the north dundas TIMES

Reaching by direct mail to over 5,500 homes and businesses in Winchester and area

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Getting outside: trails for snowshoeing, skiing, hiking

by Joselyn Morley

Did you know that the municipality loans out snowshoes? Neither did I, until I heard it at a Council meeting. Apparently, there are a lot of people interested in borrowing those snowshoes! It makes sense. Even the most outdoors-loving amongst us are feeling the lack of social interaction, as well as all those things that we do in the winter inside, that we can't do right now. We can't visit friends, see a movie, visit the library, go shopping, go to museums or plays..... you get the idea.

People are restless, and they want to try new things. Snowshoeing is one of those things. Snowshoeing, alongside skiing or hiking, is conducive to social distancing. The outdoor rinks are open for skating, the roads and sidewalks are cleared for walking, the trails are cleared for snowmobiling, but there's still a number of places to explore for hiking, snowshoeing, or cross country skiing.

A lot of people in the west side of North Dundas end up heading to Kemptville if they want to go for a nature walk. There are trails and roads through Ferguson Forest, and the Campus, and, of course, there's Limerick Forest. North Dundas has its own system of trails to explore.

The Oschmann Forest has a short trail of 1.2 km. There's a diversity of trees, and there's a maple sugar bush in the spring. There are interpretive trail signs, and a heritage sugar shack. It is north of Winchester, off of Ormond Road.

The Robert Graham Trail on Country Road 18/Glen Stewart Road is 140 acres, and has 6.5 km of trails for hiking, snowshoeing, or skiing. The trails are through the woods of white and red pine, and forest regeneration. It is home to deer, turkeys, lots of birds, rabbits, and a variety of other wildlife species.

Two Creeks Forest is on Highway #2, between Iroquois and Morrisburg. The area is 457 acres, with 4.5 km of trail. This is a bio-diverse forest. It includes coastal ecosystems, grassland flood plains, and lowland forests. This type of forest contains the greatest number of living species of all the eco-regions in Canada.

If you want to head a bit further afield, the South Nation watershed extends north east, until the South Nation River empties into the Ottawa. There are many opportunities for cross country skiing, hiking, and snowshoeing throughout the area. To our west is the Rideau Valley watershed and North Grenville, trails that include those at Limerick Forest.

If you can't borrow one of those pairs of loaner snowshoes from the municipality, and you want to get some of your own, here are some things to keep in mind. Snowshoes are meant for walking over snow that you would sink into without them. You do not need them on packed or icy trails. Hiking through mounds of snow is hard work. Snowshoes keep you from sinking. They are relatively easy on the body, and are much more compact than the old cat-gut rackets from years ago. It's pretty easy now to avoid one foot stepping on the other, and the bindings don't need much adjusting once they're on, unlike the old leather ones. They aren't overly expensive.

Like anything, you can spend as much money as you want, but it's possible to get a decent pair of snowshoes for the price of a pair of skates. If it's been a while since you've thrown yourself into a winter sport, it's a lot easier on the body to fall into a pile of snow while snowshoing than it is to fall on the ice while skating. Some people like adding hiking poles to their kit

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Nation Valley Snowmobile Association and snowmobile safety

by Joselyn Morley

Nation Valley Snowmobile Association (NVSA) is in Ontario District 1, Upper Canada Snowmobile region. This region has over 3,000 kms of marked, groomed trails, and 31 groomers, 1,000 club volunteers with 65,000 volunteer hours per year. (Check out https://ucsr.ca)

NVSA is a group of volunteers who are responsible for the maintenance, signing, and administrative work related to snowmobile trails in the areas of Finch, Chesterville, Winchester, South Mountain, and Morewood. The club meets once a month, currently via zoom. Members groom and maintain trails. Volunteers are the heart of the sport, and right now the Club is looking for volunteers. They thank the people who are out there helping to groom and sign, but they need more help. Covid has increased the number of snowmobilers, but decreased the numbers available for meetings. They are asking those snow enthusiasts to help with the administrative work of the club (organisation and paperwork), grooming, and signing. You can send them a message on Facebook, or email nvsa.treasurer@yahoo.com.

The Association reminds snowmobilers that they need a permit to be on the trails. Please stay on the open trails, and do not go off trail. Do not drive on private property without permission.

Snowmobilers are responsible for knowing the rules of the trails, and to be familiar with the Ontario Motorized Snow Vehicles Act (MSVA). You must know the rules and laws. In order to ride on trails, you must be at least 12 years old, have a valid driver's license or motorized snow vehicle operator's license, have insurance, and have registered the snowmobile with the Ministry of Transportation. Carry your drivers license and motorized snow vehicle operator's license (MSVOL), proof of ownership, and insurance with you at all times.

In order to drive on roadways, or across roads where permitted by local jurisdiction, you must have a valid Ontario drivers license. Know your hand signals, and use them. You can ride alongside public roads between the shoulder and fence line, unless prohibited by the municipality. You cannot ride on high speed roads, such as the 400 series, or on the pavement or plowed shoulders of roads and highways where other vehicles drive. Speed limits on roads are different for snowmobiles. On roadways with 50 km/h or lower, snowmobiles may go 20 km/h maximum. On roads with higher speed limits, snowmobiles are limited to 50 km/h. Speed limit on trails is 50 km/h, but always ride to the conditions.

