

The Independent

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DISCOVERING BOOKS



Harrison Vanleerzem, 3, was wide-eyed with excitement as he went through one of the 450 bins of books at the Plympton-Wyoming Fairgrounds during Lambton County Library’s annual book sale. More than 13,500 books were offered for sale July 26.

Aid unlikely for Alvinston

Heather Wright
The Independent

The mayor of Brooke-Alvinston was hoping there would be financial help to deal with the damage left in the wake of a downburst. But, Mayor Dave Ferguson says the municipality doesn’t qualify to use the funds set up by the provincial government. July 20, heavy thunderstorms moved through Lambton. Researchers say a downburst with winds of up to 115 km hit Alvinston and surrounding area, bringing down countless trees which struck vehicles and homes. Neighbours worked together to clear the debris off the streets that day, however homeowners and the municipality have a lot of work yet to do to clean up the remains of the trees, fix roofs and homes

and replace vehicles. Ferguson says no one has been able to say exactly how many trees have fallen. “Every time I go by, looking back here, (as some clean up occurs) now you can see better. There’s another tree tipped over and another tree sheared at the top, limbs are all gone. I don’t have a number but it’s not 20 or 30 it’s 50, 60, 70.” Ferguson says the municipality’s public works employees have been working hard to clear the damage but it’s a big job. “It’s the sheer volume of wood, sticks, trees, we do only have four people on the road crew, we’re doing all the work together. So then their other road work has been neglected.” The mayor spoke to provincial politicians about what funding might be available.

SEE ALVINSTON PG 2

Lightning strike causes barn fire

Heather Wright
The Independent

A direct hit by lightning caused a barn fire northwest of Wyoming. Friday night, a heavy storm rolled through Lambton County again which included lots of lightning. Acting Plympton-Wyoming Fire Chief Scott Jordan says the farm family on Confederation Line watched as lightning hit a three-sided barn filled with fresh hay. It ignited almost immediately. “The owner’s son was right there and saw the lightning strike,” says Jordan. The heavy rain in the storm didn’t help quench the flames. “The rain turns to steam before it gets to the roof with the heat,” the chief added. Fire crews from Wyoming, Camlachie and the Petrolia/North Enniskillen department went to the large cattle farm between Plowing Match and



Thick smoke could be seen from during Friday’s fire.



Mandaumin Roads around 5 pm. By 10 pm, Jordan estimates the crews poured 72,000 gallons of water on the blaze. Smoke could still be seen rising from the hay pile days later. Jordan says the farmer had heavy equipment and pulled apart the hay which kept it from spreading to the nearby cattle barns. No animals were injured in the blaze. Jordan expects it will cost over \$500,000 to replace the barn and the hay.

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Alvinston clean up continues

CON'T FROM PG 1

Lambton-Kent-Middlesex MPP Monte McNaughton and the Minister of Municipal Affairs say there is help in disasters, however Brooke-Alvinston likely won't apply.

Ferguson told council there are two funds available for municipalities to help pay for the clean up costs. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs has a fund for disaster clean up if a municipality incurs costs which would be four per cent of its total budget. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs also has a fund; it's three per cent of the total budget.

That would mean the municipality would have to spend between \$140,000 and \$188,000 to qualify.

Ferguson isn't sure that will happen at the municipal level.

There are costs.

Public works employees are cleaning up the damage, although the amount of overtime has been limited.

Brooke-Alvinston also has to find a way to get rid of all the trees which fell. Right now the waste is piled high at the public works yard on Brooke Line and at the Okes Auto Lot off Nauvoo.

Administrator Janet Ferguson is working to bring a large chipper to Alvinston to deal with the waste.

The municipality is also facing fees for inspections at the water tower. The aluminium clad tower was hit by a tree. The aluminum is dented. An inspection is needed to make sure that's the only damage.

Denkers says the first inspection cost \$6,300.

During Thursday's council meeting Ferguson suggested costs could top \$90,000 for the municipality.

But the mayor is also worried about the financial burden homeowners will bear.

Many are still working to figure out how much work their homes may need.

Ferguson says a neighbour had a 8,000 pound tree fall on his bungalow. They're still assessing the damage.

"You can see the trusses on the one end to a point. The end of the house is blown out a couple of inches. And then the kitchen downstairs there's movement," he says. "So, until they start taking off roofing, the



FILE PHOTO

Trees toppled in the July 20 storm all around the Alvinston water tower. It was hit by a tree and the aluminum siding was impacted. Testing was being done on the tower to determining the extent of the damage.

sheathing, the siding to physically see or crawl up through the attic to physically see what he considers damaged."

And he worries about those who have to pay for tree removal on their property.

"If you had a big tree in your backyard – and this is from a couple of years ago – and had to be removed carefully – didn't damage the house, you'd be looking at \$5,000 cost on doing that.

"Now I've got a big tree in your backyard; it's tipped over partway, it has to come down. How do you get that big tree down that may not be (covered by) insurance because it hasn't touched anything but it has to come down because it is safety issue.

"Now, if you're a pensioner or somebody with a lower income and you get a five or \$10,000 charge that's going to be devastating to them when they realize it was gonna cost them," says Ferguson.

Youth summit planned Oct. 14 in Petrolia

The Independent

Petrolia's new Youth Advisory Committee wants teens to say YES to the first Youth Engagement Summit.

Earlier this year, at the request of Petrolia Councillor Debb Pitel, the town formed the committee hoping to get young people involved in the community and to help them find mentors.

The first big project will be the YES conference at the Petrolia Y Oct. 14.

The event will deal with key subjects including career workshops, information from community partners, games, prizes, and guest speakers. The Petrolia Lions will also be hosting a free lunch for the teens involved.

Public comments wanted on park deals

The St. Clair Region Conservation Authority wants to know what you think about the deals to return Highland Glen and McEwen Conservation Areas to Plympton-Wyoming.

