. In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, personal information is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act and will be used for the purpose of candidate selection.*



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Position will be responsible to assist with customer service at the Township Office, take payments and provide support for general reception. Work will also include various administrative duties such as research, filing and records management to support operations.

**REQUIREMENTS ARE:**

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- Experience with customer service in person and over phone
- Self-starter, dedicated to independent task completion
- Full time student in the past academic year and returning to full time studies in the fall of 2023
- Completed their 2022/2023 school term
- A valid Ontario driver's license (Class G or G2) preferred
- Be between 15 and 30 years of age,
- Canadian citizens, permanent residents or have refugee protection status under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
- Legally entitled to work in Canada
- Will not have another full-time job.
- Be able to work days during May/June to August 26th (Dates subject to change)

**Application Deadline: 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 1, 2023**

**Written resumes for all positions will be received until 4 pm on Wednesday, March 1, 2023 and should be addressed to: Township of Warwick, 5280 Nauvoo Road, PO Box 10, Watford, Ontario, N0M 2S0.**

E-mail submission of resumes and questions on positions can be submitted to the Township of Warwick at [messelment@warwicktownship.ca](mailto:messelment@warwicktownship.ca) or 226-848-3926.

[www.warwicktownship.ca](http://www.warwicktownship.ca)

# Public Information Session

## Sidewalk Connectivity Study

**Monday, Feb. 27, 2023**  
**6:00 - 7:00 pm**

Victoria Hall, Lobby  
411 Greenfield Street, Petrolia

**All are welcome!**




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# Editorial

## More licenced child care needed

The near tragic story of a toddler falling into a pool at a Petrolia daycare highlights a problem which has been plaguing Lambton County for years - the lack of licenced daycare.

According to information provided to us last spring, Lambton has 57 licenced child care centres with about 3,200 children enrolled. In March 2022, there were 1,322 children waiting for a space in them. That included little Waylon Saunders who is now at home recovering after falling into a pool at an unlicenced daycare.

Families wait up to two years for a licenced daycare spot. We know some who apply for licenced child care as soon as they find out they're expecting, hoping to be able to get a spot for their child when their maternity leave is over.

There are plenty of people who provide excellent care in their home without a stamp of approval from the government. There are others that don't.

And there is really no way for families to tell whether their getting the good or the bad, unless they have friends who have used the provider.

Even vigilant parents can miss something when they're investigating the best place for their toddler to stay while they are out earning a living. And there is bound to be some pressure on them to act quickly when they do find a spot since there are so many people on the hunt.

That's why licenced child care is important in the community. Licenced centres have to meet a certain standard, they're inspected and there are more people on hand providing care than you would find in a home daycare.

The federal government has recognized the need for licenced care is pumping \$10.2 billion into the system hoping to lower child care costs to \$10 per day by 2025.

There was also a plan to create 85,000 new spaces.

The wheels of government turn slowly and parents continue to wait. With a long list of social issues which need the government's attention, we hope the goal to continue the expansion of licenced child care doesn't fall through the cracks.

## Letters to the Editor

The Independent welcomes Letters to the Editor.

Our preferred methods to receive letters are via email to [news@petrolialambtonindependent.ca](mailto:news@petrolialambtonindependent.ca) (please use Letter in the subject line) or through our website [www.petrolialambtonindependent.ca](http://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



LAMBTON COUNTY ARCHIVES PHOTO

The Lyceum Hall in Watford was home to movies, plays and dances over the years. It was on the top floor of Thurlows building on the town's main street. Thurlows was home to a confectionary, doctor's office and a paint and wallpaper shop over the years.

## Online access to meetings should not be difficult

I'm not sure what the big deal is but apparently, in Plympton-Wyoming, there is a lot of deep thinking that has to go into something as simple as government transparency.

At the Feb. 8 council meeting, Councillor Mike Vasey said several people had asked him why the town doesn't record council meetings.

Since 2020, the town has streamed its meetings to YouTube so people don't have to attend the council meeting.

The problem comes when people can't get in front a computer during the exact time council meets because the town will not record the meetings. And there would be a significant number of people who wouldn't be able to watch a council meeting live since Plympton-Wyoming meets at 5 pm when most

people are getting off work, getting their kids to sports or trying to get supper together.

So, Vasey asked the town to press record and upload the video to YouTube so everyone can watch when they want.

It seems there are some issues with that. According to the clerk, there has been a lot of "chatter" by municipal clerks about "how you deal with that information."

What's to deal with, other than the video is a permanent record some councillors would rather not people see.

Councillor Bob Woolvett suggested some of the information might be 'misleading' because committees don't make the final decisions. I surely

hope he's not suggesting his taxpayers wouldn't understand what's going on.

I get the town has to rewrite procedural bylaws to allow the practice, but that's not rocket science.

I think Councillor Kristen Rodrigues summed it up nicely saying "It's about transparency" adding "if you want people to be more engaged in the community, give them that availability."



Heather Wright

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# Opinion

## Concern hospitals will be ‘robbed’ of surgeries

EDITOR: Our Premier, Doug Ford has recently announced that new stand alone, private, for-profit surgical clinics for cataracts and diagnostic clinics (for procedures like MRIs), would be funded by the provincial government.

He said this was being done to help alleviate the backlog of surgeries and diagnostics that exist in Ontario.

Presently, all of the cataract surgery done in Sarnia-Lambton, is done at the Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital of Bluewater Health.

But Premier Ford is building new cataract surgery clinics, in three areas of the province: Windsor, Waterloo and Ottawa. The majority of cataract surgery will be done at those for-profit clinics. This will rob our local public hospitals of services and our community of convenient surgeries

performed in our home areas.

Most for-profit clinics charge extra fees, and Mr. Ford’s promise that all a person will need is their OHIP number is misleading. Extra fees, such as supposed better lenses, extra testing or administrative fees are regularly charged.

People that need cataract surgery will have to travel to Windsor, and pay for extras that are not needed.

Mr. Ford has also stated that he will put out tenders for hip and knee replacement clinics in the fall. Again, people would have to travel, be discharged the same day and pay for extra costs.

This would also take much of the elective surgery out of Bluewater Health, again, robbing our hospital of local services that the community needs.

Mr. Ford has said that 50 per cent of the surgeries done in hospitals are “simple...easy.”

If he continues in developing for-profit clinics, most community hospitals would lose their surgical programs. There is not an area in Ontario who would wish to lose local surgical programs, or have their local public community hospitals decimated.

Our tax dollars should go to public programs, such as our public hospitals, and not to private, for-profit health care businesses.

Every Ontarian, including residents of Sarnia Lambton, must fight back against the privatization of our health care.

**Shirley Roebuck,  
Co-Chair of the  
Sarnia Lambton Health Coalition**

## New boundaries bring Lambton together

**Heather Wright**  
The Independent

Lambton is one big happy federal riding and that has surprised a few local politicians.

The Electoral Boundaries Commission released its report on the new boundaries for the next federal election and Lambton County - along with three Indigenous communities - will be enveloped in one riding - Sarnia-Lambton Bkjewanong.

That’s a far cry from what the commission first suggested.

The federal commission looks at the riding boundaries every 10 years and alters them to make sure each member of Parliament represents roughly the same number of people.

Lambton County is currently represented in two ridings, Sarnia-Lambton and Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

Under the proposal released in September, Sarnia-Lambton would have grown to include Walpole Island, as well as parts of Wallaceburg and Dresden. It would be called and be called Sarnia-Lambton Bkjewanong.

