

Green light to improve Petrolia crosswalks

Heather Wright
The Independent

Saying the time for study is over, Petrolia council is moving forward to create safe crosswalks in the downtown.

Town council agreed Monday to use an existing report from 2019 on crosswalks in the downtown to make the core safer for pedestrians. In January, council voted to commission another report which wasn't expected to begin until May.

In 2019, council received a study which recommended removing sidewalks with road markings but no lights. The consultant said they aren't legal crosswalks. The consultant wanted the amber crossing at the TD Bank improved and two more placed at the corners of Petrolia Line and Queen St. and Petrolia Line and Princess St. where children cross to go to school.

But at the time, council shelved the report with Mayor Brad Loosley voicing concern about how adding the crossings would removed downtown parking.

But in January, the head of Lambton County Developmental Services urged council to reconsider the study.

Two of LCDS clients were hit in 2022 while crossing the road at the corner of Petrolia Line and Greenfield Street.

During the budget session, council agreed to move forward and set aside \$7,000 to update the 2019 study and \$60,000 for at least one crossing could be upgraded this year.

But Monday Councillor Debb Pitel convinced council to skip the second study.

"I just don't feel a second report is necessary. I think that we have enough information that we can move forward. Maybe it isn't 100 per cent complete, but there's certainly enough information that we could act upon improving and expanding what we currently have for the safety of our community right now."

Clerk Mandi Pearson says town staff will meet to draw up a plan from the 2019 study which councillors will likely see "in the next few months."

WHO-DONE-IT?



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

The shock of murder is all too much for Mrs. Peacock, played by Ella Taylor, and Mrs. White - Ireind Farr - as the LCCVI student cast of the murder mystery Clue practice for their upcoming performance. For the first time in a decade, the Lancers will grace the stage at Victoria Playhouse Petrolia. You can read more about the March 8 to 11 event on page 6.

‘We need this housing’ Dawn-Euphemia severances in limbo

Heather Wright
The Independent

Dawn-Euphemia Mayor Al Broad says an important source of housing in rural areas of Lambton is in jeopardy.

Since 2015, Dawn-Euphemia has been trying to get Lambton County and the provincial government to recognize the value of smaller farm lots. The provincial planning policy says the should be about 40 hectares.

Only 10 per cent of farms in Dawn-Euphemia meet that standard. Most are around 20 hectares.

When the county's official plan was approved in 2017, it recognized the smaller farms. But the province didn't approve, saying all farm parcels have to be 40 hectares.

The issue went to a Local Planning Appeal Tribunal where the province agreed Dawn-

Euphemia will have farm parcels that are 30 hectares - rule the county has to enforce. That's still larger than most of the farm plots in the township and, in at least one case, means a local farmer may bulldoze a home.

"The gentleman that was looking to sever a parcel, the remaining parcel was going to be like 28.4 hectares instead of 30 and we cannot approve that," says Broad.

"It is totally, absolutely ridiculous. So, we have the province on one hand that has these provincial policy statements saying one thing, and then we have them pushing Bill 23 through on the other side to try to get more housing.

"We can supply the housing, but this particular house is going to be torn down - bulldozed down - because the farmer is not a landlord. He doesn't want to be a landlord.

"We need this housing. And then their provincial policy doesn't allow for the existing housing to remain. That's the frustrating part."

Ken Melanson, the manager of planning and development services for Lambton County, says there may be a way around the log-jam. He says the province's Build Homes Faster Act allows ministers to make exceptions, if the municipal plan meets the province's housing goals. But Melanson says, the ministry hasn't outlined how that will work yet.

Broad is hopeful the details will come soon, so Dawn-Euphemia can move forward and protect much needed housing.

"We're not taking a bunch of land out of production," Broad says noting all the farm plots used to have a house on them. "We need that housing."



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Petrolia OKs development study

Heather Wright
The Independent

Petrolia Councillor Joel Field says it’s possible the town could bring in \$11 million in development charges with the housing projects already on the table.

He was one of five municipal councillors who approved spending \$29,500 on a development charges study - the first step in a year long process which could lead to the municipality charging developers a fee for every home they build. In Sarnia, that fee can hit \$35,000. Plympton-Wyoming charges around \$11,000.

When the province gave municipalities the power to raise cash to fund the capital needs caused by growth in 1989, Petrolia resisted. Councillor Ross O’Hara said Monday the policy spurred development. “We’ve always tried to work with developers...This is nothing short of a tax...It’s a tax on the developer that will be carried over to the person that buys the home.”

Field disagreed saying the development charges will save taxpayers money. The housing in the planning stages now will require more fire trucks, roads and

improvements to the water systems. “I want to save the taxpayers money and I feel that some of this development needs to pay for that development,” says Field.

Councillor Liz Welsh agreed saying the municipality has control on how much development charges will be.

“Municipalities, as we know, have very few revenue generating tools beyond property taxation. And I think this is an opportunity for us to raise the necessary revenue to increase our infrastructure that’s coming now with our new developments.”

But O’Hara insisted adding a fee could slow housing development voting against hiring a consultant to complete the study. Mayor Brad Loosley also opposed it.

Field says other communities - such as Sarnia and Plympton-Wyoming - have a thriving housing market.

“Other municipalities are not collapsing. I don’t think we need to be the highest (development charge) I think we need to get the study done to understand what we don’t know right now.

“We’re making a lot of judgment calls without having the facts.”

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Larry Leckie and Terry Syer have been honoured for their volunteer work in Petrolia. The Town of Petrolia held its annual volunteer appreciation night Thursday. Over 80 volunteers – service club members, members of town committees, Victoria Playhouse Petrolia volunteers, among others – attended the event. Leckie and Syer were recognized as Volunteers of the Year. Leckie – with members of St. Paul United Church – spearheaded the opening of the Community Refrigerator project which provides food for those in need 24 hours a day. Syer is active in outdoor pursuits including both the Petrolia and Lambton Trails groups and is the coordinator for pickleball in town. He also serves on the Heritage Advisory Committee. Officials say a third volunteer will be honoured at a later date.



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Petrolia’s pricey sidewalk problem; report says over \$1.5 million needed soon

Heather Wright
The Independent

Petrolia has a pricey sidewalk problem. A consultant’s report explained presented at a public meeting Monday suggested the town spend over \$1.5 million to build and widen sidewalks throughout the town, soon. But the total price tag of the proposed work is much higher - more than \$4.25 million to fix aging sidewalks, widen those that are narrow, build sidewalks in several subdivisions where they were never planned and possibly provide up to six trail connections including linking Petrolia to the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area and with a trail north to Wyoming.

Jordan Fohkens of the engineering firm BM Ross and Associates laid out the issues his company has found and some of the concerns the public has brought forward as the town tries to make Petrolia a walkable

community.

Fohkens says about 30 per cent of the town’s sidewalks are undersized including several along major roads where there isn’t a boulevard to buffer the traffic. He estimated there is about 1.6 kilometres of sidewalks in that category.

Jenna Simpson, the principal of a private elementary school, raised that concern at the public meeting. Simpson often brings the school children to Bridgeview Park.

“It does feel like we’re walking beside a highway with young children, I think because there’s not a buffer between the sidewalk and the road.”

Fohkens says the public brought up two main areas of concern during the public input sessions.