The municipality and the conservation authority have been working since 2019 on a deal to return McEwen Park and since 2021 on an agreement for Highland Glen.

The agreements have been approved by both organizations, however, provincial legislation requires a 45-day public comment period. You can find the agreements at the SCRCA's website. Public comments will be received until Aug. 26 through the email comments@scrca.ca.

Officials say the deal will proceed but public comments may help shape the terms.

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BLAKE ELLIS/LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE PHOTO

Tour Guide and Summer Student Ryan Shaw explains the history of the Canadian Rig, which is currently being retrofitted this summer at Petrolia Discovery. Work is underway to restore the Canadian Rig at Petrolia Discovery thanks to a grant from Lambton’s Creative County Fund.

Canadian rig at Discovery gets \$10k facelift

Blake Ellis
Local Journalism Initiative

The Canadian Rig on the grounds of the Petrolia Discovery Centre is getting a retrofit. Developed in 1866 in Petrolia, the Canadian Rig was used by many hard oilers as they fanned out around the world beginning to make more oil discoveries, taking their skills learned in the local oil fields. The structure will be rebuilt and reinforced with steel. There is a group of local experts and volunteers working on the project, said Chair of the Petrolia Discovery

Foundation Liz Welsh. There were no scale drawings of the structure, so Bob Maniuk stepped up to do the drawings and put together a work plan for the project. The bulk of the work will be completed by this fall, said Welsh. The work is being completed with a \$5,800 grant from the County of Lambton’s Creative County Grant Program. That money is matched by the Petrolia Discovery Foundation, said Welsh. “It is a labour of love,” said Welsh, about her volunteer work with Petrolia Discovery. This is only the second season Petrolia Discovery summer

students have acted as tour guides with the site open from Thursday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in July and August. Summer student and tour guide Ryan Shaw, an LCCVI student, who also worked for Petrolia Discovery last year, said they have already surpassed the number of visitors this year over last year. There were approximately 1,000 visitors in 2022. Shaw said he enjoys learning about local history. Petrolia Discovery is an original oil field developed in the 1860s. At its height of production, it had as many as 300 oil wells on the grounds.

Plympton-Wyoming looking at housing grant

Heather Wright
The Independent

Plympton-Wyoming is looking at an option for lower cost housing. Council has given staff approval to spend up to \$10,000 to see if the town could take advantage of the Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation’s Housing Accelerator Program. The Housing Accelerator Fund provides funding to local governments encouraging developers to increase housing supply. It also places priority on homes which are climate resilient in small and Indigenous communities. The fund will provide \$20,000 in grants per unit in four-plexes up to \$2 million. It will provide even more for multiple unit housing projects. “You do not get any grant money for single family dwellings. This is only townhouses and semi detached,” Public Works Manager Adam Sobanski told council July 26. The fund was established several months ago, but Sobanski says he put it aside because of the complexity of the process. But CMHC is concerned small municipalities aren’t applying for the cash and its hired firms to approach

communities to help them with the application process. “Hearing that there is the potential we could get it and that it can be quite lucrative has the least brought me here to discuss it today,” he told council. “There is a large grant CMHC is worried that it’s going to be under subscribed so they won’t actually be able to use it all. So, CMHC is pushing these kinds of companies to push us to apply because the money may be there for many of us.” Sobanski says the town would have to find a developer with land which only needs to be rezoned who would be interested in the project. And he says there are some in the community that fit the bill. “We can remove some of the barriers or at least help pay for some old barriers based on this project,” he added. “You’re not you’re not using town property tax dollars to help that developer remove barriers, you’re using federally-provided, CMHC tax dollars to help remove those barriers...carrying out those studies that will be required to rezone those lands or a few lands beside it too, if there’s interested in.” Councillors wanted to hear more, with most noting how expensive hous-

ing has become. “No one can afford a house anymore,” said Councillor Bob Woolvett. Councillor John VanKlaveren agreed. “It’s certainly worth exploring in my opinion,” he says. “The demand...is extremely high for affordable housing. “There’s a lot of folks that would just love to purchase a home and just can’t enter that market, particularly here in Plympton-Wyoming, unfortunately. So it might be a disservice to our municipality not to explore this.” Council gave staff approval to work with a company to determine if the town would qualify for the project which is expected to last four to five years. The exploration will cost up to \$10,000. Sobanski will return to council in mid-August with a report about the possibilities. But he cautioned council a number of times this would not be a quick or easy project to complete. “If we get approval, it is going to very much take on a lot of time to move forward,” Sobanski said. “But, it is a massive benefit for this town if we can help accommodate some higher density housing.”

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Brooke-Alvinston OK’s \$946K arena plan

Heather Wright
The Independent

Brooke-Alvinston has given the green light to \$946,000 plans to upgrade the dressing rooms and add a sprinkler system to the Brooke-Alvinston-Inwood Community Centre. But it could be some time before it is built since the Alvinston Optimist Club will have to raise at least half of the cash before a nail is hammered. Council had seen the plans created by Spriet Architectural before. A number of community groups, including arena users like minor hockey, figure skating, the fair board and the Alvinston Optimists, had a chance to give input over the last few months and had approved of the idea in concept. July 27 it was the first time councillors who are - or were - Optimist members declared an indirect conflict in the issue and sat out the discussion. Both Deputy Mayor Frank Nemcek and Councillor Jenny Redick - Optimist members - were

found to have broken the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act while voting on items which pertained to the Alvinston Optimist. Redick has since resigned from the group saying she had been considering it for a number of months because she was over-committed and wanted to spend her time on council matters. The Thursday night council meeting was also the first time politicians had seen the price tag. “I have to admit, I was rather amazed at the price tag here,” said Councillor Don McCabe. “I think the dressing rooms are needed addition. And it’s going to be a necessity to be able to move this forward and allow people to start doing the fundraising as necessary to make this happen.” But, he added other groups, including Friends of Campbell House and the local Legion, have big projects. And he says the municipality has obligations, including paving Lasalle Line and the