Make sure you know the municipality's snowmobile by-laws. Check trail availability before entering. Ride on the right hand side of the trail. Obey signs. Stay off private property without the owners permission. Be careful crossing roads, railway tracks, and stay off rivers and lakes where possible: travelling on ice is always risky, as conditions can change quickly. If you do choose to travel on ice, check with local snowmobile clubs prior, wear personal floatation device, or floater snowmobile suit, and carry ice picks that are easily accessible.

Trails are patrolled by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), Municipal Police Services, and Conservation Officers. The Upper Canada Snowmobile Region is part of the OFSC. The International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA) offers a Safe Riders Safety Awareness Program. The first rule they stress is that alcohol and snowmobiling do not mix. It is illegal to operate a snowmobile while impaired by alcohol or drugs. They urge you to know your abilities, and those of your machine, and don't go beyond them. Keep your snowmobile in good shape. Dress appropriately, don't snowmobile alone, and make sure you share your plan, tell someone where you're going and when you're expected back.

Coleman's lights update

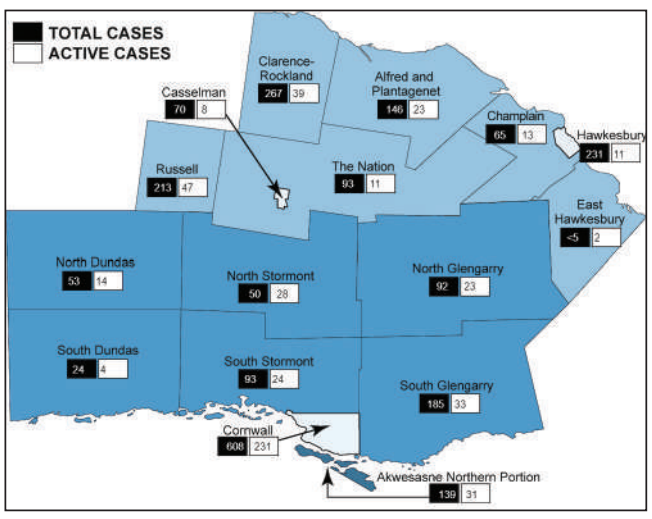
The display of Christmas lights dedicated to Debbie.

A most amazing display of Christmas Lights could be found on Church Street between Hallville and Mountain, right beside St Andrews United Church, just north of Highway 43. The display was dedicated to Debbie Coleman, and donations to the Canadian Cancer Society are welcomed. It is set up every year during the holidays by Darrin Coleman in honour of his sister, Debbie, who died in 2014, aged 55. The Coleman family wanted to thank everyone who donated to the cause.

"Darrin Coleman and Family would like to thank everyone that came out to see the Christmas lights on Church Road in Hallville this year. Due to the generosity of the community, we were able to raise $1652.40 for cancer research. The funds go to the Canadian Cancer Foundation. Thank you to all who donated. Come by next year for an even bigger display of lights as we are expanding!

Thank you again."

Dr Paul Roumeliotis, the EOHU, Virus Mutations, and the One Third



Covid cases in EOHU as of January 22

by Joselyn Morley

According to Dr Paul Roumeliotis, the Chief Medical Officer of Health for the Eastern Ontario Health Unit (EOHU), a full twenty-five to thirty three percent of people in this health unit are failing in some manner to take adequate steps to social distance. This shocking fact was shared with Mayor and Council members at the Council meeting on January 19.

Dr Paul spoke to, and with, the Councillors for over an hour about the state of the EOHU, the numbers of people infected or recovering, the number of dead, outbreaks, vaccination, precautions, schools, and small businesses.

He noted that the numbers of people infected with Covid-19 in the EOHU are headed in the right direction. Currently, the numbers are as follows: total active cases 542; total cumulative cases 2,333; total currently hospitalised 21; currently in ICU 5; total resolved 1,741; total deceased 50. There are 15 ongoing outbreaks, with 47 outbreaks resolved. There have been 99,946 tests for Covid-19 conducted in the EOHU, and, so far, 1,715 vaccines administered.

He remarked that the number of children infected was concerning, and that the numbers show that they were most likely infected by socialising over the Christmas break. Again he stressed that, even if children do not experience severe cases of Covid-19, the possibility remains of them carrying the virus home to their parents, or grandparents, or some other vulnerable person in their immediate circle.

Schools in the EOHU jurisdiction will not be returning to in person learning until February, nor will schools in Ottawa. Conversely, schools within the Leeds Grenville Lanark Health Unit returned to in person learning on Monday of this week. In a situation where students live in one health unit and attend school in a different health unit, such as children from our township who attend schools in Kemptville, the children will be allowed to attend if their school is open.

Dr Paul was asked about masks. He stated that, for most people, double layer cloth masks are good. The tri-fold disposable masks are a bit better for some people, depending on the job they are doing, but not necessary. He reminded us that the masks are intended to protect other people. You do not wear a mask to protect yourself, rather you wear one to protect people around you. They are intended to stop the spread of the virus.