The Lambton-Kent-Middlesex riding would be replaced with Elgin Middlesex Thames. It would include Warwick, Brooke-Alvinston and parts of Dawn-Euphemia as well as parts of Chatham-Kent, Elgin and Strathroy.

The proposal put Forest and Lambton Shores in a riding called South Huron Shores meaning Lambton County would have had three MPs.

Sarnia-Lambton MP Mari-

lyn Gladu headed up the Conservative Party’s efforts to make sure the boundaries were fair. She and others in Lambton urged the commission to make Lambton a single riding. It has a population of about 124,000 people; the boundaries commission was shooting for 117,000 people per riding.

So when the new boundaries were released Friday, Gladu was pleasantly surprised to find that the bureaucrats listened.

“This time around, it seemed to me that there was not any partisanship. It was really about keeping communities of interest together, and making sure that we had Indigenous representation,” says Gladu.

“Although it adds about 20,000 people to the riding, I think it makes much more sense.

“It keeps all three First Nations in one riding with one MP, and I think that’s a good deal.

“And now we just have to train people to be able to pronounce Sarnia Lambton Bkjewanong.”

And she says having one Lambton MP will mean contacting one MP and one MPPs (the provincial government uses the same boundaries) instead of two at each level.

“You had to talk to four individuals instead of two to get agreement to do anything.

“I think making the boundaries consistent with Lambton county will simplify getting multiple levels of government approval.”

Lambton Warden Kevin Marriott is also pleased with



ELECTION BOUNDARIES COMMISSION PHOTO

The new riding of Sarnia-Lambton Bkjewanong

the move.

“I can’t believe they actually took our advice,” he says. “The fact that they swung from carving Lambton into four pieces, and listening to having one riding was what surprised me.”

Al Broad, the mayor of Dawn-Euphemia, agrees.

“I was surprised common sense actually happened,” says Broad.

“I’m very much in favour of the new boundary and I’m glad they kept our township as a whole.

“The Sarnia-Lambton riding makes more sense.

Brooke-Alvinston Mayor

David Ferguson, whose municipality is right now in Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, says the new boundaries will be good for the elected officials in the upper tier, too.

“This is a long physical writing for the population base we have it’s far better off to compact it in the county now as one voice will have one MP and I think it’s gonna be good thing.”

The new ridings take effect in the next election. The provincial ridings will change during the next election expected in 2026.

- **Emery Huszka**  
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- **Julie Maw**  
Dealer - Courtright ON,  
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- **Dave Foulon**  
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# Brooke-Alvinston facing six per cent tax increase

**Heather Wright**  
The Independent

Brooke-Alvinston Mayor David Ferguson is hopeful local politicians will be able to reduce a projected tax increase of six per cent. But it won't be by much. Treasurer Stephen Ikert laid out the proposed budget for members of council Feb. 9 saying a number of factors are driving costs up. Inflation is up about six per cent. Insurance costs have climbed 14 per cent. Wages in the municipality have risen about six per cent, mainly because the Community Centre/Recreation Department has more full time workers this year. The cost of gravel and fuel is also up. And, Brooke-Alvinston continues to see its provincial funding cut. The Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund grant this year has dropped 13 per cent or \$67,800. This year Brooke-Alvinston will receive \$453,900 but Ikert warned the cuts will continue with another \$200,000 likely to be on the chopping block. "Its transition funding (the province is) taking out," says Ferguson. "They've kind of decided there's too much shiny stuff in the rural municipalities for the changing demographics. If you want if you want the shiny

stuff, raise your taxes," he adds. That means Brooke-Alvinston is going to have to be focused on core services. "We have to buckle down, provide basic services, and look at the changing demographics that we have and how it is aging and go after more development," the mayor says. Ferguson is also concerned about rising recreation costs. This year, for example, it will cost \$526,530 to run the community centre and recreation department. That's up nearly \$68,000. Ferguson says it is going to be hard for the municipality to continue to fund those rising costs hinting other communities may have to kick in some cash to help. "People need to start to realize more and more that the other municipalities don't pay into Brooke-Alvinston recreation facilities. And we have 2,350 people. It hurts," he says. "We run three ball diamonds, we run a full fledged arena. We have a phenomenal volunteer group. It's all coming out of Brooke Alvinston. And I want to emphasize phenomenal volunteers who are running sports programs. But it's being funded by one municipality. Some the kids are coming in from 20 miles away." Ferguson says there are "a couple of things" council will be discussing as it tries to pare down the \$4,690,493 operating budget and the \$1,763,750

capital budget. He declined to say what he thought could be cut to save some cash. But Ferguson expects there may only be room to bring the increase down to the five per cent range. Ikert told councillors Feb. 9 that a six per cent tax increase would mean a \$44.16 increase in revenue for every \$100,000 of assessed value of a home. The revenue on farm land would increase by about \$10 for every \$100,000 of value. Council is expected to review the budget again at its next regular meeting.

**BY THE NUMBERS**

- √ \$4,690,493 the cost to operate the municipality in 2023
- √ \$ 1,763,750 - the amount of money to be spent on capital projects
- √ \$650,000 - the cost to repair Lasalle Line West - \$600,000 comes from grants
- √ \$360,000 new plow - about \$300,000 to come from reserves
- √ \$330,000 - for the balance of the cost of the new fire truck paid in 2023 - \$135,000 is coming from reserves
- √ \$ 384,406 - the amount of money paid for road repair in 2022
- √ \$ 747,500 - the amount of money set aside for road repair in 2023
- √ \$62,000 - the cash for asset management consulting
- √ \$33,000 0 for Inwood Park, soft surface for playground and bleachers

# LEAF IN PETROLIA



BLAKE ELLIS/LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE PHOTO

There were some big dreamers on the ice at Petrolia's Greenwood Recreation Centre Sunday during the free skating, including more than one little Leaf fan.

# \$38M new housing

**Heather Wright**  
The Independent

\$38 million - that's the value of the new homes and businesses in Plympton-Wyoming in 2022. That from Tracy Pringle from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation. She told council the town now has 5,459 properties with about 58 per cent of them homes and 36 per cent farmland. The rest is commercial and industrial. Pringle says there is about \$2 billion worth of property in the municipality. The rest of Ontario also saw a 2022 growth spurt with 45,000 homes built generating \$37 billion in municipal taxes. MPAC hasn't reassessed the value of homes since 2016. One was planned in 2020, but was delayed because of the pandemic. Pringle says she has no "inside" knowledge on when the province move ahead suggesting word may come during the provincial budget this spring.

# Warwick development fees proposed between \$10K and \$19K

**Heather Wright**  
The Independent

A consultant is recommending Warwick Township start charging nearly \$19,000 in development fees for new homes. But not all councillors are convinced it is a good idea. Monday Daryl Abbs of Watson & Associates Economists presented a report on development fees saying "ensuring that growth does pay their fair share of the development targets, or their fair share of the capital costs, is the sound financial approach. The report calculates how much money

would be needed to pay for new services like water, wastewater, fire and recreation because of growth. Abbs says \$13,322 would cover that cost in rural areas and \$23,685 would be appropriate in urban areas. Because the provincial government is limiting the amount of fees charged to 80 per cent right now, that would mean a developer would pay \$10,658 per home in rural areas and \$18,948 in urban areas. Non-residential construction would pay development fees based on square footage - \$4.10 in the urban area and 56 cents per square foot in rural areas. The numbers worried some councillors. "That \$10,000 a house you were talking to

you might be the difference between somebody who can afford it and can't afford it. We're looking at trying to find housing for people," said Councillor Wayne Morris. Deputy Mayor Jerry Westgate agreed saying Warwick is in a unique situation because it has another source of income - the landfill - "maybe we don't need development fees the same as other places." Treasurer Trevor Jarrett pointed out Warwick is the only community along a 400 Highway without the fees. Warwick is projected to build 465 new homes in the community in the next 15 years. Council made no decision on the fees.