regular maintenance of Brooke-Alvinston’s assets. “So a million dollar bill is nothing to be sneezed at...We got the drawings. And we know what’s going to happen. So now let’s see what the appetite is or what people want to invest in.” Councillor Craig Sanders said the documents should just be turned over to the Optimist so they can start fundraising. Jamie Armstrong - the head of the Optimist Building committee and a former councillor - was at the meeting. He’s pleased the project is moving forward, even if the price tag is high. Armstrong says the Optimists will now begin fundraising and applying for grant money - something which is difficult to get without a concrete plan. “You have to be prepared, you have to have some money raised and you have to have the plan. Then, you have a better chance of getting the big provincial and federal grants when they come out,” says Armstrong.

Brooke-Alvinston to look at heritage designation rules

Heather Wright
The Independent

Frank Nemcek thinks Campbell House is worth saving and he thinks using the heritage designation may be the only way to do it. The deputy mayor asked council to develop a policy for repealing a heritage designation which would include the requirement of a Heritage Impact Assessment at the cost of the person looking to de-designate the building. The move comes as the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority prepares to ask the municipality for a building permit to tear down the home

of Archie Campbell. He donated the land for the Alvinston area park and willed his family home built in the 1860s to a new conservation authority in the 1960s. The Friends of Campbell Park say even though the conservation authority has ignored maintenance on the house, it should not be torn down but restored instead. “The only thing we have going for us is that heritage designation,” says Nemcek at council July 27. “Before they tear it down, they have to get that taken off I assume. “I don’t think we have a policy on heritage...that would be one more thorn in their side to get this thing torn

down.” Nemcek doesn’t believe the house is about to collapse, as an engineer said in a report to the SCRCA. “After that big storm, all the trees around it are down around the house, the house is standing there like a statue.” Council agreed to direct staff to come up with a process to remove a heritage designation. But it put the request for a moratorium on demolition for three years on hold. Council delayed that decision until the policy report comes back to council and they can figure out the future plans of the Friends of Campbell House.

No plans in PW for \$1,000 AirBnB fee say planners

Heather Wright
The Independent

No, there are no plans for a \$1,000 licensing fee for short term rentals in Plympton-Wyoming. That from Lambton County planners during a recent Plympton-Wyoming meeting. During an update on the consultation process which could lead to a new regulations for AirBnB-type rentals, Councillor Bob Woolvett said he’d heard concerns the county is plan-

ning a steep fee for a license to run an establishment. “There are some people already up in arms saying that we’ve been told there’s going to be \$1,000 license fee. What I said to them was, and you can correct me if I’m wrong right now, I said, ‘I have not heard that whatsoever.’ I do not believe that statement was made from anybody from here.” County Planning Manager Ken Melanson says there was a discussion at one of the public forums about the cost of licensing short term rentals. He

said at the time if there are “10 times fewer” units in Plympton-Wyoming than Lambton Shores - which already regulates the units - the fee might be “10 times more” to cover the costs. That lead to people assuming the high fee. But planning officials said the majority of people at the open houses - many of whom live near rentals - are in favour of some form of regulations. Council is expecting to see a report on the community open houses August 28 before draft rules are drawn up.

Grandmother led Charlton to be a Big Sister

Heather Wright
The Independent

Stacey Charlton always wanted a little sister. It took years, but eventually it happened. And it was the words of her grandmother which led to her relationship with her little sister. The Oil City woman has been a Big Sister to Ashlyn Mitchell for the past eight years - many years after she wished for a little sister. “When I was little, I didn’t take to the fact very well that I had three brothers and no sisters. When my mom wound up having my youngest brother and I found out it was a boy, not a girl, - not a happy camper.” But her grandmother, a former Children’s Aid Society worker and one of the founders of Big Sisters in Lambton

said, “Hey, there’s this program someday you can have a little sister. Once I was done college I felt I had the time.” Ashlyn had been a little sister for a while, but her previous match didn’t want to drive from Sarnia to the county to get together. When Charlton asked for a little sister from Lambton, she was matched with Ashlyn. For years, they’ve been together crafting, camping, and taking photos. They go to all of Charlton’s family gatherings together and if Ashlyn isn’t there, the first question, according to Charlton is ‘Where’s Ashlyn?’ The organization uses a survey to match big and little sisters and it seems in this case, they hit it on the nose. “My mom has always joked that she gets all these weird deja vu-s when Ashley is hang around because the

two of us are very similar.” Charlton says the program is wonderful for both the girls and the “Bigs” as she calls them. And when the opportunity to be part of the Aug. 9 Big Squeeze Fundraiser for the organization came up, she was all in. Charlton and Ashlyn will be serving their lemonade at *The Independent* from 10 -2 pm. “There are so many kids on the wait list,” she says noting when she was matched eight years ago, 100 kids were waiting. “It’s also a good way to promote through Lambton county that Big Brothers and Big Sisters is here and they need some help.”



Stacey Charlton and Ashlyn

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Spirit makers want ‘equal access’ to Ontario consumers

Heather Wright
The Independent

Jan Westcott says the spirit industry wants a level playing field in Ontario. The head of Spirits Canada was in Corunna Wednesday to meet with a small group which included Sarnia-Lambton MP Marilyn Gladu and Sarnia-Lambton MPP Bob Bailey as well as municipal councillors from Brooke-Alvinston and Sarnia. He’s on a mission to have the Ontario government allow the spirit industry to sell its products in grocery and corner stores.