He stressed the importance of remaining vigilant. It has been a long road. He explained that many people are very good about distancing when at work, or carrying out tasks, but when they relax, they end up socialising informally. They become infected, and take it home to their families. He shared his frustration with big stores which are not adhering to restrictions as intended. For example, if a store is allowed a certain number of people inside it per square metre, that is based on the walkable space in the store, not the entire space. You have to take the shelf space out of the equation.

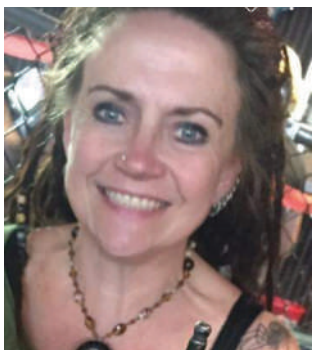
The Mayor, Council, and Dr Paul all agreed that smaller businesses should be allowed to open. Once a small business leaves a town, it does not come back. Dr Paul believes that restaurants should continue to be allowed to do take-out only, but that small shops be allowed to open. He, as well as Mayor and Council, have contacted Premier Ford and MPP Jim McDonell, asking that small businesses be allowed to open.

The virus is mutating successfully. Every virus has the possibility of mutation every time it reproduces. Viruses can reproduce from every 8 to 72 hours, depending on the virus. The variant we are most familiar with is the SARS-CoV-2 VUI 202012/01, or B117. That is the one first identified in the UK in December, 2020, and by mid-January it had been seen in 50 other countries. It was detected in Ontario at this time. This variant, as well as others identified in other parts of the world, are more virulent than the initial virus. It spreads faster, and is easier to catch, meaning that more people will get sick, stressing the health care system. So far, the vaccines developed to date seem to be as effective against the variants. Even though we are tired of the pandemic, health professionals and epidemiologists are asking us to stay vigilant.

Getting outside:

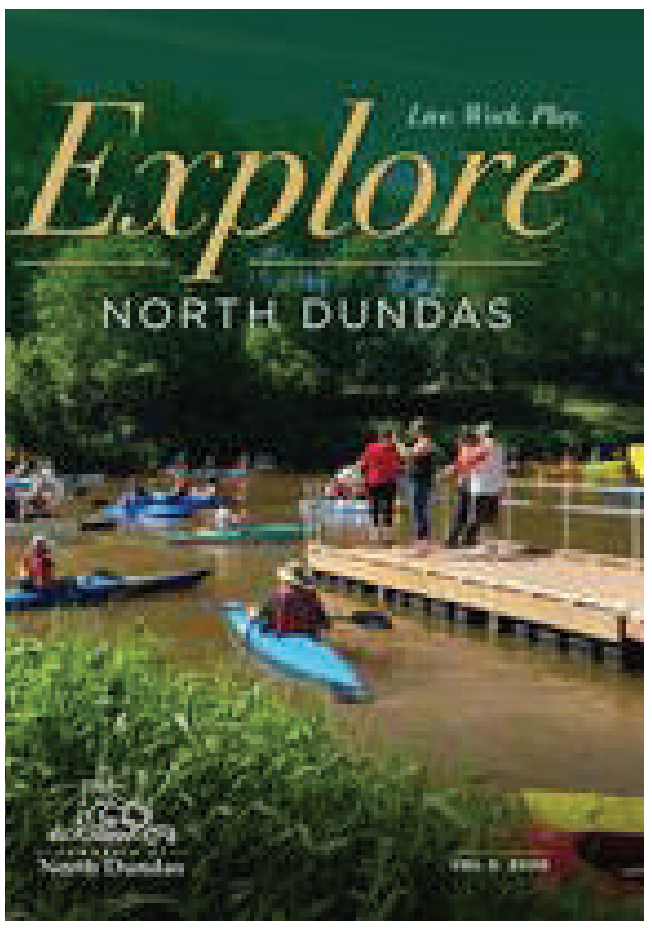
cont'd from front page

list when heading out. They can add a bit more motion if you're after a workout, and they provide balance. Dress in layers, because it's easy to overheat once you get going. Being too warm in winter can be dangerous if you can't take a layer off as you heat up. The size of your snowshoes depends on your weight. An adult between 150 to 200 pounds wants a snowshoe that is 25 inches in length and 8 inches across. Most snowshoes will say this right on the shoe. Add about 20 pounds to your actual weight, to allow for your clothes, boots, backpack, water, and lunch. A pair of snowshoes that is too small won't keep you up in the snow.



If you need an event covered contact joselyn@ndtimes.ca

North Dundas Ads for Businesses Initiative



by Joselyn Morley

North Dundas is offering an Ad Initiative for local businesses. The township is going to be including the ads in the Explore North Dundas publication of 2021. This year's edition will be the fourth for the township. This initiative is open to any business in North Dundas that offers service in some capacity at the time, including curbside pickup, in-store shopping, or online or phone shopping.