# Warwick wants Canada Post to drop post office box numbers

The Independent

Warwick Township is formally asking Canada Post to look at using civic addresses on mail in the community. Warwick is one of only two communities left in southern Ontario which requires post office boxes on any mail. But it causes problems with package deliveries, particularly in

Watford. Most companies won't deliver to a post office box. "Canada Post assigns mailing/postal address for the purposes of mail delivery. The municipality assigns civic (911) address to identify a physical location. In the case of Watford's mail delivery, the required Canada post mailing/postal address does not match the civic address," writes CAO Amanda Gubbels in a

report to council. "Residents in Watford would still obtain their mail at their assigned PO Box, but the PO Box number would not be included on mail," she added saying then parcel delivery would be completed. Monday, council voted to formally ask Canada Post to consider civic addresses in Watford so the company can examine the idea.

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# Corunna celebrating 200 years

## Celebration marks becoming 'Almost Canada's Capital'

**Blake Ellis**  
Local Journalism Initiative

If the original intentions for Corunna came to fruition, the town and surrounding Lambton County would look much different today. The original survey of Corunna had the intention of the community being the future site of the capital of a united Upper and Lower Canada, now Ontario and Quebec. That's one of the things which will be celebrated when the community celebrates its 200th anniversary.

Tracy Kingston, the chair of the Corunna 200 Committee, says Lord William Beresford was sent from England to survey and lay out a settlement. He and his survey party first set foot in the area, which would become Corunna in 1823.

It was named after La Corunna, a seaport in northwestern Spain, where a battle of the Napoleonic War took place and his commanding officer Sir John Moore, died in battle. Kingston first became aware of the original 1823 survey through her work with the St. Clair Heritage Committee. The street grid were diagonal and resembled the Union Jack with a 10 acre St. George's Square converging in the middle of the survey where the parliament buildings were to be located. The proposed St. George's Square is where the streets of Hill and Baird now intersect.

Of course, Ottawa became Canada's capital. The idea of Corunna becoming the capital was rejected because of the close proximity to the United States and needing more of a central location in the colony, closer to Quebec, but Corunna hopes to revive some of that early excitement when it was thought

Corunna could be a possible capital. In the wake of the decision, Kingston said it took a long time before Corunna was actually settled. Another survey was conducted in 1836, but it and the original 1823 survey were rejected in favour of another survey in 1837, which is the town layout you see today.

Lots were put up for sale and the development of Corunna slowly began. The post office was established in 1852 and soon the village boasted two shoemakers, two harness makers, three blacksmiths, a cabinetmaker, a tinsmith, a gristmill, a shipbuilder, two general stores and several hotels. Over the years, the community has celebrated its fate as 'almost Canada's capital' including placing a monument at what was King George Square. The St. Clair Heritage Committee wants to expand on it and a storyboard is being developed on the history of Corunna.

The storyboard has been in development for the past couple of years, says Kingston and this will be a good time to unveil it. She is looking to May 23, as she plays on the 1823 theme.

It has been 200 years since Beresford set foot on the site, which would become Corunna and the community is looking to mark this occasion with a celebration which being dubbed Almost Canada's Capital. A street festival is scheduled for Sept. 23. Even though the committee is still in the planning stage, she said there will be vendors and artisans set up with many family fun activities. There could be a dunk tank or Disney princesses also a part of the day.

She hopes to have Aamjiwnaang First Nation involved. Treaty 29 or the Huron Tract Purchase was signed in 1827, just four years after the original survey of 1823 and the Sept. 23 celebration is also close to the Truth and Reconciliation Day on Sept. 30.

# Farmers getting mental health help

**Blake Ellis**  
Local Journalism Initiative

"It is ok to not be ok." That from Joanne Fuller, coordinator of the Farmers Wellness Initiative, as she made a presentation at the Lambton Farm Safety Association annual general meeting, Feb. 2 in Petrolia

Farming can be a difficult profession, leading to many mental health issues from burn out to depression to anxiety, said Fuller.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture, along with the Canadian Mental Health Association, is offering the Farmers Wellness Initiative, which was launched in January 2022, but did not get fully underway until June. The program offers all Ontario farmers and their families free 24 hour mental health support.

Fuller says when a person calls 1-866-267-2655, they go through an intake process and are matched with a counsellor.

Counselling is then offered over the phone, through virtual means or in person, said Fuller.

Anything you discuss does not have to be related to farming. You do not

need to be an Ontario Federation of Agriculture member to use the service. In a national survey of farmers conducted in 2016, it was found 35 percent meet the classification of depression, while 58 percent of respondents were experiencing high stress with 16 percent battling with chronic stress.

Forty percent were also uneasy with seeking professional help. The pandemic has made those statistics worse, said Fuller, pointing to a 2021 survey where 76 percent of farmers were experiencing moderate of high levels of stress.

Suicide is two times more likely to happen, compared to the national average.

Since June, the number of farmers calling for help grows monthly. She said call volumes were rising in August, September and October, then levelled off in November and December. Now those numbers have continued to rise in January.

There are a lot of calls from people between the ages of 30 and 50 years of age, said Fuller. There is an even split between male and female callers.

- THE INDEPENDENT

# Petrolia Terry Fox run hits \$28K

**Blake Ellis**  
Local Journalism Initiative

"Every dollar raised is closer to a cure," says Petrolia Terry Fox Run Organizer Steve McGrail.

That as he learned the Petrolia run raised \$28,079 as of Feb. 10.

McGrail said this is the largest total Petrolia has raised since he began organizing the annual run in 2011.

Half of what has been raised has been through donations collected online at \$14,071.

He said with the Terry Fox Run going virtual during the COVID-19 pandemic, people are more comfortable with donating and pledging online.

There have also been a few local families who have recently been affected by cancer. They had big support groups of participants and donors who help boost the pledge totals.

There were also some donors who are originally from Petrolia but have relocated. They have still earmarked their pledges to the Petrolia Terry Fox Run.



FILE PHOTO

Jackson Mitchell led the Ribbon of Life in 2022.

"It is nice our community totals are trending upwards, but from year to year, totals fluctuate," said McGrail.

There were 170 participants in the Terry Fox Run on Sept. 18, with McGrail indicating at the time already \$25,000 had been raised at that time. A silent auction was also being conducted and Terry Fox t-shirts being sold bringing further money into the cause.

Runs at area schools pushed the total higher - those donations came in after the run.

2022 was the first time there was an in-person event after two years of virtual events.

**Friday Feb 17**

7pm  
Top Gun: Maverick (PG-13)  
Victoria Hall, 411 Greenfield St.  
Sponsor: D2 Entertainment

**Saturday Feb 18**

9am-11am  
FREE Family Sports & Fun!  
Petrolia YMCA, 360 Tank St.

1pm-3pm Open Gym  
Petrolia YMCA, 360 Tank St.