Tile Yard Road and First Street where students walk to LCCVI on a road without sidewalks and a narrow ledge on a bridge they must pass is one area of concern.

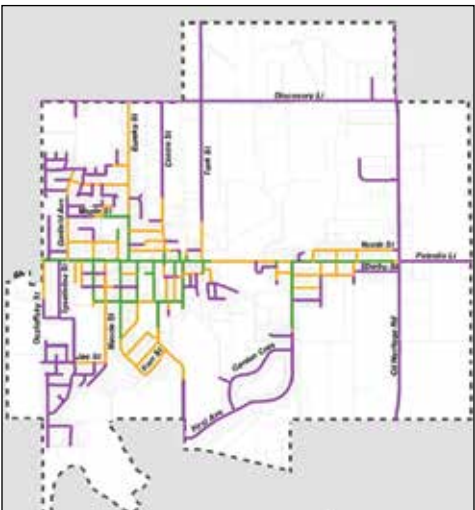
The study suggests there are ways to build up the sides of the roads and created a sidewalk or multi-use trail. That carried a price tag of between \$180 and \$313,000.

The streets around Queen Elizabeth II Public School, specifically Maple and Garfield Street are also of high concern. There isn’t a sidewalk along Maple which is the main access for the school.

The study shows First Ave., Tank Street, and Pearl Street were the highest priority to be widened. Sections of Dufferin Avenue, King Street, and Albany Street have highest priority to replace sections of the sidewalks.

The public can take a look at the reports findings at town hall for the next month. BM Ross will present its final report to council sometime after that.

It will be up to council to decide how to move forward although only \$30,000 has been set side in the 2023 budget for sidewalk repairs.



The map from consultant BM Ross shows where there are roads with two sidewalks (in green), one sidewalk in yellow and no sidewalks in purple.

Lambton politician worries about push to end school closing ban

Blake Ellis
Local Journalism Initiative

Trustees across Ontario want the province to lift a moratorium on school closures and that has some rural politicians concerned.

The Ontario Public School Board Association this week called on the Ontario government to lift a moratorium on school closures put in place om 2017.

At the time, the Liberals were facing political heat over local boards deciding to close schools with low enrolment moving students to another location.

One of the last schools to be approved for closure before the moratorium was South Plympton Public School near Wyoming.

School boards across the province say half empty schools are a drain on their resources.

“We appreciate this is a complex issue, but after six years our students and their families shouldn’t have to wait any longer for their schools to be built, repaired and renewed,” said OPSBA President Cathy Abraham. School boards have been balancing the upkeep of aging

infrastructure, shifting enrolments and other financial pressures while delivering educational programming, she said.

“The current situation has created unsustainable funding deficits, as it costs the same to clean, heat, maintain and keep the lights on in a school whether it is half empty or full,” said Abraham. The OPSBA hopes the province can lift the moratorium by the end of the current school year.

But Dawn-Euphemia Mayor Al Broad doesn’t want to see that happen.

Dawn Euphemia School on Oil Heritage Road is most likely to close should the ban be lifted. It’s the only school in the municipality.. An already completed pupil accommodation report calls for the rural school to close and students to be bussed to Dresden where they would attend a JK to Grade 12 school in the Lambton-Kent Composite building.

Broad says lifting the ban and the eventual closure of the public school will have a large negative impact on his municipality.

One of the first things families consider when looking to move to an area is the

closeness of an elementary school, he said.

Dawn-Euphemia Public School is the only elementary school in the township and having children split up and bussed to other schools will negatively affect the social fabric of the community, said Broad.

The mayor will be bringing forward a motion at the next Dawn-Euphemia Township Council meeting to call on the province not to lift the moratorium.

While rural politicians are working hard to keep the schools open, local educators have been saying for years they can only begin to fix some of the infrastructure issues if they don’t have to pay for upkeep of half empty buildings.

In 2022, the Lambton-Kent District School

Board estimated only 75 per cent of the boards schools are used.

And there are a number of schools with less than 150 students. There were six elementary schools including Dawn-Euphemia Public School with 121 students and the Mooretown-Courtright Public School with 106 students.

Brian McKay, the superintendent of business for the public board, said in December, the empty spaces still cost money to maintain.

“We can turn down the heat in some areas of schools, but we can’t turn it right off,” said McKay, noting their continues to be a cost to keep all of the schools open at decreased capacity.

‘We will fight them tooth and nail’

Heather Wright
The Independent

The mayors of Warwick Township and Plympton-Wyoming made a direct appeal to CN Rail, hoping to get the company to pay its share of drainage projects. But it appears little progress has been made.

Last year, CN informed municipalities across Ontario it wouldn’t pay for costs associated with drainage. CN said because it was governed by federal rules, it did not have to follow provincial regulations. The company simply stopped paying the bills municipalities across the province sent.

Warwick is waiting for about \$160,000 and CN has \$80,000 outstanding in Plympton-Wyoming. They’re not alone. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario says the company owes about \$1.5 million for new drain construction and maintenance across the province. AMO added about \$2.7 million worth of drainage projects are in limbo because of CN’s refusal to pay.

Feb. 17, Warwick Mayor Todd Case and Plympton-Wyoming Mayor Gary Atkinson met with CN Rail officials, but did not get any commitments with the rail company.

“While it was a productive meeting with CN Rail, the municipalities are hopeful that a quick resolution can be found to the issue, so drainage works are not held up in

the province and outstanding invoices to municipalities are paid,” said Case.

But, he tells The Independent, the company seems entrenched in their position, even though CN has paid for its share of drainage work in the past. “They’ve set a precedent over the years by paying, and they do benefit from the drain.”

Plympton-Wyoming Mayor Gary Atkinson agreed.

“CN Rail continues to benefit from municipal drainage assets for its rail infrastructure. Hopefully, CN Rail will revisit its position on Ontario’s Drainage Act,”

Case says the municipalities are not about to give up.

“We will join up with the other municipalities, we will fight them tooth and nail on this one. Because at the end of the day, it’s the right thing to do. It’s the responsible thing to do,” Case says.

“They’re benefiting so why should the farmer down the road or the person with the estate lot or whatever the case may be have to pay more because these guys aren’t paying, and they’re actually holding up good drainage work and projects because they’re refusing to pay.”

The provincial government backs the municipalities saying CN is subject to the Drainage Act.

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Editorial

Fees least of housing worries

The rhetoric was thick as Petrolia council moved forward on a study on development charges.

In 1989, the province gave municipalities the power to charge developers a fee. It would be to pay for services which would be needed as the population grew from the development. Over the years, many municipalities - in fact the majority in Lambton County - began charging the fee. But Petrolia resisted.

At the time, the council of the day thought the fees would discourage development. And, developers did start to build in Petrolia, although there is no solid proof the lack of development fees was the reason. After all, when houses were going up in Petrolia, they were also going up in places like Sarnia, where the fees were charged.

Generally speaking, developers build houses when there is a market for them. And that's usually when the economy is good.

Councillor Ross O'Hara, who was part of the council which decided to stay away from development charges, was very pointed in his criticism of council's move toward the fee. He called it a tax that would be passed on to home buyers, making the house even more expensive. While O'Hara is likely right - the fees will be built into the cost of the home - it's unlikely a fee of under \$10,000 will stop someone from buying a \$500,000 or \$600,000 house which seems to be the norm in Petrolia now.