The publication is expected in the spring of 2021. This initiative is open to businesses, as well as charities, service clubs, and not-for-profit organisations. The ad will take the form of a collage of ads, each the size of a business card. The final ad will include the logo of the business, social media and website addresses of the business, contact information, and some text. There will be no cost to businesses to participate.

In order to be included, the business needs to submit a high resolution logo (250 DPI), website and social media addresses, your contact information, and any text that you would like included. If you already have a business card with that information, you can submit that instead. Space is limited in this ad initiative. You can contact the Business Development Officer of North Dundas, Stephen Mann, for more information, and to submit your business details, at smann@northdundas.com

Queen's Park Update

by MPP Jim McDonell

As we complete the fourth week of our provincial lockdown, we see our local caseload numbers levelling off and our seven day rolling average declining. The latest statistics for Stormont Dundas Glengarry and Akwesasne show that, as of this past Thursday, there were 390 active cases. Our local hospitals are still stretched to capacity, so the progress is very welcome. While there is an improvement, we have fallen behind our neighbours west of us. Brockville, Kingston, and Belleville, along with other areas in the province, have successfully brought their levels down, allowing schools to open this Monday. Schools in Ottawa and the Eastern Ontario Health Unit territories will remain closed for at least the upcoming week.

This week we continued to suffer outbreaks at local long term care homes, sadly resulting in the loss of more lives. We must become serious about following the lockdown restrictions that took effect on January 14 until our vaccination program has a chance to inoculate our most vulnerable, our medical practitioners, and our frontline workers. Failure to do so will overwhelm our hospitals and result in more lost lives. First and foremost, stay at home. Leave for expressly permitted activities that include going out for groceries or prescriptions, seeking health care services, exercising, and going to work, if unable to do remotely. These orders and other public health restrictions are outlined at www.Ontario.ca/COVID 19.

Our provincial vaccination program is progressing well, with Ontario administering almost 92% of the vaccines it received, as of Thursday morning, only behind Alberta at 94%. These results compare to BC at 74%, Saskatchewan at 85%, Manitoba at 48%, and Quebec at 73%. Earlier this week, we received the disappointing news that Pfizer vaccines will be severely cut back over the next few weeks to allow for plant improvements in the company's Belgium plant. Premier Ford was particularly disappointed to learn that our vaccination efforts would be reduced to zero for the upcoming week, as supply is being diverted to other countries.

Despite the tough national news, I want to compliment our local Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, and his vaccination team for their progress, inoculating the staff and residents at 12 of our region's 16 long term care homes. While the EOHU will not receive any supplies next week, they are still on track to complete the area's homes by February 15.

While our fight against the pandemic continues, the government also has an eye on the post pandemic recovery. One crucial piece of our provincial recovery plan is the 2021 Ontario Budget. So far, through the pandemic, we have received unprecedented input from families, workers and businesses. Our first pre budget consultation has already started with members of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. We have set aside a $45 billion recovery fund, but we need everyone's input to ensure this money achieves the maximum benefit possible for residents and businesses. As in past years, my office will be reaching out to our municipalities, small businesses, and other organizations for their input. You can forward your input to my office to be included in our local submission, or directly to the ministry at https://www.ontario.ca/page/2021 budget consultations.

As always, remember to stay home, stay safe and save lives. Your health and that of your loved ones may depend on it.

Regards,
Jim McDonell
MPP for Stormont Dundas South Glengarry

Q&A with Cyndy and Sarah – RRSPs

by Cyndy Batchelor, Bcom, Financial Advisor & Partner, O'Farrell Financial Services

Q: What is an RRSP?
A: An RRSP is a Registered Retirement Savings Plan. A deposit into an RRSP will give you a tax credit while allowing you to build your own personal "pension plan" for retirement.
Q: How much can I contribute to my RRSP?
A: Up to 18% of your income to a maximum of $27,830 for tax year 2020. However, if you did not max out your contributions in previous years you can catch up. Your Notice of Assessment will tell you your RRSP limit.
Q: Should I use a RRSP or a TFSA?
A: The difference between an RRSP and a TFSA (Tax Free Savings Account) is that a RRSP contribution gives you a tax break. Where do you put your savings first? If you are just starting out and earning less, saving in a TFSA may be more prudent. Plus, when you retire the money you saved in your TFSA is not considered income – so it will not affect your taxes. As your income grows you can switch to a RRSP to take advantage of the tax break.
If you have more questions, please reach out to us! See our ad in this week's North Dundas Times for contact information.

A Time for Heroes

by David Shanahan

During the last world wars, the phrase "total war" came into fashion. It meant that the war was being fought, not only by those in uniform, but by the efforts of the entire country. Not only the military were needed, but also the civilians who worked in factories, kept the economy going, cleared up bombed buildings, and all the myriad jobs that had to be done to keep the effort going. It was not just those frontline workers who were the heroes.

Well, we're in that same situation today. Covid has declared war on the peoples of the world, and it will take the combined efforts of so many to defeat it. But there's more to the fight than that. You will see in the Times this week that mayor, council and health unit are putting the spotlight on local people who are struggling to keep afloat as they deal with lockdowns, shutdowns, stay-at-home orders, and all the other restrictions that endanger their businesses. These people are our neighbours and friends, people who have put everything they had into building up something that is now in danger of collapse.