2pm  
Paws of Fury: The Legend of Hank (G)  
Victoria Hall, 411 Greenfield St.  
Sponsor: Kiwanis Club of Petrolia & Area

7pm  
The Lost City (PG-13)  
Victoria Hall, 411 Greenfield St.  
Sponsor: Petrolia 150 Committee

**Sunday Feb 19**

9am-11am  
FREE Family Sports & Fun!  
Petrolia YMCA, 360 Tank St.

1pm-3pm Open Gym  
Petrolia YMCA, 360 Tank St.

9am-1pm  
Fundraising Breakfast  
Petrolia Legion, 4129 Glenview Dr.  
Sponsor: Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 216

10am-2pm  
Family Safety Open House and Fundraising BBQ  
Fire Hall, 370 Centre St.  
Sponsor: Petrolia & North Essex Fire Dept.

1:50pm-2:50pm  
FREE Public Skating  
Greenwood Recreation Ctr., 4065 Dufferin Ave.  
Sponsor: Doug & Judy Krall and Family

**Monday Feb 20 Family Day**

8am-10am  
NEW LIFE ASSEMBLY FREE Family Day Breakfast  
New Life Assembly, Gymnasium 421 Oozloffsky

10am-12pm / 1pm-3pm  
FREE Public Swimming  
Petrolia YMCA, 360 Tank St.  
(Pool Closed 12-1pm)

11am-1pm  
Sponsor: Mayor Brad & Wendy Looney  
1:30-3:30pm  
Sponsor: The Lions Club of Petrolia  
FREE Public Skating  
Greenwood Recreation Centre, 4065 Dufferin Ave.

10am-2pm  
Family Bouncy Fun and Games  
Petrolia YMCA, 360 Tank St.  
Sponsor: The Lambton Central Petrolia Optimist Club

11am-1pm  
Low Cost Family BBQ  
Petrolia YMCA, 360 Tank St.  
Sponsor: The Lambton Central Petrolia Optimist Club

3:30pm-4:30pm  
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Petrolia Lions Hall, 451 Huggard St.  
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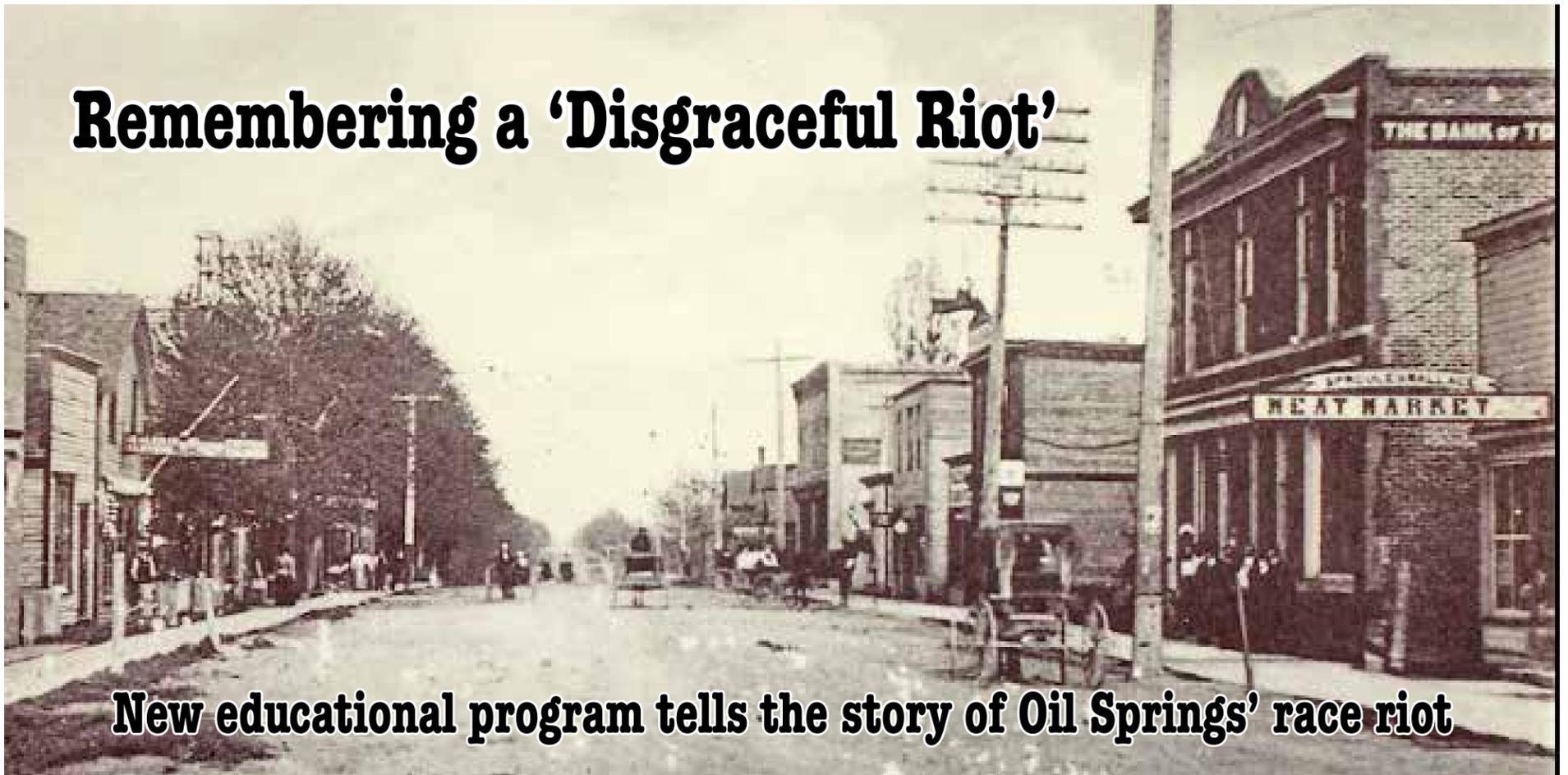
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# Remembering a ‘Disgraceful Riot’



## New educational program tells the story of Oil Springs' race riot

OIL MUSEUM OF CANADA PHOTO

Oil Springs' main street about the time of the race riot in 1863.



Blacks who came to work in Oil Springs oil boom were the target of racism. The March 14, 1863 race riot drove them from the community. Newspapers across North America, including Chicago, carried the story.

**Blake Ellis**  
Local Journalism Initiative

Christine Sydorko says a riot which drove African Americans from Oil Springs should not be swept under the carpet.

So, the education program coordinator of the Oil Museum of Canada put together a program for local educators to understand this part of Black history in Lambton County.

While some books chronicle the race riot which drove the Blacks from Oil Springs, it's not a well known event. At the time, newspapers labeled the riot as “disgraceful.”

Sydorko says it would have been a cold and wet night on March 14, 1863, when a group of about 100 people gathered on one end of the village to form up, appoint a captain and then make their way to the black community on the outskirts of town.

An influx of labourers came to Oil Springs after 1858 to find work in the oil fields, including Black workers from Dresden, Chatham and Amherstburg.

But black labourers had difficulty getting a job, so they would work for reduced rates of pay and longer hours than their white counterparts. The practice raised tensions and the Black workers and their families kept their distance, living away from the established white community on Centre Road.

That night in March, racial tensions were at a boiling point after Mrs. Justin Bradley, the wife of the proprietor of the boarding house, the Royal George, was pushed off a sidewalk by a Black labourer.