In 2015, the Ontario Liberal government allowed the sale of beer and wine into grocery stores but consumers couldn’t buy their favourite whiskey without going to an LCBO store.

During the pandemic, Westcott says the restaurant industry successfully lobbied the provincial government to sell pre-made mixed drinks with take out orders. But even with 60 of 82 government MPPs agreeing spirits should have the same market access as beer and wine, the province has yet to make the move.

“We went through a similar process ... in 1982 and Quebec made the decision to allow beer and wine to be sold in large chain grocery stores in Quebec, we had 40 per cent of the beverage alcohol market in Quebec...

Over that seven or eight year period there, our market share crashed to 14 per cent,” he told *The Independent* after the event at the Corunna Legion.

“When people had the opportunity to buy a bottle of wine or six pack of beer, once or twice a week, when they did their grocery shopping, they stopped going to the FAQ – that Quebec’s LCBO – and our sales went through the roof to the floor.

“We closed most of our distilleries, we laid off all kinds of people. It basically killed the business in Quebec.”

Westcott says the spirit industry sells about 29 per cent of the alcohol in Ontario and says the industry “can’t take the risk” of its market share being eroded because it doesn’t have equal market access.

“We would like the opportunity to compete on a level playing field with everybody else. That’s what we’re asking for.”

Westcott says without that commitment, it will be harder to attract large investments. “We need to attract capital investment from those companies into the Canadian business, to improve our plants to make ourselves more environmentally sustainable, to create new products to innovate, and to market our products, both here and around the world. And when we have things like this, (lack of access in grocery stores) that come up,

and people in those other countries say, ‘I’m not sure we should be putting more money into Canada, we’re not getting equal treatment.’”

Westcott was urging change in St. Clair Township where spirit’s giant Diagio’s plans to build a new Crown Royal plant in St. Clair Township. The company is in the final stages of getting its building permits and Mayor Jeff Agar has said the company could begin construction this summer.

“It’s extremely important,” says Westcott of the new \$250 million plant. “This plant will be the first new commercial distillery built in Canada and over 50 years.”

Westcott says Diagio has not made it a lot of its plans public yet including how it will purchase the grain it needs for the product, but he expects local farmers will have new opportunities for their products.

“More distilleries just means more opportunity - right? They’re going to be looking for all kinds of local services, I suspect.”

Westcott adds its likely the company will use warehousing and shipping facilities it already has near Windsor.



Jan Westcott

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ONE DOWN, ONE TO GO



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

The pedestrian crosswalk in Petrolia’s downtown is up and running again. Bluewater Power workers installed the new electronics system at a cost of over \$34,500 after the unit was hit by lightning in June 15. It has a couple of new features including an audio warning that the lights are flashing and a bar of lights above the sign marking the crosswalk for greater visibility to drivers. Meantime, Petrolia’s Director of Operations, Mike Thompson, expects a new pedestrian crossing at Queen and Petrolia Line, near Canada Post, will be installed in the early fall. Petrolia council members included money for the additional crosswalk in the 2023 budget after the head of Lambton County Developmental Services urged council to make crossings in town safer.

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The Redick family presents scholarships in Tanner’s name to Jace McGrail and Laine Shaw Friday night.

Remembering Tanner, helping community

Heather Wright
The Independent

It was an emotional, exciting and rewarding weekend for Jenny Redick.

It was her late son Tanner’s 24th birthday and the ball diamonds in Alvinston were filled with people who knew and loved him for the Tanner Redick Memorial Two Pitch Tournament.

Tanner Redick, 21, died Dec. 13, 2019 in a crash with a combine. That summer, his family started hosting a two-pitch tournament to help remember him. This weekend 30 teams are playing at the Alvinston ball diamonds and sharing stories about Tanner.

“He loved any sport,” says Jenny Redick. “It’s summer; he loved the summer. I can just see him. It’s funny, this morning, when I got up and start loading the car (to prepare for the tournament) there was a cardinal chirping right outside at my house; they say you know cardinals or sign from heaven. So, okay, here we go.”

The weekend is a lot of good fun and people share stories about her son. “I love it the more people come up to me and talk to me about Tanner.

“It’s emotional exciting, rewarding all those,” she said her voice crackling with emotion. “I know Tanner really would have appreciated giving back to the community. It’s funny he was young – he was 19 years

A trip down memory lane at LCCVI golden reunion

Blake Ellis
Local Journalism Initiative

LCCVI grads from around the world - literally - converged on Petrolia over the weekend.

The Grade 12 and 13 classes of 1972 and 1973 held their 50th anniversary reunion. There were 45 people out to Crabby Joe’s on Friday night, 50 to 70 people for supper at the Kingswell Glen Golf Club, and they were expecting 45 for brunch on Sunday to end the weekend, said Joe Joosten, a member of the reunion’s organizing committee.

This is the seventh time a reunion has been held for this group of graduates with the first one being held in 1982. Joosten said there were approximately 150 graduates and the first reunion garnered about 150 participants, including spouses. “At that point we knew there was a lot of interest,” he said.

“We wouldn’t have this if we didn’t have an amazing, tight group, said Graduate Margo McMahan. She travelled from Kelowna, British Columbia to attend this weekend’s reunion and to visit with family. This is McMahan’s second reunion as she had attended the one 10 years earlier.

Joosten said it is getting a little easier to organize the event each time. Work begins

old 20 years old – and he just loved this community.”

Tanner had just landed his first job as a firefighter at the Six Nations Fire Service, but he had been a longtime volunteer firefighter in Alvinston. He spent much of his spare time in Alvinston with family and friends.

Many in the firefighting community and his school friends join the tournament which has raised \$62,000 for community causes in two years. The organization has also started a scholarship in his name which was awarded to Jace McGrail of Wyoming and Laine Shaw Friday night.