The unfortunate comments by Premier Ford some time ago, advising people to shop at big box stores, may have been based on the idea that doing all one's shopping in one location was safer than moving around a number of stores; but it only caused confusion and upset. People weren't sure if they were allowed to shop in smaller stores, or if they would face fines if found out of doors by the police. We want to do the right thing, if only the government would tell us clearly what the right thing is.

Here's the thing: local businesses of all kinds are struggling. Not all are in the same boat: supermarkets are doing ok - we have to eat, after all. Restaurants need us to order some take-out as often as we can. But other stores and businesses, those who have had to close completely, or who don't have the option of on-line activity, they are the ones in real peril.

Why should we care? Obviously, because they are neighbours. But, more than that, they are essential to the well-being of our community. They provide employment, they donate and sponsor so many events and social service organisations. The great fear is that, if once we establish the habit of shopping outside the community, or only in big box stores, then that pattern will continue, even after we get back to the new normal. But, by then, many of those local businesses will be gone for good, unless we act now.

We are in a "total war" now, facing an enemy that has declared war on people everywhere. It will take the concerted efforts of all of us to deal with this danger. This is not hyperbole: there is a real threat to local people who have put everything they have into building up these community assets from which we all benefit. So, what can we do?

We have to be creative, and that requires input from everyone. "Shop local", aside from being really poor grammar, is becoming too much of a cliche now to be really effective. But that is what we are talking about. The problem is: aside from ordering take-out, and doing some on-line shopping with those local people who can provide that service, what can we do to help those who have been forced to close down completely?

We need ideas. We need inspiration and community involvement in solving this problem. This is more than just a capitalism survival of the fittest situation, not a normal business competition in which some will inevitably go to the wall. There are so many different aspects to this. The parent who is trying to keep a business afloat while dealing with kids home from school; the fear, uncertainty, the mental health concerns, the anguish and the boredom of being in lockdown for so long.

We at the Times will try and profile as many local people as possible in the coming weeks, and work with whatever ideas you, friends and neighbours, can suggest to help these people survive. Can you afford to buy in bulk from clothing and other stores, rather than wait for seasons to change? Can we buy gift certificates as an act of faith that the business we buy from will be there to honour the gift? Is there a way in which, under the restrictions that exist, we can help out and give some business owners a break for a day?

Can we establish a network to keep in touch and up to date with them, so we can react properly to their changing circumstances?

This is not an attempt to provide answers: it is a plea to you to think about this and come up with answers for yourself, and ones you could share with the Times that we can pass on. Yes, this, too shall pass. We shall overcome. But to get there, we need to work together. We need to be heroes. We call the frontline workers heroes, and they definitely are. But we all have to become heroes, to ensure that the heroes have a community that survives this time. That retail workers still have somewhere to work afterwards. That medical and emergency workers have a place to go for a meal and a pint together one day.

"We can be heroes, just for one day" (David Bowie)

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Did you notice that North Dundas Township saw a jump of seven new Covid cases in the latest EOHU report? There are now nine residents with Covid compared to just two the previous week. The total caseload in ND rose to 48 from 41 for the whole epidemic.

There were no questions to the MOH about this. I am guessing this is a community up surge rather than a nursing home problem. The only local nursing home respiratory incident at Community Living Winchester wrapped up January 11, and was not Covid according to the EOHU.

The new increase could involve one or more cases of people picking up Covid at work or on the street and passing it unaware to other workers, friends and family.

This is no cause for alarm. At 48 total cases, we are the third lowest municipality across EOHU. Only South Dundas at 22 total cases and East Hawkesbury at 5 are lower.

But it shows that, despite a Covid performance that is still much better proportionally than hot spots in Toronto and other big centres and small centres in our region, that we are far from immune. Vigilance is critical.

Bert Hill
Winchester

Stormont Dundas & Glengarry OPP NEWS

Assault:

On January 18, 2021 at approximately 3:45 p.m Stormont Dundas & Glengarry Ontario Provincial Police officers responded to a report of dispute in progress on Frost Avenue in South Stormont. Investigation revealed that an adult accused had assaulted the victim several times.

A female, age 65, from South Stormont was arrested and is charged with Assault Criminal code Sec. 266 two counts. The accused was released from custody and is scheduled to appear at the Ontario Court of Justice in Cornwall on March 2, 2021.

Fraud charges laid:

On January 20, 2021 at approximately 2:52 p.m, SD&G OPP officers responded to a report of fraudulent activity at a business in Chesterville. Investigation indicated that a male and female had fraudulently dealt with the business in order to obtain prescription medication.

A male, age 49, of North Dundas, is charged with: Fraud Under $5000 CC Sec. 380(1)(b); and a female, age 44, of North Dundas, is charged with the same charge.

Both were released and scheduled to appear in Morrisburg court on April 6, 2021.

Driver charged with refusal:

On January 21, 2021 at approximately 3:27 p.m, SD&G OPP officers responded to a single motor vehicle collision on Valley Street in North Stormont Township.