The mob made their way to Centre Street and roused the black families from their sleep in the cold dark night. They told them to leave the community, and started torching their homes. Many Black families fled into the woods with only the clothes on their back. There was even speculation there could have been a lynching although newspaper accounts later said one person was seriously injured.

The mob accomplished their goal - the Black community left Oil Springs after the riot, returning to their communities in Kent and Essex counties.

While the details of the riot itself were recorded, Sydorko set to work to find out what happened after the riot.

She first heard of an account of the riot five years ago from a newspaper article. There was very little detail about the event. So, during the pandemic as many newspapers around the world were being digitized, Sydorko went to find more details.

While there were few accounts in Canadian publications, American newspapers reported on the riot including *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Detroit Free Press* and *The Douglass Monthly*, a newspaper published by famed abolitionist and former slave Frederick Douglass.

Sydorko found a number of constables were sworn in that night to bring the riot under control. Three of the rioters were captured.

One man, John Lavins, an Irish widower from Lambton County was sentenced two years to the Provincial Penitentiary of Upper Canada, later renamed the Kingston Penitentiary. The penitentiary was in the process of being built, so Lavins would have spent his time behind bars on the construction crew.

Since Lavins was convicted of a felony, under English law, his land and goods would have been confiscated upon his conviction.

One other ringleader went to trial, but he was from a wealthy family, and was not convicted. Sydorko speculated his wealth allowed him not to be punished, whereas nobody liked the Irish in those days.

Finding the information about the aftermath wasn't easy. There are few details of the court case, as records were stored in the Petrolia Town Hall, which was later consumed by fire. Sydorko gathered much of her information from the intake rolls at the Kingston Penitentiary.

And as she did her research, Sydorko still found race to be a barrier. Often there was push back with some people saying the riot didn't happen or that Black people did not work in the oil fields of Oil Springs.

“This is just ridiculous,” said Sydorko.

Sydorko hopes the educational program which can be found on the Oil Museum's website will be well used by schools and even community to help right the record.

“Canada could have been a welcoming haven, but we were not that,” said Sydorko, to the many runaway slaves who found freedom north of the border. “I no longer want it to be swept under the carpet.”

**Disgraceful Riot at Oil Springs.**  
We regret to learn that a disgraceful riot took place at Oil Springs, on the evening of Saturday last; the parties who figured in it apparently having been fired with the ambition to imitate, though on a smaller scale, from the want of a full supply of material,—the disgraceful conduct of their cousins in Detroit (two weeks ago). As in this shameful proceedings which occurred in Detroit, the cause of the disturbance at Oil Springs was, a dispute, a dispute which is endemic on the greater portion of this Northern Continent which lies South of the St. Lawrence and the great Lakes. In the case now under consideration, a gang of ruffians and rascals, eventually well on to a lunatic by preconcerted arrangements Saturday last, for the purpose of attacking the colored people from the village shanties. They assembled the village, and their object of the more orderly and these endeavored to disperse the mob by a bellish purpose; but they were fired in any way, they intended to serve the mob as well as determined, they at once proceeded to the shanties of four or five of the inmates, and obliterated them to the woods and elsewhere. These unoffending people were totally, with all their belongings, assigned for this or that persecution, with some for a wanton assault on the North side of the St. Lawrence Lakes, as it too frequently is on the St. Lawrence. The chief actors in this transaction, it is said, are report from each other's country, in fact, who swear their allegiance as subjects to Canada, because they live in fighting to put the colored race of equality with gentlemen such as

**RIOT AT OIL SPRINGS, C. W.**  
**A Mob Attack the Negroes after the Manner of the Detroit Fiends, but without the Remotest Excuse for It.**  
[From the Detroit (Copperhead) Free Press, 17th.]  
OIL SPRINGS, C. W., March 16.—A riot of a serious character occurred here on Saturday night, owing to a grudge against the colored people.  
The rioters, to the number of eighty or one hundred, assembled at the east end of the town, chose a captain and marched to the dwellings of the negroes. On arriving at their destination they ordered the negroes to leave town, and, before they had time to obey the order, the mob commenced their work of destruction by destroying the furniture belonging to the negroes, and then fired the houses, of which four were destroyed, and beating any negro they could catch. Detective McKain swore in a number of constables and succeeded in capturing three of the rioters. It was reported that one negro was killed, but it is now denied. One is badly hurt. The others ran to the woods and escaped. Great excitement still prevails here.

# Sports



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Kole Keating looks to see if the puck went into Ripley's net the first period Saturday night at the Greenwood Recreation Centre.

## OT loss ends Squires season

**Barry Wright**  
The Independent

The Western Ontario Athletic Association senior hockey season came to a disappointing conclusion for the Petrolia Squires losing 4-3 in overtime to the Ripley Wolves.

The second-ranked Wolves won the best-of-seven AA quarter finals in four straight games against the seventh-seeded Squires with the final game at Greenwood Recreation Centre Saturday.

First, Friday in Midwestern Ontario, Petrolia jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the first period but couldn't hang on losing 6-4 to the Wolves.

Ripley broke a 4-4 tie with just over two minutes remaining and iced the game with an empty net marker just seconds later.

Merritt, Issac McLean, Adam Arsenault and Tom Moxley scored for the Squires.

Saturday, in front of the home crowd, McLean opened the scoring in the decisive contest with a power play goal midway through the first period.

After the visitors had taken a 2-1 lead in the second frame, Corey Pawley tied the game and Steve Farlow gave the home team a one-goal advantage in the third period.

The score held up until Ripley tied the game with 73 seconds left in regulation time and then won it in the extra period.

Brendon Merritt and Kraig Wright each contributed two assists for the Squires.

Brandon Campbell took the loss in both games three and four despite making 38 saves in each contest.

Petrolia ends the season with an overall record of 12-12.

## Alvinston Killer Bees clinch

**Barry Wright**  
The Independent

Carter Wright's first goal of the season in the opening minute of the third period was the eventual game-winner as the Alvinston Killer Bees beat the Flames in Delhi, 7-5.

The win clinched the final Western Ontario Super Hockey League playoff spot for the Bees.

Kier Cumming had two goals and two assists for Alvinston and Brandon Ritchie had a goal and three helpers.

Matt Stevens, Dawson Winchester and Kane Johnson had the others.

Spencer Robertson was the winning goalie for Alvinston with 38 saves.

The Bees are tied with Plattsville for seventh place in the standings a point back of Erin. Alvinston is off this week and close the regular season schedule in Erin Saturday, Feb. 25.



## Spits help Flyers to playoff berth

The Independent

Despite gaining just one point of a possible four, the Petrolia Flyers clinched the final playoff berth in the PJHL's Yeck Division.

The Flyers got some help from Aylmer when the Spitfires lost 6-2 to Thamesford Sunday.

The Spitfires are 13 points behind the Flyers for eighth place and only have six games remaining. Petrolia is 8-24-4 heading into the first of three straight Thursday night home games this week against Lucan at 7:30. The Irish is 15-15-3 on the campaign.

Friday, Thamesford scored twice in 19 seconds midway through the second period to break open a one-goal game and go on to beat the Petrolia Flyers, 6-2.

Harly Jacklin Allison and Tanner Hull scored for the Flyers.

Maddox Nazwaski made 37 saves through a little more than 44 minutes of action.

Sam Dobroski stopped all ten shots

directed his way in just under 16 minutes of play.

The Trojans outshot the Flyers, 53-27.

Nazwaski made 49 stops to backstop the Flyers to a 3-3 overtime tie with the North Middlesex Stars Thursday at Greenwood. He saved all five shots in the extra period as the Stars outshot the Flyers, 5-0.