“I miss Tanner terribly and the old saying of time heals, it doesn’t. It gets more frustrating and a little more upsetting because you see his friends moving on in their life and you think ‘Oh that would have been Tanner’ or you know buy their first house, get married – all those things,” says Redick.

“So this to me, this is a milestone for Tanner every year. So I’m hoping it’ll go on forever.”



Jenny Redick offers a youngster a cupcake in honour of Tanner’s birthday.



Joe Joosten, Cathy Davidson of Corunna, Paulette Cepek of Point Clark, Margo McMahan, of Kelowna- one class member who came a great distance - and Eileen Jackson of Sarnia.

six months in advance with the booking of venues.

“I have deep roots in this community,” said McMahan. “I never forgot my roots.”

McMahan, who grew up on a farm in the Petrolia/Wyoming area, got “the heck out of Dodge” and went to British Columbia in human resources and as a college professor.

Even though McMahan travelled across the country to attend the event, other members of the class travelled farther coming from Malaysia and Ireland, while others came from Michigan and Ohio, as well as Alberta.

McMahan said the reunion has been a great way to reconnect with former classmates.

And in the near future, they’ll get a booklet updating everyone on what their former classmates are doing now.



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FRIDAY, AUGUST 4

- 5pm-9pm** Food and Free Corn served by Watford Youth Activity Club
- 4pm-6pm** Scarecrow Contest Registration and Setup
- 6:15pm** Scarecrow Contest Judging
- 6:30pm-8pm** Youth Games and Activities in the ELCC
- 7pm-12am** Two Pitch Tournament
- 8:30pm** Live Music by Speed Wobble

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5

- 10am-9pm** Two Pitch Tournament
- 11am-7pm** Food and Free Corn served by Watford Rotary
- 10am-5pm** Free Inflatables and Activities from I Fast Rentals
- 11am-3pm** Indoor Vendor and Craft Sale at the ELCC
- 12pm-3pm** Face Painting by Sarah's Fantastic Faces
- 12pm-3pm** Touch A Truck play event at the ELCC
- 9:30pm** East Lambton

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SUNDAY, AUGUST 6

- 9am-10:30am** Free Breakfast from New Life Assembly
- 10am-3pm** Watford Cornfest Car Show at the ELCC
- 10am-4pm** Two Pitch Tournament
- 11am-5pm** Food and Free Corn served by the Alvinston Killer Bees
- 10:30-11:30am** Cornhole Tournament Registration
- 12pm** Cornhole Tournament
- 1pm** Live Music from NDR&C

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HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Harrison Vanleerzem, 3, left, and his sister Elisabeth, 5, were checking out some of the books available at the annual Lambton County Library sale July 26.

Book bonanza draws readers to Wyoming

Heather Wright
The Independent

It was a book-lovers paradise at the Wyoming Fairgrounds as the Lambton County Library held its annual book sale. An estimated 13,500 volumes were available to the public either \$1 per book or \$5 for a shopping bag full of summer reading material. Brian Bowley, a technical services supervisor with Lambton County Libraries, said July 26 that the county buys up to 20 copies of a book when it comes out, depending on the waiting list of readers. But after a few years, as people have read and returned the book, it sits on the shelf. Bowley says computer program determines which books haven't been checked out in three years and they're offered for sale.



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

August Clelland, 2, of Camlachie was among the book lovers browsing some of the estimated 13,500 books.

Jerker lines invented 160 years ago

The Independent

One of the inventions which powered the oil industry is turning 160. It was 1863 when John Henry Fairbank, who was 31 at the time, devised the jerker line system linking several oil wells together to share one power source. It was a major leap forward from the spring pole method which needed men to continually stomp on it for hours, days and even months. Portable steam engines were sometimes used but in the swampy tangled wood of Oil Springs this was both difficult and expensive.

The jerker line liberated the oilmen from exhausting physical labour and made oil production much more cost-effective. By hooking wells together, it allowed 20 wells or more to use one steam engine slashing a producer's costs and making them sustainable, even during times of wildly fluctuating oil prices.

This multiple pumping system became known as the jerker rod system and it was universally adopted all over Oil Springs and later Petrolia to hundreds or thousands of wells.

It quickly evolved into building power stations known as rigs, then transferring the power through the jerker. Until electricity arrived in Oil Springs in 1918, coal fuelled the massive steam boilers of the rig.

The system gets its name from the swinging motion of the arms, it "jerks" and produces a rhythmic sound that changes with wind and weather. This "singing" of the jerker is an authentic and intangible piece of heritage that has been heard for



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

The jerker lines can be seen on the Fairbank Oil Property in the early years of exploration. Today, 160 years later, they still power the historic wells.



160 years. Artists have also used the jerker lines as a background to their music. The jerks occur at 11 beats per minute, the same speed as relaxed breathing. The system is still in use today. Fairbank Oil in Oil Springs operates almost half of its 320 wells using the jerker line and other oil producers in Oil Springs use it, too. Though it was used on hundreds of wells in Petrolia during its long boom from 1866-1905, the jerker system has disappeared over time except for the Petrolia Discovery where it is used on four wells.

- PAT MCGEE

The Independent

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Sports

Bressette brings home Indigenous Games medals

Barry Wright
The Independent

Bob Bressette of Kettle and Stony Point has three medals to his credit from the North American Indigenous Games in Halifax.

The reigning trainer of the year in the Provincial Junior Hockey League with the Petrolia Flyers won two gold medals, and a silver as trainer for Team Ontario's box lacrosse squads.

The boys' won the 16U and 19U title while the girls' 19U team were runners up in their division.

Julius Sinopole of Aamjinaang and the Sarnia Pacers program was part of

the gold medal winning box lacrosse squad in the 16U category beating B.C. 7-6 in the final.