Investigation revealed that the adult driver was under the influence of alcohol. The driver then refused to complete standard testing requested by the officers. The female driver also resisted officers during the arrest. The woman, age 58, of Champlain Township was arrested and is charged with Resist Peace officer CC Sec. 129(a) and Failure or refusal to comply with demand CC Sec 320.15(1). The accused was released from custody and are scheduled to appear at the Ontario Court of Justice in Cornwall court on February 11, 2021.

Anyone having information on the above incidents or any other crime is asked to call SD&G OPP at 1 888 310 1122, or Seaway Valley Crime Stoppers at 1 800 222 TIPS(8477), or you can submit a TIP online at www.seawayvalleycrimestoppers.ca.

Gardening: In January?

by Joselyn Morley

What's growing in January? Well, two things that gardeners are beginning about now are peppers, and sweet potatoes. Some people seed eggplants at this time too. Some wait until they start their tomatoes. As peppers aren't native to anywhere near here, they take a long time to get going, and they need a long season. They're also terribly susceptible to cold. You cannot direct sow pepper seeds in Eastern Ontario and get peppers. They need to be started indoors, and they need to be started early. If you don't have time, place, or inclination to grow pepper plants from seeds, you can buy them at any garden centre. There are usually other gardeners selling pepper plants they've grown from seed, as they are overrun with plants come end of May.

Peppers like heat. They need heat. They will not germinate without a steady supply of heat. Some people germinate them in trays made for growing seedlings, by putting them on top of heat vents, or in a very warm room, or on top of the older refrigerators. Those of us who have too many cats and old drafty houses rely on heat mats. Heat mats are amazing! Some people can germinate their seeds and grow seedlings on their south facing windowsills. Some of us who have old houses with thick walls and north facing windows rely on grow lights.

You don't need to spend a fortune on grow lights. The fluorescent lights marked as 6500 or the LED lights labeled "daylight" work fine. Keep the plants close enough to the light that they don't get "leggy". Using a soilless mixture, such as Pro-Mix premium all-purpose, will help germination, and help to ward off some of the problems brought on by potting soil. Some types of peppers can take more time to germinate than you think they should. Have patience. Granted, sometimes you will get seeds that won't germinate at all, but usually, if you give them just a bit more time, they will pop up. Don't over-water. Cats and seedlings don't mix.

Sweet potatoes do not grow here without some serious dedication. They need a long season, and a lot of heat. If you enjoy a challenge, and you have some extra space, give them a try. You take a sweet potato and put the end in water. You can suspend it in a cup with some toothpicks. The idea is that the sweet potato will grow roots down into the water, and sprout up. Once the sprouts are a decent length, you cut them off the sweet potato, and put them in water to root. Make sure you have a sweet potato with a shorter growing season. They can't be planted out until the soil is warm, so usually at the beginning of June. A lot of growers will mound the soil, and cover it with a tarp to get and keep it warm. Now is time to start sprouting the shoots.

Send in your letters, stories, events to editor@ndtimes.ca

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Council send letter to Premier on behalf of local business

by Joselyn Morley

Mayor Tony Fraser has sent a letter to Premier Ford, on behalf of Council and staff of North Dundas, formally requesting that the province consider the small businesses in North Dundas as the lockdown continues.

Mayor, Council, and Dr Paul Roumeliotis from the EOHU, discussed the need to stand up for small businesses in the face of provincial shut downs at the Council meeting on January 19. They discussed the fact that it is much easier to monitor and control the numbers coming into a small shop than a big box store, and much easier to ensure that social distancing is being observed. All present were bothered by the fact that big box stores that sell food are allowed to remain open to sell items that are not grocery or pharmacy goods, whereas small retailers must close.

In the letter, Mayor Fraser stresses that, as there are no big box stores in our municipality, with all our retailers closed, residents are forced to travel outside of the area, to places like Ottawa, where Covid-19 rates are higher, to shop. He writes: "We are not asking to close the big box stores but rather, to treat all businesses equally."

TOWNSHIP OF
North Dundas

January 19, 2021

Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

I am writing on behalf of the members of council and staff of the Township of North Dundas.

We respect the extraordinary efforts you and your administration are making to safeguard the residents of our Province and our community. Our community has respectfully followed all Provincial Lockdown and State of Emergency protocols and, like the rest of the country, has endured and persevered during these very challenging times.

As the lockdown orders continue to be extended, we must speak-up and request that there be far more consideration and thought given to our small businesses. There are no big box stores in close proximity to many of the residents in our municipality. Small businesses are the fabric of our community; it's owners, operators and staff are our residents, relatives, neighbours and friends. Having these businesses closed, forces our residents to shop in other regions where COVID is more active.

While our restaurants have been able to pivot and re-invent themselves and do their best to keep our communities fed, the other small businesses are stuck behind locked doors. Our hair salons and barbers are suffering. These are businesses that work by appointment and can control the numbers entering their shops and can book their appointments to ensure proper cleaning and sanitizing protocols are met. In fact, in my experience their protocols far exceed the minimum requirements and are at a level that exceeds those we hear of occurring in big box stores. We need a new plan and we need it quickly. We are not asking to close the big box stores but rather, to treat all businesses equally.