O'Hara also suggested the fee would cause a slow down in development - asking them to think about what would happen if 50 per cent of the homes planned were put on hold.

There is a very real possibility the pace of building in Petrolia will hit a wall. That will be more about rising interest rates and inflation or the slow pace of moving through Petrolia's planning system than a single fee.

Perhaps politicians opposed to the fee should look at it from a different angle; the taxpayers of Petrolia may be less able to afford the tax increase for cost of upsizing a water line or a new fire truck than a developer selling homes for a half million dollars.

New housing is important, but so is keeping the tax rate affordable for those already living in Petrolia.

Letters to the Editor

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Our Story



LAMBTON COUNTY ARCHIVE PHOTO

The people of Lambton have always loved a good deal. In 1912, there were six buying clubs in Moore Centre, Plum Creek, Wheeler, Brigden, Waubuno and Bradshaw. They were headed by the Lambton Farmers' Co-Operative whose head office was in Petrolia. They eventual merge to the Brigden Co-Op, one of three United Co-Operatives. In 1993, according to the Lambton County Archives which recently shared this vintage advertisement, the Brigden Co-Op merged with Orford Co-Op which at the time included the Brigden Post office. It eventual became Agris in 2006.

Sidewalks leading to schools should be fixed first

If you have ever walked along Petrolia Line heading to Bridgeview Park, you know exactly what Jenna Simpson is talking.

The elementary school principal told council Monday taking her young students down the extra wide sidewalk to the park is like "walking beside a highway" because there is no buffer - no boulevard - between the sidewalk and the traffic.

It's just one of the observations council heard about Petrolia's sidewalk problem.

A third of the sidewalks are too narrow.

About 1.6 kilometres along busy roads has no boulevard for extra protection for walkers.

Tile Yard Road and First Ave - where LCCVI students walk to school - has no sidewalk at all.

Neither does Maple Street - home to Queen Elizabeth II elementary school.

There's over 1,500 distressed sidewalks in need of repair and 158 tripping hazards throughout town - a lawsuit waiting to happen.

Just to fix the top priorities the consultant says over \$1.5 million is need.

It seems Petrolia has a long way to go before it hits its goal of being pedestrian friendly.

There are also some interesting new walking trail ideas including the trail link under the bridge on Petrolia Line linking Bridgeview Park. It has a price tag of about \$178,000. The town has

already given it the green light and town staff says it won't be built without 50 per cent coming from donations or grants.

There's also suggestions for links to the local conservation area and Wyoming.

It all sounds great, in my mind, it makes far more sense to repair the sidewalks our kids use to get to school first to make their commute safer.



Heather Wright

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Petrolia’s \$10 million spending plan approved

Heather Wright
The Independent

Without a lot of fanfare, Petrolia council has approved the 2023 budget which will see most homeowners pay about \$69 more in municipal taxes this year.

After one day of budget deliberations in January and a public budget meeting in February, council officially passed the document Monday night. This year, Petrolia will spend \$6,092,783 to operate the town and \$3,958,576 on capital projects.

Town staff brought a three per cent tax increase to council for 2023. That comes after three years without a tax increase. The three years before that, the town passed along a one per cent increase.

A three per cent tax increase means homeowner with a house assessed at \$193,000 – the average in town – will

pay \$69 more to cover the cost of municipal taxes. Lambton county is projected to raise its portion of the bill by about four per cent.

That’s even though there is about \$54,000 more in revenue this year because of new housing.

Officials said inflation helped drive up the cost of running government. Inflation is hovering around seven per cent in Ontario.

There are some larger than average increases in the budget – including council’s salaries which are up nine per cent more than the \$108,000 spent in 2022.

The cost of general administration is up four per cent, but there are some big increases in spending within the department including an 80 per cent increase in legal fees – with \$45,000 budgeted this year over \$25,000 spent last year.

Over all, the town plans to spend

about 13 per cent more on legal and professional fees this year.

The town expects to contribute more to the operation of the YMCA in 2023. Taxpayers will foot \$487,225 of the bill to run the centre. That’s up from \$435,426 in 2022.

In 2023, the town hopes the arena will need less than last year - \$211,966 - to cover its deficit.

The town also plans to collect enough taxes that it will be able to put \$1,531,458 into working reserves at the end of the budget year – it’s slightly less than the town put into the working capital reserves last year.

Rick Charlebois, town treasurer and chief administrative officer, says the town has built its reserves to \$8,904,238.

Only Mayor Brad Loosley spoke at the budget passed. “I had concerns of being at three percent but under the circumstances I can live with that.”

Brooke-Alvinston passes 5.77 per cent tax increase

Heather Wright
The Independent

Brooke-Alvinston Mayor David Ferguson was hoping this year’s projected six per cent tax increase could be trimmed. It has been - by a third of one per cent.

Brooke-Alvinston council passed the \$4,690,493 operating budget and the \$1,763,750 capital budget Feb. 23 after council made a number of changes earlier in the month.

Treasurer Stephen Ikert says council added \$5,000 for a Community Improvement Plan grant, \$65,000 was removed from the public works budget after the manager said a number of items could be put off this year. Council also increased the amount of revenue which it expects from the community centre to \$16,000. Brooke-Alvinston, like other municipalities, had very few rentals in 2022 due to the lingering pandemic.

In the end, the changes only reduced the tax increase to 5.77 per cent, says

Ikert. That means a \$44.16 increase in taxes for every \$100,000 of assessed value of a home. The taxes on farm land would increase by about \$10 for every \$100,000 of value.

Brooke-Alvinston is facing the same pressures as many other communities, including rising inflation and insurance costs.

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 has the added hurdle of provincial funding cuts. 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.

While council approved the yearly spending plan, it wasn’t without some concern.

Councillor Don McCabe says the budget is “a sobering reminder” that the municipality is facing needs totaling nearly \$10 million in the next five years even as the municipality depletes reserves to keep the tax increase as low as possible this year.

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

Warwick gets first government cash for ELCC

Heather Wright
The Independent

Warwick Township has received its first significant grant for the East Lambton Community Complex.

The Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario announced Friday the township has been granted \$750,000 to help cover the cost of the barrier-free, accessible,

and gender inclusive washrooms that use green technologies at the complex.

Warwick Chief Administrative Officer, Amanda Gubbels says the grant also helps pay for an addition which allowed the township to build a walking track in the \$11 million facility.

It’s the first government grant the municipality has received for the complex.

Warwick Mayor Todd Case says it will help pay down the \$9 million debt for the project. “It is a huge impact in a very positive way on our debt... this money is very, very much appreciated and welcomed,

Meantime, the community’s fundraising campaign is almost “over the top” Gubbels says. So far, \$1.925 million has been raised of the \$2 million goal

Petrolia library services may have to expand to community spaces

Heather Wright
The Independent

As Petroia’s population grows, the town may have to bring the library “outside its four walls.”

Andrew Meyer, the general manager of cultural services for Lambton, spoke to council Monday about the Library Services report. While other municipalities face the prospect of closing smaller branches in the future, Meyer

says Petrolia’s library may need to provide more services since the population is projected to increase to 7,400 residents by 2031.