Dylan Demeulenaere scored twice and Colby Ackworth had the other to give the home team a 3-0 lead after the first period but the Stars chipped away with a goal in the second period and two more in the third.

Ex-Flyer Wil O'Leary-Dilosa scored the second goal for North Middlesex and assisted on the equalizer at 11:01 of the third period. O'Leary-Dilosa's brother, Logan, was in the lineup for Petrolia.



## Flags blanked by Habs in Mooretown

The Independent

The Lakeshore Canadiens got on the board with two power play goals in the second period on its way to a 3-0 win over the Flags.

John Chartrand made 51 saves as the visitors outshot the Flags, 54-17 in PJHL action in Mooretown Saturday.

It was the second loss of the week for Mooretown who fell 6-1 in Wheatley last Tuesday.

Brett Vince had the lone goal for the Flags

and Watford's Malcolm Verstraten made 39 saves.

Mooretown remains in fifth place in the Stobbs Division with a record of 18-16-1.

The Flags are on the road for games in Wallaceburg and Dresden Wednesday and Friday.

They host Essex on Saturday at the Moore Sports Complex at 7:30.



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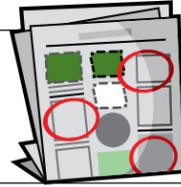
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**Help Wanted**

**THE PETROLIA FAIR BOARD**  
is looking for a  
**TREASURER**

Interested individuals can send a resume to  
**kellyhumphrey1966@gmail.com**

Deadline for submission is  
**March 10 2023**

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**For Sale**

**KENMORE FRIDGE and 30" KENMORE ELECTRIC RANGE** for sale. In good working order. Call 519-882-0608.

**VARIOUS HOUSEHOLD ITEMS FOR SALE** – Kitchen stools (2) \$100; sewing machine \$75; snow-suit (size 5) \$20; beautiful painting \$300; nurses books (3) \$60. PLUS dining table (seats 6-8) FREE. Call 519-845-3072.

**Notice**

**DERBY CANCELLED** - Bluewater Anglers are cancelling our Ice Fishing Derby scheduled for Saturday, February 18.

**Upcoming Events**

Oil Springs Optimists'  
**Meat Bingo**

**Thurs., Feb. 16 @ 7pm**  
at the Oil Springs Youth Centre

*To Enter and Play, you must be 18+ years of age*

All proceeds go to local youth

**LAMBTON COUNTY Science Fair**

Register by 5pm March 24.  
Open to students: **Grades 3-12**  
**Mar 31 / Apr 1 @ Lambton College**

For info and to register www.lambtoncountysciencefair.ca

**ADVERTISING POLICY**

The publisher of this newspaper, *The Independent of Petrolia and Central Lambton*, reserves the right to clarify or refuse any advertisement based on its sole discretion. The publisher reserves the right to reject, discontinue or omit any advertisement without notice or penalty to either party. Liability for errors or non-insertion is limited to the amount paid for the cost of space occupied by the error. Claims of errors must be made prior to the next publication date.

Monday, February 20, 2023

**The Independent**  
*Serving Petrolia and Central Lambton*

**Happy Family Day**

Our office will be closed for Family Day.

Deadline for the Feb 23 issue will be **Friday, Feb 17 @ 12 noon**

**Upcoming Events**

**COUNTRY SOFT ROCK JAMBOREEE - 3rd Wednesday** (Feb 15, Mar 15) at the Petrolia Legion. Lunch 12noon-1pm \$10.00 pp. Music 1-4pm by donation.

**SHROVE "PANCAKE" TUESDAY - February 21 2023** at Christ Church, 414 Oil St., Petrolia from 5-7pm (while quantities last). Good Will offerings accepted with all proceeds to Lancer Locker. Everyone is Welcome!. For more info call 519-882-1430

**ST. PHILIPS CARD PARTIES - Fridays, Feb 17 & 24 and Mar 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31 @ 7pm** at the St. Philips Hall. \$5.00 pp. Light Lunch. Wheelchair accessible. Call 519-882-4840 for more info.

**THE DEMENTIA - FRIENDLY CANADA PROJECT - Sunday, February 26** with The Alzheimer Society of Samia-Lambton at Christ Church, 414 Oil St., Petrolia following our 10 am service (approx 11am). 519-882-1430

**ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES - February 22 2023** at Christ Church, 414 Oil St., Petrolia – Church Services at 10:30 am and an Evening Service at 7:00 pm

**PANCAKES & SAUSAGE SUPPER - February 21 from 4:30-6:30pm** at the Camlachie United Church. All you care to eat - Advance Tickets Only: Adults \$10, Child 6-10 \$5, Children under 5 eat free. 226-776-1222 or Doug 519-869-4727. camunitedevents@gmail.com.

Watford Warwick Horticultural Society presents Horticulturist Jessica Bos-Landry speaking on **"STARTING SPRING SEEDS, WHEN AND HOW"**, Thursday Feb 16, 2023 at 7 pm. Join us at the Horticulture Centre 5306 Nauvoo Rd Watford. Cost for non members \$10.00. Members free. For more info, visit our FB page https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100071073251927 or call/text Holly 226-402-0116

# Church DIRECTORY

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

**In-Person Service**  
**Sundays @ 10:00 am**

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

**Christ Anglican Church**  
414 Oil Street, Petrolia

**Join us for In-Person Services**  
**Sundays @ 10:00am**  
Everyone Welcome

Church Office: 519-882-1430 | christchurchpetrolia@gmail.com  
Rev. Dave Hewett

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

**In-Person Services**  
**Sundays @ 10:30 am**

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

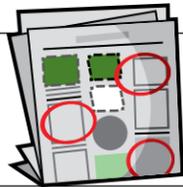
**First Baptist Church**

**In Person Church Service**  
**Sunday Mornings @ 10:30 am**

Pastor: Alex Craig

418 Greenfield Street, Petrolia | Church Office 519-882-2480  
email: fbcpetrolia@gmail.com | website: www.firstbaptistpetrolia.ca  
Find us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/First-Baptist-Church-Petrolia

**Classified Deadline:  
Monday @ 12 noon**



# Classifieds

**Word Classifieds: \$10 plus tax for up to 40 words**  
 Stop in at the office 9a-3p Mon, Tues, Fri or 9a-12p Wed  
 4156 Petrolia Line – Call 226-738-0728  
 or email: [office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca](mailto:office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca)

## Obituary



### STREVEL Wayne

Wayne Strelvel, of Oil Springs and formerly of Petrolia, died with family by his side on **Thursday, February 9, 2023** one day before his 79th birthday. Wayne is survived by his wife of 58 years Betty (nee Currah). He will be missed by son Dwayne and Tracy Strelvel, his daughter Angela and Scott Everest, his grandchildren Carissa and Brad DaSilva, Marina Everest, Dawson Everest, Alex Strelvel, and Julia Strelvel, and his six great grandchildren. Wayne was

predeceased by his parents Murray and Norma Strelvel, and his brothers Don, Sheldon, and Owen. He is also survived by his brothers and sisters-in-law Helen and the late Terry Gilfoyle, Edgar and Carol Currah, and Murray and Diane Currah. Wayne operated Wayne Strelvel Construction for 45 years.

**A Celebration of Life will be held on Wednesday, February 15, 2023 from 2 to 6 pm at the Wyoming Royal Canadian Legion, 493 Erie Street.**

As expressions of sympathy, memorial donations may be made to St. Joseph's Hospice and Heart and Stroke Foundation.