We are a community that is lucky to have numerous volunteers and volunteer organizations. This includes community outreach organizations that offer clothing and household goods to those in need. While we appreciate that donations cannot be dropped off at this time, capacity restrictions backed by strong social distancing and other safety measures already in place will deliver better outcomes in a way that is effective, fair, saves jobs and supports local businesses and families.

On behalf of our council, staff and community and individuals that depend on the retail sector for their livelihoods, your thoughtful consideration and leadership on this matter is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Mayor Tony Fraser

Cc: Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing - Hon. Steve Clark
MPP SD&SG - Jim McDonell
Dr. Paul Roumeliotis – Medical Officer of Health E.O.H.U.

P. O. Box 489, 636 St. Lawrence Street, Winchester, Ontario K0C 2K0
Tel. (613) 774-2105 Fax (613) 774-5699

Dr Paul assured the Mayor and Council that he would be talking to Premier Ford about the need to consider small businesses. Mayor Fraser's letter was copied to MPP Jim McDonell, as well as to Steve Clark, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Mayor Fraser encourages any constituents to write, email, or call our MPP, Jim McDonell, to express their concerns about the effect that Covid-19 is having on the small businesses of North Dundas. The contact information for our MPP Jim McDonell is as follows:

Jim McDonell, MPP SD&G, 23rd Floor, Suite 2302, 777 Bay St, Toronto, ON, M5G 2E5; or Jim McDonell MPP SD&G, Legislative Building, Queens Park, Toronto, ON, M7A 1A1.

Cornwall Office: Time Square, 120 Second Street West, Cornwall, ON, K6J 1G5. Telephone: 613-933-6513. Email: jim.mcdonell-co@pc.ola.org.

Mayor Fraser's letter is reproduced here, with his permission.

Special Council meeting to set Capital Charge

by Joselyn Morley

The day following their regularly scheduled council meeting, the North Dundas Council found themselves gathering yet again, virtually of course, to address the need to set new capital charge rates. The old bylaw, which set the rates previously, had expired with the new year. The new bylaw 2020-59, has received first reading, but requires further consideration.

The Council intends to have a very fulsome discussion about how to fund the growth of the community, and how to fund future infrastructure development. But, in the meantime, they needed to get together and set the Capital Charge rates. Although the provincial stay-at-home order means that building permits cannot be granted at this time, builders can submit applications and the township can accept them. Hence the need to have capital charge rates formalised, even though no building permits will be granted while the stay-at-home order remains in effect.

Capital Charges are the fees charged by the municipality to builders as part of the process of granting building permits. The intention is to help cover costs of infrastructure, namely water and sewer. Council decided to set the rates at $6,500. This is broken down as $2,404.57 and $4,095.43 for water and sewer rates respectively.

The township is growing fast. The current infrastructure needs to be expanded. Council needs to find a middle ground that welcomes development, and makes sure that development costs are not prohibitive enough to deter building in North Dundas, while ensuring that a fair amount of the costs for improvements and expansion of infrastructure are covered by developers. Finding a middle ground that welcomes development without making the current tax payers bear the burden for expansion is the goal of the current Council. They do not want to scare away builders with prohibitive development costs, but the current tax base cannot support the entire cost for expanded infrastructure.

The Council is intent on making sure that development in North Dundas is good for both the current residents and those joining the township.

County council makes call for businesses to reopen

Councillors with the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry on Monday urged the provincial government to reopen small businesses in the province.

Councillors adopted a resolution requesting "the Province of Ontario allow for small businesses to immediately reopen with the required health guidelines and protocols in place."

At its monthly meeting on January 18, council received an update on the current COVID-19 situation in our region from Eastern Ontario Health Unit Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Paul Roumeliotis. During his update, councillors expressed frustration with the current provincial shutdown mandate that council feels is too restrictive on small business.

"It is frustrating that some small businesses are forced to close their doors, while others can remain open," said Warden Frank Prevost. "We are calling on the provincial government to realize that, when businesses and customers follow health protocols, we can blunt the spread of COVID-19."

Council further expressed the concern that when small businesses close, it is difficult if not impossible for them to reopen.

Council heard data that suggests the vast majority of COVID-19's spread in our region comes via so-called 'close contacts', instead of visits to small business. Dr. Roumeliotis echoed the sentiments of council during Monday's meeting, and requested a copy of council's motion be sent to the Health Unit for endorsement.

Council's resolution will be shared with the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, SD-SG MPP Jim McDonell, and circulated to all municipalities in Ontario.

North Dundas Council report

by Joselyn Morley

The North Dundas Council held its first council meeting of 2021 on January 19, the third Tuesday of the month. The meeting was held virtually, with the councilors, officers, clerks, and delegates connecting remotely. The meeting package was 171 pages long.

Some of the more notable developments included an agreement between the township and the Upper Canada District School Board concerning the daycare at Winchester Public School.