“The challenge with the Petrolia site, although it’s small, it is a heritage building, and it’s a building that is well loved by the community because of its heritage value as a historic train station.

“And it really doesn’t allow for expansion,” he told councillors.

“So instead, I think that the shift in focus would be, how can we bring the library outside of the four walls of the library, spilling out into the market space, you’ve got a beautifully positioned library alongside your market, we’re very close to the Victoria Hall.

“So instead of looking to increase the square footage of the library...look at creative ways to allow the library to spill out into the community,” Meyer said.

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LCCVI mystery ‘Clue’ heading to the big stage

Heather Wright
The Independent

It is a classic who-done-it that will be familiar to people who love board games. Over 30 staff and students at LCCVI are putting the finishing touches on the first play staged at Victoria Playhouse in a decade. The March 8 -10 play is based on the classic board game Clue.

“You’re in the same rooms, and it’s all the same characters like Professor Plum, Scarlet, Miss White, all of them. And the weapons are the exact same. And it’s this whole idea ... it’s like a who-done-it, like, in what room, where?” says Director Christina Langstaff.

The director says while older audience members will remember the mystery board game, the students didn’t need to be brought up to speed. They had all played Clue as well, she says.

“Isn’t that funny? It’s like these classics. They just stick around.”

Over the last two years, the drama department has staged some smaller events including a haunted house at Halloween. But this is the first time since the pandemic for a full-scale play. And it’s the first time in over a decade LCCVI has brought the play on the big stage at Victoria Playhouse. It’s a lot of work – the students have been rehearsing since September – but Langstaff says the community is pitching in.

“The students and the community, like companies, partnerships have just been so supportive, in terms of like time and donations, and the community at the school helping us out. So it’s been incredible,” she says

“They’re just excited to see that, like the youth of our community participating together. And this is really a great



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Ava Horwood was busy painting the set for the LCCVI play Clue Monday. About 30 students and staff are working on the murder mystery which hits the VPP stage March 8.

accomplishment ... all the work that goes into a show.”

Langstaff adds a lot of community members remember their time being in high schools show so they “have this love, and so they want to support us.”

“It’s really been incredible to see everybody kind of step up and be creative and help us all do it together.”

Langstaff says tickets to closing night are going fast and the elementary school performances are already sold out.

Tickets for the show can be purchased at the VPP box office.

Fiddicks defamation hearing slated for Nov.

Heather Wright
The Independent

It will be November before an Ontario court will decide if a defamation suit brought by Fiddicks Nursing Home against the family of a former resident will go ahead.

Tom and Maria Moore were served with a \$200,000 defamation lawsuit by Fiddicks Nursing Home in Oct. 2020.

In its claim, Fiddicks says the Moores “embarked on a malicious campaign ...which have portrayed Fiddicks...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’ lawyer 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.

In 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.

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 and their access to Dawson saying the home’s policies on visiting residents were not in line with the provinces.

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. The motion says the Moores’ comments were “a matter of public interest” during the pandemic.

The anti-SLAPP legislation requires a hearing to be held in 60 days.

However, the Moores’ lawyer, Denis Grigoras, says “the 60-day requirement is routinely ignored because it is practically impossible to schedule a long motion within 60 days of the anti-SLAPP motion being made, given the typical length of these motions vis-à-vis the court’s availability to hear them.”

Grigoras says the hearing is expected to take place Nov. 17.

Lambton power workers help CK in ice storm

The head of Bluewater Power says Lambton County was relatively unscathed during two ice storms while thousands of people in the Windsor-Chatham-Kent region were left in the dark for days.

Feb. 22, snow and freezing rain pelleted the province with communities along Lake Erie and Lake Ontario taking the brunt of the storm. Thousands of homes in Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent were without

power for days and two Bluewater Power crews went to help out.

Lambton had a fair amount of ice build up, but Bluewater Power CEO Janice McMichael-Dennis says the local electricity grid stood up “incredibly well” with just three problems affecting about 25 homes.

“To have a storm like that go through and have only 25 homes affected – our system did incredibly well,” she added.

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WARWICK TOWNSHIP COUNCIL ARE LOOKING FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES / BOARDS

ALL application forms must be submitted by **4pm on Thursday, March 9th, 2023**
They can be addressed to 5280 Nauvoo Road, PO Box 10, Watford, ON N0M 2S0

Appointments for Township committees will be for staggered terms between one (1) year and four (4) years; and members shall be a resident and/or ratepayer in Warwick Township. Appointment to the County of Lambton Seniors' Advisory Committee is for a term of two (2) years.

- WARWICK TOWNSHIP CEMETERY BOARD
(1 MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC)**
The Warwick Township Cemetery Board is responsible for providing advice and input on Cemetery services and assisting in the management of all cemeteries within Warwick Township. (Watford Cemetery, Bethel Cemetery, Warwick Cemetery plus several 'inactive' cemeteries)
- COUNTY OF LAMBTON SENIORS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(1 MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC)**
The County of Lambton is recruiting a resident from Warwick Township for the Seniors' Advisory Committee. The role of the committee is to promote interests and identify seniors' issues and address them at a County level. Questions regarding this committee can be directed to Anita Trusler at Lambton Public Health by calling 519-383-8331 ext. 3646 or emailing anita.trusler@county-lambton.on.ca. Application forms are available at the Township Office and on the Township website.

For further information on Township committees, or to receive a copy of the Terms of Reference or an application form, please contact:
Amanda Gubbels, CAO/Clerk, at agubbels@warwicktownship.ca
Heather Willemse, Deputy Clerk, at hwillemse@warwicktownship.ca or by calling 226-848-3926.

Application forms are available at the Township Office or on the Township website and must be submitted by the above date to the Clerk's Department.

www.warwicktownship.ca

Staffing concerns as Lambton expands daycare

Heather Wright
The Independent

Lambton will build 521 new licenced child care spaces by 2026 but officials say the biggest hurdle may be finding the early childhood educators to care for the children.

Valerie Colasanti, the general manager of social services for Lambton County, says the new spaces are part of the federal and provincial agreement to provide more affordable child care spaces. Lambton will be providing up to 521 spaces under the deal.

Colasanti says the spaces will be split between school based programs and licenced home daycare.

“These are all new spaces. Some of the ones in the school have already been discussed as the schools are building, so they know those are coming,”

she says. “The ones outside of the schools, those are all new builds. So, some would be looking to expand existing childcare centers, and some would have to do new builds or partner with local municipalities.”

All that requires some co-ordination, recently a committee of Lambton County council agreed to the idea of hiring a coordinator for 18 months to get the project moving. That has to be approved by the full council.

And Colasanti admits they’re on a tight timeline; “Some of the school spaces definitely have already been planned. They’ve been in the planning for some time. So those ones will open a little bit more quickly.

“The other ones (through private or government partnerships or home daycare) we’re in different stages right now.

We really have to look at where we were going to put them, what existing infrastructures are there, can we grow any areas?

And while that seems like time consuming job, Colasanti says getting the spaces built won’t be the most difficult part of the job.

“I think the biggest challenge was going to be staffing, it’s real challenge to get early childhood educators, we have some vacancies right now that we haven’t been able to fill. So that’s going to be our biggest challenge. And we do have a workforce plan, the province is developing one, but it’s going to be a real challenge to be able to staff.”