Meantime, the girls' team, including Lily Bressette of Kettle and Stony Point won the silver bowing 10-8 to B.C. in their final.

Bronson George of Kettle and Stony Point finished fourth in the male 19U baseball tournament, losing a heart-breaking decision to Saskatchewan in the bronze medal game.

Rogan Sands of Kettle and Stony Point and the Team Ontario softball squad went 2-4 in the preliminary round and had the playoffs wiped out by inclement weather and North

Lambton student Mariah Atliman of the Team Ontario female 19U volleyball team finished fourth in their tournament.

Ali Page of Sarnia won four medals, including three golds in 14U swimming while Hayden Wilson and Devynn Manning of Kettle and Stony Point won gold and bronze in their respective wrestling categories.

All the participants attend North Lambton Secondary School in Forest except for Bressette, Sinopole and Page who attend Northern, Great Lakes and Gregory Hogan Catholic elementary school, respectively.

Wyoming's McGrail wins Hall of Fame honour

LCCVI grad Jace McGrail is a co-winner of the Pappy Burr Award, which goes to outstanding students about to enter post-secondary education.

McGrail has recorded consistent marks in the 90s while attending

Petrolia high school. He also volunteers for local Terry Fox Runs, helps local food banks and has collected mitts and hats for the Sarnia Legionnaires Jr. 'B' hockey team's annual Woolly Toss.

He's enrolled at Lambton College in

September.

At LCCVI he participated in baseball, cross country, hockey, volleyball and track and field.

The Hall will hold its annual induction dinner October 14 at the Dante Club in Sarnia.

Ex-Petrolia Flyer signs with Alvinston Killer Bees

Colby Ackworth has signed with the Alvinston Killer Bees of the Western Ontario Super Hockey League.

The speedy forward from Strathroy was the second leading scorer with the PJHL's Petrolia Flyers last season with nine goals and 19 points in 35 regular season games. He added a goal in

four playoff encounters.

The Bees also signed Thomas Harbour for the coming campaign. He played a handful of games for Wisconsin's Northland College last season and also has GOJHL experience with London and the St. Marys Lincolns as well as a season in the OJHL with Brampton.

Wammes to represent Canada in Scotland

Nick Wammes cyclist of Bothwell has been named to Canada's national cycling team for the ICI world cycling championships.

Wammes will compete as a track cyclist in the sprint division at the event in Glasgow, Scotland beginning

Thursday.

Wammes, 23, has represented Canada on the world stage for the past seven years, including a performance at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.



Nick Wammes

Jackson, McLean and Brigade onto elimination tourney

The Sarnia Brigade are in Windsor this weekend for the Ontario senior baseball AAA elimination tournament. Wyoming's Core Jackson leads the Brigade at the plate this season hitting .529 with eight doubles, a triple, 11 home runs and 44 RBI. His home run total includes a four-home run performance against London last week.

Petrolia's Alex McLean is the top pitcher for

the Sarnia squad going 8-0 with 39 strikeouts and a 2.99 ERA. He is also helping offensively with a batting average of .442.

Corunna's Mike Damchuk has two wins and two saves with a 2.18 ERA. The Brigade is ranked as the top senior baseball team in the country in the latest poll by Canadian Amateur Baseball Central.

Corunna tops Bulls in game one of OBA qualifier

The Corunna Giants beat the Dresden Bulls, 13-4 Sunday in the north Chatham-Kent community in the opening game of a three-team home-and-home series to determine who will advance to the OBA Senior B baseball tournament hosted by the Petrolia Raiders on the

Labour Day weekend. Wyoming is the other club in the round-robin tourney.

The Cattlebarons are scheduled to play Corunna at Courtright Wednesday at 7 pm while Wyoming travels to Dresden Thursday for first pitch at Kinsmen Park at 6:45 pm.

Bright's Grove golfer top 15 at World event

Noah Oliver finished in a tie for 13th place and was top Canadian in the 47-player field in the boys' 10 and 11 division at the recent Optimist World Junior Golf Tournament in Florida.

The Bright's Grove resident had rounds of 81, 80, and 79. The member of the Sarnia Golf and Curling Club has already qualified for the same Optimist event in 2024.

Meantime, Lucas Rogers of Kettle Point finished a tie for 70th in a field of 130 golfers in the boys' 13 and 14 group.

And Petrolia's Jackson Policicchio was part of the boys' 16-18 group, but their tournament has been affected by inclement weather. Policicchio only played one round last Wednesday.

He carded a 91.



Noah Oliver

5

WAYS

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3. POSTURE

While riding, keep a neutral spine by bending at the hips and avoiding the “hunch” in your mid-back. If possible, avoid excessive movement from your upper body and use your back as a fulcrum instead.

4. CORE STRENGTH

Having well-conditioned abdominal and back muscles will help to support your upper body while riding and minimize excessive swaying. Your chiropractor can help to guide you and recommend exercises that are targeted to your core, as well as exercises to enhance your overall conditioning.

5. ADJUST YOUR BIKE TO YOUR FRAME

Minor adjustments can make a huge difference. Different styles of bikes require different riding postures, however, the photo above provides a quick reference for general adjustments that can help ensure a relaxed, comfortable posture while riding your bicycle.