A great thanks to the staff of the Bluewater Health Acute Stroke unit and ICU.

## Celebrations

### 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary

Please come and celebrate with

→♥← **Larry & Sharon Watson**



on **Saturday, February 18**  
at the Oil Springs Fire Hall  
from **2-4 pm**

Best Wishes Only Please!

## In Memoriums

In Loving Memory of: **Mom, Dad & Sharon**

*The world changes from year to year...  
Our lives from day to day  
... but the love and memory of you shall never pass away.*

Audrey, Jim, Jeff, Jeniffer, Nathaniel & Jen and families

IN MEMORY OF **Owen Dobbyn**  
 July 20 1940 - February 19 2021  
 2 years have passed since you left us.  
 We are thankful for those memories of a life well lived.  
 Which continue to bring us hope, comfort and inspiration.  
 Lovingly remembered by your wife Jessie and families

In loving memory of a wonderful Dad, Grandpa & Great Grandpa **ARNOLD JOHNSON**  
 who passed away ten years ago, February 18, 2013

*Those we love don't go away,  
They walk beside us every day,  
Unseen, unheard, but always near,  
Still loved, still missed and very dear.  
For death leaves a heartache,  
No one can heal,  
And love leaves a memory  
No one can steal.*

Forever loved and missed  
Elaine, Len, Kathy,  
Linda and Larry  
and families

In loving memory of a precious husband and father **ROBERT CLARK**  
 who passed away, 30 years ago,  
February 21, 1993.

*He had a nature you could not help loving  
And a heart that was purer than gold.  
And to those who knew him and loved him,  
His memory will never grow old.*

*Know we loved you, and still do today.  
Know we miss you, in our hearts you will stay.  
Nothing but memories as we journey on.  
Longing for the smile from a loved one gone.*

Forever loved, by wife Mary Ann, Les, Leanne, Lisa & Families

## Death Notices

February 5 - February 12, 2023

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5**

**BRANTON, Harrison "Skipper"**  
Age 93, of Town  
Smith Funeral Home

**COONE, Magdalena**  
(n Wijnacker)  
Age 101, formerly of Bothwell  
Badder & Robinson Funeral Home

**WESTON, Douglas Bennett**  
Age 67  
Denning's of Forest

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6**

**CHAYTOR, James Welford**  
Age 87  
Smith Funeral Home

**DRYSDALE, Angela**  
(n Cote)  
Age 73  
Smith Funeral Home

**ETTINGER, Margaret Edith Ann**  
Age 47  
Smith Funeral Home

**GEORGE, Earl "Chub" Bruce**  
Age 78, of Kettle & Stony Point  
Gilpin Funeral Home

**LUXTON, Donald Arthur III**  
Age 33  
Smith Funeral Home

**PARIS, Gloria Mae**  
Age 71, of Glencoe  
Van Heck Funeral Home

**TIMMS, Kathleen**  
(n Whistance-Smith)  
Age 94  
Smith Funeral Home

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7**

**BAX, Antonius "Tony" Wilhelmus**  
Age 79  
Gilpin Funeral Home

**MOTA, Carlos**  
Age 72  
Smith Funeral Home

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8**

**BREYER, Constance Lynn**  
(n Lewis)  
Age 71  
Smith Funeral Home

**DANYLCHUK, William "Bill"**  
Age 96, of Sarnia  
Smith Funeral Home

**PRINGLE, Dorothy Matilda**  
(n Tunks)  
Age 103, formerly of Bothwell  
Badder & Robinson Funeral Home

**RYCKMAN, Sharon Louanne**  
Age 69, of Forest  
Gilpin Funeral Home

**SARGENT, Mary Emily "Helen"**  
(n Sparling)  
Age 92  
D.J. Robb Funeral Home

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9**

**COPELAND, Diane**  
(n Taylor)  
Age 81, of Bothwell  
Badder & Robinson Funeral Home

**GRIMWOOD, Alan Regis**  
Age 76  
Smith Funeral Home

**McGREGOR, Maureen**  
(n Gallivan)  
Age 56, of Strathroy  
Needham-Jay Funeral Home

**STREVEL, Wayne**  
Age 78, of Oil Springs  
Needham-Jay Funeral Home

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10**

**MUNRO, Carol**  
(n Oatman)  
Age 77  
Van Heck Funeral Home

**SILER, Linda Marie**  
(n Forbes)  
1961-2023  
Denning's of Forest

**WELSH, Glenda Joan**  
Age 88, of Corunna  
Knight Funeral Home

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11**

**FOX, Cameron David**  
Age 29  
Smith Funeral Home

**KAMEKA, Frederick "Fred"**  
Age 86  
McCormack Funeral Home

**MACHAN, Robert Lorne**  
Age 83  
Smith Funeral Home

**McBEAN, Garry Lee**  
Age 85, of Town  
D.J. Robb Funeral Home

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12**

**KERR, Nancy Anne**  
(n Gunn)  
Age 76  
D.J. Robb Funeral Home

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

# Calendar of events

PLEASE CALL AHEAD TO CONFIRM DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Events are listed FREE for non-profit groups in Petrolia and Lambton County (space permitting).

To be included in this listing email the required information to [office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca](mailto:office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca)  
 Subject: **FREE EVENT LISTING.**

### CLUBS AND REGULAR EVENTS

DAY	START TIME	LOCATION	EVENT	CONTACT INFO
Mon	7p	Watford	Darts @ Watford Legion	519-876-2360
Tues	7p	Watford	Euchre @ Watford Legion	519-876-2660
Tues	7p	Petrolia	Petrolia Toastmasters @ Petrolia Lion's Hall	519-381-4910
Wed	6:30p	Oil Springs	Legion Open – 6:30-10pm	519-834-2537
2nd Wed	7p	Petrolia	Bingo @ Petrolia Lion's Hall	519-882-8728
3rd Wed	7p	Sarnia	Monthly Meeting @ Horticultural Society	519-332-5837
3rd Thurs	7p	Oil Springs	Optimist Meat Bingo @ Youth Centre	519-834-2152
Fri	7p	Brigden	Pool Night @ Brigden Legion	519-864-1395
Fri		Watford	Meat Raffle, 50-50, CTA @ Watford Legion	519-876-2360
Sat	12p	Petrolia	Lunch 12-3 or until sold out @ Petrolia Legion	519-882-1557
Sat	2p	Petrolia	Meat Raffle @ Petrolia Legion	519-882-1557
Sat	3:30p	Forest	Meat Raffle @ Forest Legion	519-786-5357
Sat	6p	Alvinston	Catch The Ace @ Alvinston Legion	519-898-2100
		Brigden	NEW LEGION HOURS: Thurs 6-9p; Fri 6-9p; Raffle Saturdays 4-8p; Non-Raffle Saturdays 6-9p	

### UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	START TIME	LOCATION	EVENT	CONTACT INFO
Feb 15	12-1p	Petrolia	LUNCH @ the Petrolia Legion - 519-882-1557	
Feb 15	1-4p	Petrolia	COUNTRY - SOFT ROCK JAMBOREE @ Petrolia Legion - 519-882-1557	
Feb 16	7pm	Oil Springs	Optimist - MEAT BINGO @ the Youth Centre - 519-834-2152	
Feb 17	7pm	Petrolia	St Philips CARD PARTY @ St Philips Hall - 519-882-4840	
Feb 18	4pm	Oil Springs	MEAT RAFFLE @ the Oil Springs Legion - 519-834-2537	
Feb 21	4:30p	Oil Springs	Shrove Tuesday PANCAKE SUPPER @ Oil Springs United Church - 519-834-2728	
Feb 27	2-3:30p	Zoom	Ontario Ancestors Drop-in & Chat ZOOM WEBINAR for a link to the meeting visit <a href="mailto:lambton@ogs.on.ca">lambton@ogs.on.ca</a> or email <a href="mailto:lambton@ogs.on.ca">lambton@ogs.on.ca</a>	
Mar 3	7pm	Oil Springs	CORN HOLE @ the Oil Springs Youth Centre - 519-339-8101	
Mar 4	4pm	Oil Springs	MEAT RAFFLE @ the Oil Springs Legion - 519-834-2537	
Mar 4	7pm	Brigden	EUCHRE @ the Brigden Legion - 519-864-1395	
Mar 11	4:30pm	Brigden	MEAT RAFFLE @ the Brigden Legion - 519-864-1395	
Mar 15	12-1p	Petrolia	LUNCH @ the Petrolia Legion - 519-882-1557	
Mar 15	1-4p	Petrolia	COUNTRY - SOFT ROCK JAMBOREE @ Petrolia Legion - 519-882-1557	

**\*\*Deadline for submitting free events is Friday @ 12 noon\*\***

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Town: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Event Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone # / website: \_\_\_\_\_

You can drop this off at our office or email the information to us at [office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca](mailto:office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca)

## Everaert shines in a shootout loss

Ethan Everaert made no fewer than 73 saves during regulation and overtime and then stopped four of five in the shootout but he and his Legionnaires came up short, 7-6 Friday to the Lincolns in St. Marys.

Former Petrolia Flyers Landon Marcy had a goal and two assists for Sarnia.

Meantime, Plympton-Wyoming's Ryan Richardson had a goal and an assist and ex-Flyer Tyler Richardson made 45 saves in an 8-4 setback to Leamington on Saturday at Pat Stapleton Arena.

The Legionnaires remain three points up on Komoka for the final playoff spot in the GOJHL's Western Conference.

The Kings were beaten 3-0 by London Saturday.

Sarnia entertains the Nationals Thursday and take on the Rockets in Strathroy Saturday.

The Rockets remain tied for fifth in the conference with Chatham with the Maroons having three games in hand.

## Lancers close season with win at Clearwater

Shane Knight's second goal of the game was the eventual game-winning goal as LCCVI beat Northern, 4-3 to close out the LKSSAA boys' high school hockey regular season.

LCCVI takes first place with a 6-0-2 record.

Miller Mailloux and Reid King also scored for the Lancers against the Vikings and Joey Shaw had two assists.

The Lancers host Ridgeway in an A/AA semi-finals Wednesday at 2 pm at Greenwood Recreation Centre in Petrolia.

The other semi-final has North Lambton

taking on the LKCS Cardinals in Dresden.

The winners play for the title Feb. 22.

Meantime, the Lancers boys' basketball teams both have semifinals game on the road today. The juniors travel to Wallaceburg at 5:30 and the senior squad takes on the Wolfpack at 7 pm at Great Lakes. The winners play for the AA title on Saturday.

The junior and senior girls' volleyball teams were scheduled to play semi-final games on Tuesday but the scores were not available prior to our weekly deadline. The finals are set for Friday.

## Host takes second place at Silver Stick

The host Lambton Shores Predators fell 4-3 to Lambeth in the B championship final at the U9 regional house league Silver Stick tournament in Forest on the weekend.

The Preds reached the final with a 4-1 win

over Belmont in the quarter-finals and a 1-0 decision against Mt. Brydges in the semi-finals.

Lambeth downed Mooretown, 8-4 in the quarter-finals.

## Forest's Vanos second at Chicago invitational

St. Pat's grad Johnny Vanos finished second in the men's weight throw at an invitational event in Chicago over the weekend. Vanos, now a graduate student at Purdue, uncorked a runner-up throw of 21.96 metres in his final attempt Friday.

The Forest native has finished

either first or second in all five events he has been in this season.

Vanos and the Boilermakers take part in an invitational event at Notre Dame this weekend in its final tuneup event for the Big Ten Indoor Track and Field Championships in Ohio on Feb. 24 and 25.



Johnny Vanos

## Local wrestlers win gold at provincial university meet

Corunna's Brianna Fraser and Sarnia's Howard Moffatt won gold medals at the OUA wrestling championships at McMaster University in Hamilton.

Fraser, from Brock, took the women's 82 kg class and Moffatt won the men's 90 kg class in his home gym.

Elsewhere, Paige Dickson of Western and Dawson Skelton of Guelph both finished fifth

in their respective weight class and Hannah Vanderslagt of the Mustangs was sixth.

All are graduates of the Sarnia Bluewater Wrestling Club.

Fraser, Moffatt and Dickson are St. Pat's graduates. Skelton is a former Northern Viking and Vanderslagt went to Great Lakes.

The U-Sports national university championships will be held in Edmonton on Feb. 24-25.



Brianna Fraser

## WATFORD SKATER WINS SILVER



SUBMIT PHOTO

The Ilderton Ice Ignite, with Watford's Emily Van Gorp on its roster, won the silver medal on the weekend at the Hevelius Cup Synchronized Skating competition in Poland. The Ignite moved from fifth place after the short program to a runner-up position behind a team from Burlington. A third Canadian team from St. Hubert, Quebec made it a podium sweep for Canadian teams at the event with a bronze medal performance. The Ignite had finished fifth at an international event in France a week earlier.

## Port Lambton swimmer wins big

Shona Branton won two individual gold medals and a pair of medley race silvers at the OUA swimming championships last weekend.

The Western Mustangs swimmer, from Port Lambton, captured the 50 and 100 metre breaststroke finals and was part

of silver medal medley teams in both the 200 and 400 metre event.

Western was second to the University of Toronto in both the men's and women's team standings.

The U-Sports championships will be held in Victoria, B.C next weekend.



Shona Branton

## Mooretown's Belanger named lacrosse GM in 'Burg

Tye Belanger has been named the new general manager of the Wallaceburg Red Devils of the Ontario Lacrosse Association Junior B league.

The Mooretown native has agreed to a two-year deal.

Belanger was a second-round pick in the

National Lacrosse League draft in 2011 and went on to play seven seasons in the NLL with Colorado, New England and Vancouver between 2012-18.

Wallaceburg finished ninth in the 11-team Far West conference last season with a 6-14 and missed the playoffs.

## Campbell fourth at Ontario U18 championship

LCCVI's Hunter Campbell placed fourth in the U18 weight throw on the weekend at the Athletics Ontario Indoor Championships.

He had a throw of 15.07 metres.

Campbell was also 13th in the U18 shot

put.

Meantime, former Lancer Megan Jaques of Oil Springs, now attending Brock in St. Catharines, was tenth in the women's shot put at the Team Challenge at the University of Windsor. Her throw was 11.11 metres.

## Preds, Eagles take top spots in tournaments

Lambton Shores won the U13 division at a memorial hockey tournament in Ingersoll on the weekend.

The Preds went 3-0 in the preliminary round then beat Walkerton, 5-2 in the final.

East Lambton took runner up spot in the U18 division, bowing to Strathroy, 6-2 in the final.

The Eagles had were 2-1 in pool play.

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