To help meet the need, an open house will be held March 9 at Sarnia Legion from 9 am to 3 pm to talk about the jobs which are available in the industry.

Catch-up vaccine clinics start in Lambton

Heather Wright
The Independent

If you are one of the 9,379 students in Lambton who need to catch up on your vaccines, there is help.

Lambton Public Health begins its vaccine clinics Friday aimed to bring hundreds of student up to date after the pandemic.

Acting Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Karalyn Dueck says there are 6,589 students in both high school and elementary school who need to update their

mandatory vaccines.

“There’s nine children’s vaccines that are required under the Act, and they have to be reported to the local medical officer of health and the health units,” she says. “If students are not up to date or have not reported their vaccines, then they will typically get a notice.”

The students would have a limited time to prove they had the vaccines or they would be suspended. That wasn’t done during the pandemic and it has created a backlog.

“We are really trying to ensure everyone has a chance to get caught up.

“Of course, immunizations are always available through one’s health care provider. But we are also providing immunization clinics,” says Dueck.

The first of the clinics at the health unit begin Friday from 9 am to 4 pm.

There are others on March 14,16 and 17.

There will also be clinics in the high schools. LCCVI has yet to have a clinic set up.

Krall Park to be upgraded

Blake Ellis
Local Journalism Initiative

While the date for the grand opening of the Marthaville Park improvements have been set for May, Enniskillen Township has its eyes set on another project, which will see enhancements made to Krall Park.

Enniskillen Township Council voted on Feb. 21 to go ahead with the final design work and the tendering process, which will see new washrooms built at the park near Oil City.

Once this is complete, the council will decide whether to move forward into the construction phase.

Township Clerk/Treasurer Duncan McTavish said the project would replace the washroom pavilion while

putting in walkways from the parking lot to the pavilion, cement pads in the dugouts and netting around the backstops.

Enniskillen estimates the cost at \$303,875. Some of the money will come from the Ontario Community Improvement Program, with \$121,550 from the federal government and \$101,281 from the province.

The township will cover the rest taking the \$35,000 from its reserves.

McTavish said the township will not be able to build a full-sized pavilion with the funds budgeted. There will be an overhang on the building to provide for a covered area.

Enniskillen budgeted for the project last year but didn’t complete it.

- THE INDEPENDENT

Enniskillen looking for scholars

Blake Ellis
Local Journalism Initiative

They have money to give, but no takers.

Enniskillen Township councillors are perplexed after extending the deadline for the municipality’s secondary school scholarship. There have been no applications this year for the \$1,500 award.

Enniskillen students going into the first or second year of university must demonstrate how they have been active in the community through volunteering

and include a letter of recommendation from a teacher or employer.

Students are also to complete a 750 word essay which tells how living in a small rural township has influenced them, their views on how the township can attract and retain residents, why a post-secondary education is important and how the scholarship will allow them to meet their career aspirations.

The scholarship selection committee selects two students every year to receive a \$1,500 prize.

The March 1 deadline will be extended.

No cash without asset plan: Veen

Blake Ellis
Local Journalism Initiative

The Oil Springs Library needs a ramp to make it wheelchair accessible, the fire pumper is probably five or more years away from being replaced at the Oil Springs and South Enniskillen Fire Department and there are storm sewer repairs which will likely need to be included in a street reconstruction project. It all hinges on an updated asset management plan for the Village of Oil Springs.

“It sounds like it really works once you get it up and running,” said Oil Springs Mayor Ian Veen, at the Feb. 7 council meeting about asset management plans. Veen was well versed about municipal asset management plans after attending a session on asset management plans at the Rural Ontario Municipal

Association (ROMA) Convention held from Jan. 22 to 24 in Toronto.

Veen said the asset management plan allows a municipality to budget for five or 10 years in the future. This makes a capital project always ready to go. Municipal staff might need to make a few small changes. “Once you get it, it is an important tool.” He said.

When the municipality meets with provincial government officials about needing additional dollars to conduct various projects, the first thing they ask, is where is your asset management plan.

Veen said the village does have an asset management plan, but it needs to be updated. The village has been applying for grants to complete the process.

Most municipalities hire a consultant to do the initial plan. It can cost between \$25,000 and \$50,000.

DON'T LET A
FALL GET YOU
DOWN

As we grow older, our risk of falling increases and so does the risk of serious injury from a fall. Most trips, slips and falls happen in and around the home. Here are some simple things you can do to make sure your home doesn't trip you up.

THE BATHROOM

- Use a non-slip mat inside and outside the tub or shower.
- Install grab bars by the toilet and in the tub and shower area.
- Purchase a non-slip bath and shower bench to get in and out safely.
- Install a raised toilet seat to make getting on and off easier.



THE KITCHEN

- Replace loose scatter mats with rugs the have rubber backing
- Wipe up spills immediately
- Keep everyday items on shelves within easy reach
- Make sure no extension cords cross your path
- Never climb on a chair or stool to reach for something. Always ask for assistance
- Use non-slip floor wax
- Add gliders to your chairs to make moving them easier when you sit down or get up from the table.



www.lambtonchiropractic.ca

Lambton Chiropractic Centre

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Note: Vendors who qualified in 2022 as a Preferred Vendor for Advertising and Marketing Communications Services will continue to be Preferred Vendors -- they do not need to respond to this posting (no need to re-qualify).



PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

LCCVI's Darius Landon wins silver at OFSAA Tuesday

LCCVI's Landon swims to silver

Barry Wright
The Independent

Darius Landon was less than a blink of an eye away from a gold medal at the Ontario high school swimming championships in Leamington Tuesday.

The 15-year-old from LCCVI lost the 15 and over 50 metre freestyle final by eight-100's of a second to James Chen of

Richmond Hill's Our Lady Queen of the World Catholic Academy. The winning time was 25.30 seconds. Landon touched the wall in 25.38. In fact, the top five finishes in the hotly contested race were all within just over a half second of each other.

Landon won three individual events at both the Lambton Kent high school swimming championships in Sarnia and the SWOSSA championship in Windsor.

Two aces, one game for Podolinsky

A Petrolia woman has accomplished a rare golf feat.

Anita Podolinsky was playing in the quarter finals of a two person team match play in Bradenton, Florida on Jan. 26, when she had not one, but two holes in one in one round of golf, according to Fairways Magazine

The first at the Riverstrand Golf and Country Club was 105 yards and the second ace was on a 118th

fourth hole.

While Podolinsky and her partner won their quarter-final match, they lost the semi's on the final hole.

Podolinsky has been playing golf for about 30 years. She hit her first hole in one on Kingswell Glen in Aug. 2021.

Two holes in one in one round has only happened three times in pro golf – all on the men's tour.



Anita Podolinsky

New executive director at health team

The Independent

There is a new leader at the Central Lambton Family Health Team.

Ralph Ganter is the medical group's new executive director. He fills the void left when Sarah Milner resigned in January to take on a new role at Bluewater Health.

Ganter has been involved in health care

planning regionally. CLFHT Board Chair Kelly Poore says Ganter is a "trusted leader in the local health care community and has a significant understanding of rural health care."