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FRIDAY, AUG. 11

8:00am	Registration, Tractor, Display setup continues
8am – 12pm	Vendor Final Set up
Noon to 8pm	Vendor Building open
12pm	Show Opens – Displays only
1pm – 1am	Beer Gardens Open

LIVE MUSIC IN THE BEER GARDENS:

5:30-8:30pm	Jamie Baldwin
9pm – 1am	Dave and Colt, The Southlanders
7pm – 11pm	Southwestern Ontario Tractor Pullers Show Tickets at the Gates \$15/person 18 and older, \$10/person 12-17, Seniors 65+
8pm (Dusk)	Steamed Corn Spark Show (weather permitting)

SATURDAY, AUG. 12

9am	Gates Open ~ Free Parking.
TBA	On Site demo all day
12pm	Bean Pot
12pm	Parade of Power
12pm – 1am	Beer Garden Opens

LIVE MUSIC IN THE BEER GARDEN:

2pm - 5pm	Joan Spalding
9pm - 1am	Brett Baker Country
TBA	Threshing Demonstration
TBA	Shingle Mill Demonstration
3pm – 6pm	OVTPA Pull (registration starts at 2pm)
6pm	Roast Beef Dinner – ADVANCE TICKETS ONLY
7pm – 11pm	Out of Field Pull
9am-5pm	Kids' Zone -Open
9:30am & 3pm	Candy in Straw
10:00am	Pedal Tractor Pull
11am-1pm	Balloon Twisting
1pm	Tractor Bingo
2pm-4pm	Face Painting
9am-5pm	Inflatable Maze (for Kids Only)
1pm-4pm	Make & Take Birdhouses with BT Construction
8pm (Dusk)	Steamed Corn Spark Show (weather permitting)

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2pm

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11am – 3pm

Beer Garden Open

12pm

Bean Pot

12pm

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- Baby show
- Parade
- Birds of pray show
- Light horse show
- Beef show
- Dairy show
- Elite star dancers
- Yuk Yuk's comedy show at night
- Pie Eating Contest

SUNDAY

- Open at 9am
- Wyoming lions breakfast
- Heavy horse show
- Sheep show
- Antique tractor pull
- Pet show
- Wrestler show
- Greg Balch taxidermist

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Death Notices

July 24 - August 1, 2023

MONDAY, JULY 24

SIMPSON, “Jack” John Allen
Age: 70, of Wilkesport
Steadman Brothers Funeral Home

WILLIAMSON, Bradley J. “Brad”
Age: 70
Smith Funeral Home

TUESDAY, JULY 25

MITCHELL, “Betty” Mary (nee St. John)
Age: 96
Steadman Brothers Funeral Home

MATSON, Douglas “Doug”
Age: 94
McCormack Funeral Home

MARSH, Harold George
Age: 87, of Forest
Denning’s Funeral Home

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26

BOS, Helma Anna Hermanna Wubina
Age: 44
Gilpin Funeral Chapel

GIBSON, Marion (Baverstock)
Age: 77, of Dresden
Badder Funeral Home

THURSDAY, JULY 27

JOHNSTON, David William
Age: 86
Needham-Jay Funeral Home

BLYTHER, Alicia Marie
Age: 26
McKenzie-Blundy Funeral Home

KENNEDY, Sylvia Louise
Age: 100
McKenzie-Blundy Funeral Home

MARTIN, Pauline Agnes
Age: 88, of Wallaceburg
Badder Funeral Home

MCDONALD, Anne Alexis
Age: 72
Smith Funeral Home

FRIDAY, JULY 28

VAN HAAREN, Adrien Lambertus “Joe”
Age: 94
Denning’s Funeral Home

SATURDAY, JULY 29

IRVING, Marilyn (nee Nethercott)
Age: 85, of Petrolia
Needham-Jay Funeral Home

MONTEITH, Tye Matthew
Age: 28, of Corunna
Knight Funeral Home

CRAIG, Marjorie Naomi (nee Baldwin)
Age: 98
Needham-Jay Funeral Home

POWELL, Stephen Joseph
Age: 76, of Northville
Gilpin Funeral Chapel

SUNDAY, JULY 30

LALIBERTE, Eileen (nee Casey)
Age: 91
Knight Funeral Home

GARBATY, Henry Kazimierz
Age: 70
Smith Funeral Home

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

Anniversary

Happy 60th Anniversary!

August 17, 1963 Miss Caryl Christina

Richardson became the bride of Mr. George

Elie Guerette in a mid-summer ceremony at the

Temple baptist church, Talfourd St., Sarnia,

ON. Included in the ceremony was Sharon

Nantais, maid of honour, Aurore Holbrook,

Robert Butler, best man and Donald Guerette.

Officiating the ceremony was Reverend MacBain.

THE HAPPY COUPLE WILL BE CELEBRATING
60 YEARS ON AUGUST 17, 2023



Bill & Sharon Stonehouse Happy 59th Wedding Anniversary

and Belated 80th Birthday Wishes!

Best Wishes and Much Love!
and many laughs as the journey continues with your “Forever Friends”



Birthday

Come say:
Happy 95th Birthday!
to
Fern Baker

Meet & Greet
at Tank St. YMCA,
Petrolia 12 to 3 pm on
August 5, 2023. No gifts.
Love from your family.



Garage Sale

BRIGDEN UNITED CHURCH
GARAGE SALE
@ Brigden Fairgrounds
Fri, Aug. 4th & Sat, Aug. 5th
~ 8 a.m. start ~
Something for everyone:
furniture, tools, antiques, electronics, toys
and kitchen essentials!



Hall Rentals

Wyoming Lions

554 Main Street

Reception Hall Rentals

Weddings

Anniversaries

Funerals

Business Meetings



Up to 150 seating capacity
Fully licensed by AGCO

Bookings and information
call: (519) 466 7806 or 845 3333

Real Estate

**3259 Walnut St. Alvinston**

**Oversized Lot!**

Beautiful, spacious 4/5 bedroom century home with modern conveniences/updates. Located in the quiet town of Alvinston between the 401/402 corridor. This home offers a huge living room, eat-in kitchen, 2 renovated bathrooms, family room with gas fireplace, main floor laundry, grand staircase, 4 generous-sized bedrooms (primary with walk-in closet), High-speed unlimited fibre optic internet 5th bedroom could be an office on the main floor, oversized 2-car garage, big back deck, close to a community park, dog park, the Sydenham river, all amenities and schools! Low taxes of \$2460.00/year.