Ganter says he's had a "keen interest" in the family health team model and is looking forward to working with the Central Lambton team.

Rebound primping for Lambtonproms

The Independent

Rebound is getting ready to help Lambton students have their dream prom outfits.

The youth organization is hosting The Cinderella Project.

The Cinderella Project gathers new and almost-new formal dresses, shoes, and accessories, and provides them free to students unable to buy their own. The teens go to a boutique and get help from volunteers to put together their prom look. This year boutique will open April 12 to 16 from 4 to 8 pm Wednesday to Friday and Saturday from 10 am-7 pm, and Sunday from 11 am to 5pm.

To make sure there is a large selection, Rebound is holding a dress drive March 6 to 11. You can drop off any formal wear and accessories at Rebound in Sarnia or at Lambton Mall Friday and Saturday March 10 and 11.

Rebound is also looking for volunteers for the boutique days in April. The Cinderella Project needs everything from personal shoppers and seamstresses.

Rebound is also looking for people who would be willing to provide hair, makeup, flowers and nails to the students during prom season.

If you wish to help please email fundraising@reboundonline.com.

Petrolia man wins \$100,000 in lottery

After nearly 30 years of playing the lottery, a Petrolia man has won big.

Jamie Gale of Petrolia won \$100,000 in the Jan. 11 Ontario 49 Encore lottery.

Gale has been using anniversary and birthdays for his numbers since he started

playing when he was 18.

This is his first big win.

Gale plans to pay off some bills, buy something nice for his wife, and put some money away for his son's future.

Fairbank boots turn heads a century later

The Independent

Some eye-popping shoes with ties to Petrolia are turning heads online and at a new exhibit at the Bata Shoe Museum.

A pair of Clara Fairbank's carriage boots, trimmed in ostrich feathers, are part of the museum's exhibit called Obsessed.

Clara was married to Charles Fairbank in 1900. The Fairbank mansion in Petrolia was her home for 44 years from 1912 to 1956.



Clara Fairbank

A pair of Fairbank's ornate carriage boots were donated to the shoe museum in 2020 by Charlie Fairbank of Oil Springs, along with several other pairs of shoes and boots.

The carriage boots are now featured prominently in the Toronto exhibit which shows how industrialization drove shoe consumption.

"How we have come to be shoe obsessed is a complicated story of need, innovation, desire and opportunity and has as much to do with industrialization as it does with personal style," says Elizabeth Semmelhack, Director and Senior Curator of the Bata Shoe Museum in a news release.

"This exhibition explores how new ideas have inspired new shoes."

According to the shoe museum, the Fairbank carriage boots were designed in France to be worn in unheated carriages to keep your feet warm.

Most were made to fit over evening shoes.



FILE PHOTO

A pair of ostrich feather trimmed carriage boots worn by Clara Fairbanks of Petrolia is getting a lot of attention thanks to a new exhibit at the Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto called Obsessed. It looks at how industrialization drove shoe consumption.

Many carriage boots have quilted lining and fur trim for extra coziness.

The museum featured the shoes on its Instagram account recently and drew over 12,000 likes.

"These hand-made boots by a French shoemaker were long saved by my grandmother and by family long after," says Charlie Fairbank.

"My grandmother's shoes are not simply fashion items, they are artifacts of Petrolia's stellar innovation and industry which created wealth.

"When I was a boy, I chopped wood in the mansion basement for my grandmother's fireplace.

"I remember her as a woman of exquisite and expensive tastes," said Fairbank when the shoes were first donated to Bata.

At the time, officials at the shoe museum said they had never seen anything like them.

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We seek members that reflect the diversity of the communities served, with a focus on recruiting women and rural representatives, Indigenous peoples, members of visible minority groups, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and persons with disabilities.

Application form and information at
www.bluewaterhealth.ca/board-recruitment
APPLICATIONS DUE BY March 31, 2023

Sports

Flyers pick up points heading to playoffs

Barry Wright
The Independent

Harly Jacklin Allison had a goal and an assist to lead the Petrolia Flyers to a 4-2 win over Exeter.

Jacklin Allison scored the insurance goal late in the third period last Thursday night at Greenwood about seven minutes after he assisted on the game-winning goal by Dylan Demeulenaere.

It was Demeulenaere's fourth goal in seven games

since joining the Flyers at the deadline.

Cole Hudson and Kyle Flamminio also scored for Petrolia.

Elijah Grant turned aside 32 of 34 shots for his ninth win of the season.

The Flyers have now registered points in three of its last four games and have improved to 10-24-4 on the season.

The Flyers entertain Port Stanley Thursday in the final regular season home game at 7:30. Petrolia takes on

the Dolphins in Dorchester Sunday to close out the regular season schedule on the road.

The Flyers will finish eighth in the Yeck Division and will play either the Mt. Brydges Bulldogs or North Middlesex Stars in the first round of the postseason.

The Bulldogs lead the Stars by one point for the division lead heading into the final weekend of the regular season. The Stars and Bulldogs go head-to-head Friday night.

DUST UP



BLAKE ELLIS/LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

There was a Central Lambton dust-up as the East Lambton Eagles U15 Reps came to Petrolia. The Oilers fell to the Eagles 9-0 in the playoff game. East Lambton, who is undefeated in playoff action so far, hosts the Oilers in Alvinston Friday night.

Veterans lead Mooretown Flags to victory

The Independent

Brody Genyn and Logan Gardner each had a goal and two assists and goaltender John Chartrand stopped 39 of 40 sent his way in a 5-1 win by the Mooretown Flags over Amherstburg.

Blake Howard had a goal and an assist for the Flags with Tristen Konrad and Ryan Vidler adding the others.

Levi Plain had two assists Saturday night at the Moore Sports Complex.

Mooretown will finish fifth in the Stobbs Division after Blenheim clinched the fourth spot with a 3-0 home ice win over Wallaceburg Sunday.

The Flags and Blades will play in the first round of the playoffs.

Mooretown is home to Blenheim Wednesday and will close out the regular season entertaining Essex Saturday.

In between, the Flags take on the Canadiens in Lakeshore on Friday.

Jaques, Rockets lose regular season finale

Petrolia's Andrew Jaques had a goal and an assist, but it wasn't enough as the Strathroy Rockets fell 4-3 in overtime to London Sunday.

The Rockets drop to sixth place in the GOJHL final standings.

Chatham took fifth place with a 5-4 win over Komoka.

Bright's Grove's Tanner Winegard had a goal and an assist for the Nationals against the Rockets and another former Legionnaire Bradyn Santavy of Forest had two assists.

London plays St. Thomas in the first round of the postseason. Strathroy will be pitted against St. Marys.

The other two first round series will be Leamington taking on Sarnia and Chatham going up against LaSalle. The Legionnaires clinched the final playoff spot with a win over the Nationals in London Saturday. Sarnia will open its postseason series at Leamington on Thursday.

Killer Bees first ever playoff game Friday

Alvinston Killer Bees have drawn Elora in the first round of the Western Ontario Super Hockey League playoffs.


Game one of the best-of-five series is Friday night in Elora.

Game two is scheduled for Alvinston on Saturday night at 6:30. The Bees host

Elora again March 11.

The Bees ended the regular season with an 8-2 loss in Erin on Saturday.

Cam Rombouts and Carter Wright gave Alvinston a 2-1 lead after a period in the season finale, but the Blitz scored seven unanswered goals for the victory.



Waste Management

Twin Creeks Environmental Centre

Warwick Public Liaison Committee (WPLC)

NOTICE OF WPLC MEETING

The next WPLC Meeting will be held:

Date: **Wednesday, March 8, 2023**

Time: **6 p.m. Meeting**

Place: **Twin Creeks-Office Boardroom**

Please RSVP to: amclachl@wm.com

1. Call to order – Chair Mary Lynn Metras
2. Approval of/Additions to Agenda
3. Acceptance of December 14, 2022, Minutes
4. Business Arising
 - a. Full Time Inspector from MECP
 - b. RWDI: Q4 & Annual 2022 – Exceedances and Monitoring – & Q1 2023 Correspondence
 - i. Complaint report as per 11.4
 - c. Warwick Public Consultation Recommendations - Presented by Township Representative:
5. New Business
6. Reports
 - a. MECP Inspector – Review of MECP Inspection
 - b. Twin Creeks Landfill Operational Report from John McDonald
 - i. Tonnage reports (December, January, February)
 - ii. TCEC TOR Update
7. Open Session
8. Next Meeting Date/Agenda
 - a. Wednesday, June 28
9. Adjournment

AGENDA



ALVINSTON KILLER BEES

COME & MEET THE LOCAL PLAYERS at the HONEY HOUSE after the game - upper hall



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SAT MAR 4 @ ALVINSTON | 6:30 PM

FRI MAR 10 @ ELORA | 8:30 PM

SAT MAR 11 @ ALVINSTON | 6:30 PM

SUN MAR 12 @ ELORA | 1:30 PM

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Mar 31 / Apr 1 @ Lambton College

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PRESENTS



clue

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2023**

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www.mccannredimix.ca

Coming Events

Lambton Branch, Ontario Ancestors Meeting - **Tuesday March 14 @ 6:30pm** Speaker is Dr. Penny Walters. Dissecting the Documents: **UK Censuses from 1801-Present.** ON-LINE ONLY. Register for Zoom Meeting at lambton.ogs.on.ca Meetings are free and open to the public – all welcome. For more information email lambton@ogs.on.ca

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER - Friday March 3 @ 1pm at the First Baptist Church, 418 Greenfield St., Petrolia. Accessible Entrance. 519-882-2480

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Coming Events

Celebrations

Congratulations


The Eves Family
is proud and pleased to announce
the graduation of
McKayla Eves
from Logan University, College of
Chiropractic. McKayla is a graduate of
LCCVI where she excelled on the track
team. She accepted a track scholarship
at Indiana University where she
graduated with a
BSC in Health Science/Psychology.
Logan University in St. Louis, Missouri,
accepted her into their College of
Chiropractic.




She is now starting to practice in
Canada with Dr. David Blanchard
at Lakeshore Road
Chiropractic Clinic
in Sarnia

Welcome Home McKayla

Card of Thanks





The family of the late
Wayne Strevel wish to
extend their thanks to all
who helped and for the
assistance given at the
time of the loss of our
dear Husband, Father,
Grandfather and Great
Grandfather.

Special thanks to Needham
Jay Funeral Home, the
nurses and doctors at
Bluewater Health, the
Wyoming Legion staff and
all of our dear friends and
wonderful neighbours who
supported us throughout
this difficult time.

**Betty Strevel
and Family**

**Calendar
of events**

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	START TIME	LOCATION	EVENT	CONTACT INFO
Mar 3	7pm	Oil Springs	CORN HOLE @ the Oil Springs Youth Centre - 519-339-8101	
Mar 3	7pm	Petrolia	St Philips CARD PARTY @ St Philips Hall - 519-882-4840	
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	
Mar11	4:30pm	Brigden	MEAT RAFFLE @ the Brigden Legion - 519-864-1395	
Mar15	12-1p	Petrolia	LUNCH @ the Petrolia Legion - 519-882-1557	
Mar15	1-4p	Petrolia	COUNTRY - SOFT ROCK JAMBOREE @ Petrolia Legion - 519-882-1557	
Mar18	4pm	Oil Springs	MEAT RAFFLE @ the Oil Springs Legion - 519-834-2537	
Mar18	7pm	Brigden	TRIVIA @ the Brigden Legion - 519-864-1395	

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

*To be included in this
listing email the required
information to
office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca*

Subject:
FREE EVENT LISTING.

**PLEASE CALL AHEAD
TO CONFIRM - DATES
SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

Classifieds

Obituaries / Death Notices



SHANNON Bert

On **Saturday, February 25, 2023**, surrounded by family at Bluewater Health, Sarnia, **Bert Shannon of Petrolia**, passed at the age of **83**. Survived by his adoring wife of 60 years, Linda (nee Bidner) and his two children, Brian and his wife Kari Shannon and Jennifer and her husband Brian Clark and their dog Ally. He was the proud grandpa to Bailey Shannon.

Bert has four siblings, Joyce (the late John) Hamilton, Darlene and Ken Melton, the late Mary Jane and the late Norris Brandon, his twin - the late Beth and the late Jack Sayers and his brothers and sisters-in-law, Rick and Gisele Bidner, and Jim and Lynne Bidner, the late Gayle and the late Peter Staley and the late Gary and the late Jane Bidner. Predeceased by his parents Stuart and Jessie Shannon and in-laws Charlie and Rosie Bidner. He will be dearly missed by many nieces and nephews.

Bert was a very involved father who enjoyed family vacations and spending as much time as he could, taking them to their sporting events and having amazing family meals. One of his greatest joys was watching Bailey grow up, riding her horse, playing hockey and baseball. He was so proud when she graduated and became an MRT.

Bert and Linda spent many years with a great group of friends, travelling together and having fun making memories that will last a lifetime.

He was also proud to have worked for Polysar for 42 ½ years, sustaining many lifelong friendships there. Bert enjoyed golf and skiing and was involved with local hockey and baseball.

A private family service will take place. The family would like to invite family and friends to attend a Celebration of Bert's Life on Saturday, March 4, 2023 from 2-5 p.m. at the Royal Canadian Legion Br. 388 in Wyoming.