Potential for severances!
\$475,000 DON'T MISS THIS DEAL!
MLS#23011739

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Employment



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY:

The Petrolia Fair Board is looking for
A TREASURER.

Please send resumes to:
KellyHumphrey1966@gmail.com

Obituary



MITCHELL

“Betty” Mary (nee St. John)

It's with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Betty Mitchell on Tuesday, July 25, 2023 at Twin Lakes Terrace, Sarnia at the age of 96. Pre-deceased by husband Wilford Mitchell (2020). Beloved mother of Linda (Bill) Reid, Rosemary (Doug) George, Bob (Susan) Mitchell, Larry (Bobbie) Mitchell and Cheryl Sullivan (Wes Lockhart). Beloved grandmother of 14, great grandmother of 34, and great great grandmother

of 3 with two more on the way. Survived by sister-in-laws Joy St. John, and brother-in-laws Lorne Mitchell, and Stew (Jan) Mitchell. Dearly missed by many nieces and nephews. Predeceased by son William Mitchell (2015), parents John St. John and Vi St. John, brother Lloyd St. John, sister Joyce St. John, in-laws Charles and Emily Mitchell, sister-in-laws Kathleen Middleton, Edna Mitchell, and Hazel Hull, and brother-in-laws Bill Hull, Claire Middleton and Lyle Mitchell. A special thank you to all the staff at Twin Lakes Terrace Nursing Home. *Friends and family will be received for visitation on Saturday July 29, 2023 from 10am to 12pm with a funeral service to follow at STEADMAN BROTHERS FUNERAL HOME, BRIGDEN.* Interment will take place at Oil Springs Cemetery following the service. Sympathy may be expressed through donations to St. Joseph's Hospice www.stjosephshospice.ca or C.E.E. Hospital Foundation (ceehf.ca). Memorial and condolence may be sent online www.steadmanbrothers.ca Steadman Brothers 519-864-1193

Classified Deadline:
Monday @ 12 Noon

Classified Deadline:
Monday @ 12 noon

Classifieds



Word Classifieds: \$10 plus tax for up to 40 words
Stop in at the office 9am-3pm – Monday to Friday
4156 Petrolia Line – Call 226-738-0728
or email: office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca

Charity Fundraiser



Wyoming CRC
BREAKFAST FUNDRAISER

Buffet style breakfast serving eggs, bacon, sausage, pancakes, and toast! Join us at the John Knox Christian School Gym. Entry is by donation and money goes to the Edu Deo Co-impact missions team going to Belize in the end of February 2024.

ENTRY BY DONATION

DATE
AUGUST 12, 2023

TIME
7:30 AM – 11:00 AM

LOCATION
JOHN KNOX CHRISTIAN SCHOOL - GYM
4728 CONFEDERATION LINE

For more information call: (519) 845-0244

FOLLOW US ONLINE:

The Independent





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



St. Paul's United Church
4169 Petrolia Line at Centre Street
No Sunday Service on Aug. 20, Aug. 27 & Sept. 3
Service will resume: Sunday, Sept. 10 at 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





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Calendar

PLEASE CALL AHEAD TO CONFIRM DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

of events

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.

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 @ St. Andrew's Church	519-381-4910
Wed	6:30p	Oil Springs	Legion Open - cards, pool, darts - 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 Wed	1p	Petrolia	Music Jam, lunch at noon @ Petrolia Legion	519-882-1557
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
Aug 2	5pm - 7pm	Alvinston	39TH ANNUAL LAMBTON CATTLEMEN'S BEEF BBQ @ Brooke-Alvinston-Inwood Arena. Advance tickets only. Takeout available. For tickets contact: Hanneke Mills 519-318-0897 or email: lambtoncattlemens@hotmail.ca
Aug 6-7	--	Lambton County	LAMBTON COUNTY LIBRARY LOCATIONS CLOSED FOR THE AUGUST CIVIC HOLIDAY. No items will be due, as all due dates have been adjusted. For more info visit: www.lclibrary.ca
Aug 11-13	TBA	Sarnia	SARNIA ONTARIO AVIATION RALLY (SOAR) FLY-IN @ Chris Hadfield Airport. Free to the public. For more information, please follow them on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/copaflight7
Aug 12	TBA	Wyoming	WATERBALL TOURNAMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY DAY @ Wyoming Fair Grounds. Contact the PW Events Committee 519-384-4098 for details.
Aug 13	2pm - 4pm	Alvinston	WINE & CHEESE OPEN HOUSE @ Alvinston Legion Branch 249, Formal invitations will be sent out in July.
Aug 20	4:30 - 6:30pm	Camlachie	8TH ANNUAL FISH AND CHIPS DINNER @ Camlachie United Church - Served buffet style. Advance tickets only. Call the Church: 226-776-1222 or Audrey 519-383-5662 Email: camunitedevents@gmail.com
Aug 26	2pm	Wyoming	9TH ANNUAL PW TRUCK AND TRACTOR PULL @ Wyoming Fairgrounds.
Sept 2	10am - 3:30pm	Sarnia	LAMBTON PLOWING MATCH @ Southwest corner of Waterworks Rd. and Confederation Line
Sept 15-16	2pm	Petrolia	QUILT SHOW hosted by IODE Margaret Stokes @ the Christ Church Anglican 414 Oil St. - Trunk show Friday Sept. 15 @ 2pm. For more info contact: dawnmcnally@hotmail.com

THE INDEPENDENT

SERVING PETROLIA AND CENTRAL LAMBTON

10 IS CELEBRATING
YEARS

OF COMMUNITY JOURNALISM

WITH AN OPEN HOUSE 1–3 PM

SEPTEMBER 5

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PETROLIA, ONTARIO**