As an expression of sympathy, memorial donations may be made to the C.E.E. Hospital Foundation (ceehf.ca) or by cheque to the Margaret Stokes IODE or the Canadian Cancer Society (Cancer.ca). **Memories and condolences may be made online at www.NeedhamJay.com**

MORNINGSTAR Betty Louise

With heavy hearts, the family of **Betty Louise Morningstar (Harris)** announces her peaceful passing on **Thursday, February 23, 2023**, at the age of **80**, at Fiddick's Nursing Home with her loving son Darren by her side. Betty was the loving wife of Phillip Morningstar for 60 years. Dear mother to Darren (Holly), and proud grandmother to Macy. Betty was born in Edy's Mills, February 13, 1943. She was the 3rd oldest sibling in the large Harris family. Treasured sister to Buck (Aldea) Harris, Marion (Ron) Munro, Doug (Evon) Harris, John (Sharon 2004) Harris, Janice Harris, Peter (Dorothy) Harris, Brenda Harris, Donna (Richard 2002) Harris as well as a fun-loving Aunt, Cousin & Friend to a large extended family. Betty is predeceased by her parents Harold Harris and Mable Yacks (and stepfather Cecil Yacks), son Steven John (1968), brother William Harris, sister Lucille (Doug) Jarvis and Brother-in-Laws Edward, Herbert (Maxine), and Paul (Beatrice) Morningstar. Betty enjoyed a long career as a Dietary Aide at Meadowview Villa. Legend has it that she made the best ham & pickle sandwiches ever, and she made sure the student employees were properly trained to do so as well. Betty will forever be fondly remembered by all that knew her as a Social Butterfly, with her positive, fun-loving attitude and contagious smile. She loved to have fun & get together with friends and family at every opportunity. While a resident of Fiddicks Nursing Home, Betty was very popular amongst the staff and residents. Her dancing skills will be remembered for years to come. Betty's family will be forever grateful for the loving, kind care she received during her time there. **In lieu of a traditional funeral, we will be hosting a Celebration of Life to honour Betty. She loved a party, so one last party she shall have. Please join us on Saturday, March 18, 2023 at 2pm at the Oil Springs Youth Centre, 4517 Victoria St, Oil Springs, to pay respects & raise a glass in memory of Betty.** Any donations made to Bluewater Health in Betty's memory will be greatly appreciated. Arrangements entrusted to Life Transitions Burial and Cremation Service Inc.





Death Notices

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

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19 CLEAVE, William Thomas "Tom" Age 70 Smith Funeral Home HOCKING, Paul Lindsay Age 58 Smith Funeral Home	WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22 DIAMOND, Patrick George "Bud" Age 82 Smith Funeral Home WHITE, Joanne Marlene (n Murray) Age 82, formerly of Thamesville John C. Badder Funeral Home	FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24 CAMPBELL, Helen Margaret Mary (n Allard) Age 86 Smith Funeral Home EGAN, Linda Catherine Age 65 Smith Funeral Home OVERTON, Roy Age 91 Smith Funeral Home
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20 DEMELO, Maria De Fatima Age 80 Smith Funeral Home ROBERTSON, Harriet Theresa (n Campbell) Knight Funeral Home	THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23 FRANCOEUR, Deborah Louise (n Evans) Age 59 Badder Funeral Home & Reception Centre MORNINGSTAR, Betty Louise (n Harris) Age 80, of Oil Springs Life Transitions SHEARON, Steven Alan Age 47 Smith Funeral Home SPARLING, Dorothy "Dot" Vera (n Davidson) Denning's of Forest	SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25 GAUTHIER, Réal "Ray" Age 79 Smith Funeral Home VAN REENEN, Tina (n De Bree) Age 92 Smith Funeral Home SHANNON, Bert Age 83, of Petrolia Needham-Jay Funeral Home
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21 MITCHELL, James "Jim" Jeffery Age 72, of Corunna Knight Funeral Home PARK, Hilary Irene (n Rothera) Age 76, of Wyoming Needham-Jay Funeral Home		SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26 WAGNER, Dale Raymond Age 75 Smith Funeral Home

February 19 - February 26 2023

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



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



Wrestlers head to provincials

LCCVI's Brock Callister won the SWOSSA wrestling championship in the 72-kilo class.

After his win at St. Pat's over the weekend, he now advances to the provincial high school meet in Ottawa from March 9-11.

Lancer teammates Sim Limoges and Elianna Callister also qualified for the provincials with second-place finishes in their weight classes.

Watford's Devyn Manning of North

Lambton won the girls' 54 kilo class and moves on. She was also named the female wrestler of the SWOSSA from Lambton Kent.

Siblings Wes, Riley and Alyssa Crummer of Florence also will fly the LKSSAA colours in Ottawa. They are former Wyoming residents who now attend Ursuline College in Chatham, and Hayden Wilson of North Lambton also qualified for provincials with a win in the 130-kilo weight class.

Hockey champs to be crowned

Weather has reeked havoc on the high school sports schedule.

If the weather holds, LCCVI will skate up against North Lambton for the Lambton Kent boys' high school hockey crown Wednesday at 1:30 at Greenwood.

Meantime, the Petrolia and Forest schools are scheduled to decide the girls' final Thursday at Greenwood.

The game was originally set for Monday but was rescheduled due to inclement weather earlier this week.

DeVlugt named volleyball all-star

Chantal DeVlugt has been named a second team OCAA women's volleyball all-star.

The outside hitter from Wyoming averaged 9.4 points per match this season for Windsor's St. Clair Saints.

She also had 8.1 kills and just under four digs per match.

The Saints finished second in the

OCAA West this season with a record of 14-4 and beat Algonquin in straight sets to advance to the provincial championships.

But the Saints lost in straight sets to Sheridan in the quarterfinals last Thursday. The LCCVI grad had 15 points, eight kills, six block solos and four digs in the playoff setback.

SENIORS CLAIM TITLE, JUNIORS COME CLOSE



BLAKE ELLIS/LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

LCCVI and Great Lakes each won a Lambton Kent girls' AA volleyball championship. The Lancers downed John McGregor, three games to one in the senior final and the Wolfpack went to five sets before prevailing against the Lancers in the junior final (pictured above). In the senior championship match, LCCVI won the last two sets 25-22 and 25-14 after splitting the first two sets 25-23 and 17-25. In the junior championship, Great Lakes fell behind by two sets losing 15-25 and 19-25 before rattling off three straight sets 27-25, 25-21 and 15-8 in the decisive set.

TAKING THE SHOT



BLAKE ELLIS/LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE PHOTO

East Lambton U13 AE is on a winning streak, beating St. Mary's in Alvinston 7-1 to notch the fifth straight win in OMHA playoff action. The Eagles finish out the first playoff round Saturday in South Huron.

Mooretown wins twice at Gretzky tourney

The Mooretown Flags beat the Keene Wolverines from the Kingston area, 4-1 to capture the U13 B title at the Walter Gretzky girls hockey tournament on the weekend in Brantford.

It was one of three local teams to bring home gold.

The Sarnia Lady Sting also won its division

with a 4-1 win over the Barrie Sharks in the championship game in the U18 A division.

Mooretown also won the U11 house league title beating London, 3-1 in its final.



Vanos wins silver at big Ten track and field

Johnny Vanos unleashed his best throw of the season and in the process took second place in the men's weight throw at the Big Ten Indoor Track and Field Championships Friday in Geneva, Ohio.

His throw of 22.12 metres was two centimetres better than his previous best this season.

It is the 15th best throw in the NCAA this season.

Next up for the Purdue graduate student from Forest is the NCAA Indoor Championships in New Mexico on March 10 and 11.

For his efforts on the weekend, Vanos was named a second team Big Ten all-star this season.

Port Lambton swimmers win gold and silver

Shona Branton won the 100-metre breaststroke final Friday night at the U Sports Swimming Championships in Victoria, BC.

The Port Lambton swimmer, representing the Western Mustangs, touched first in 1:08.06 more than second better than Danika Eithier of Laval.

The victory for Branton avenged a close loss to Eithier in the 50-metre breaststroke earlier in the day. The Laval swimmer nosed out Branton by 18/100th of a second in the shorter race.

Branton is a former member of the Rapids swim team in Sarnia.



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