The New Year, just like the end of the year previous, brings on a lot of formalities. Contracts are renewed for another year, budgets are updated, and departments report on what's going on. The Stay-at-Home order doesn't take too much off the table for the municipality. The work still needs to be done. Staff are trying to be as flexible as they can, working from home when possible, and responding to the needs of the township. The indoor rinks are closed, as are community buildings, so staff from those locations have been re-tasked with jobs such as working on the outdoor rinks, and helping in the Waste Management Department. Some have been making plastic partitions for workers in the township offices.

The Recreation Department has decided to cancel the winter term of the recreation program. Instead, they will start the spring program earlier than planned, in April rather than May, and they will run that program for twelve weeks, as opposed to eight as originally planned.

Outdoor rinks are open. Dr Paul Roumelliotis, the Chief Medical Officer of the Eastern Ontario Health Unit, was asked about participation in outdoor activities during his discussion with the Council, and he reiterated the need to keep distance between yourself and others. Keep your family members interacting with each other, not with those from outside your immediate family.

The Inkerman outdoor rink is currently in need of volunteers to help keep it maintained. Skates and snowshoes can be borrowed from the municipality to help residents enjoy the outdoors.

The security exchange for the Forestwood Heights subdivision is completed. In short, the municipality always keeps a couple of lots in a subdivision as a guarantee that the developer will complete their obligations with things such as landscaping, road paving, and the like. If, for some reason, the builder does not do an adequate job at something, the municipality has collateral to finish the job.

Jo-Anne McCaslin, Deputy CAO/Clerk, has had the authority to solemnise marriages since 2005. She has now delegated two Deputy Clerks with the authority to solemnise marriages: Jessica Manley and Nancy Johnson.

Council meets on the first and third Tuesday of every month. The agenda, and the entire meeting package, can be found on the North Dundas Township website in advance of each meeting, and the minutes are posted very quickly after the meeting. When we are not on a Stay-at-Home order, or similar restrictions, the public is welcome to attend.

Winter Car Care & Buyers Guide 2021

We're smack dab in the middle of winter now, and your car has already weathered some foul conditions with more to come. Ensure your car continues to be dependable throughout the rest of the long winter season by performing some of these maintenance tasks to make sure you stay safe on the roads.

Alignment. When your car is out of alignment, it's harder to control. It also won't use fuel as efficiently as it could. The first of the year is a great time to get your alignment checked.

Battery. Being stuck out in the cold with a dead battery is no joke. Have your battery tested by your trusted mechanic to make sure that it's holding a charge so you don't face any nasty surprises.

Brakes. Like other vehicle systems, the conditions of winter can be tough on your brakes, especially when you're frequently trying to stop on snow and ice. Have them inspected to keep yourself as safe as possible.

Coolant levels. All your fluid levels are important no matter the season but especially the coolant in the winter. Have your entire coolant system checked, including **radiator, hoses, and belts.**

Tires. Your tires are unsafe for winter's driving conditions if the pressure isn't right. Make sure your car is easier to handle and more fuel efficient by regularly checking **the pressure.**

Wiper blades. Your windshield wiper blades are crucial for keeping snow and other moisture clear so that you can see well enough at all times.

Lighting. The days are shorter, so you'll be driving after dark more often. Have all your exterior lights inspected and replaced, if necessary. Throughout the winter, it's also important that you keep snow cleared off your vehicle to make sure your lights aren't covered.

Winter driving can be tough on your car, but the most important thing is that you and your passengers stay safe.

Keeping your vehicle maintained throughout the winter will ensure it's running at its optimum levels and you can be confident you're taking the most important precautions.

Prepare an emergency road kit in an event of breakdown. Include essentials like a shovel, booster cables, blanket, warm clothing, gloves and flashlight, among other necessities. If you reuse the same kit every year, remember to check that the items are still functional.

Road salt. Snowstorms and cold, damp winter days combine to make driving conditions perilous. This is why tons of rock salt is used on our roads to create safer driving conditions. The problem with road salt or brine — which is a mix of magnesium chloride, salt and water — is the toll it takes on the exterior of your vehicle.

When left on your car for an extended period of time, the chemicals will eat away and weaken the chassis. You will soon see rust appearing, which can lead to costly body repairs. The key to preventing this from happening is washing the offending substance off as quickly as possible.

Time for a tune up

(NC) Many vehicles have been driven a lot less over the last few months, so now, with travel restrictions lifting, it is the perfect time to give your vehicle a tune up. Getting a tune up helps to extend the life of your vehicle, keep you on the road longer, prepare for changing of seasons and to increase your vehicle's reliability.

If you have an older vehicle, make sure you frequently check your motor oil level, and alert your service centre to any changes in the motor oil level. Your service technician can inspect for any motor oil leaks or cracks which may need to be repaired or replaced. Switching to a high mileage motor oil such as Pennzoil Platinum High Mileage Full Synthetic motor oil will help stop leaks, and it's proven to reduce oil burn off for older engines.

Also, ask your service centre to check your radiator for any apparent leaks and proper coolant or antifreeze levels to protect you from spending time and money down the road. Along with checking the radiator, your technician can inspect the electrical system and other fluid levels to have everything in working order before temperatures drop, since these components are more difficult to work on in chilly temperatures.

With colder weather around the corner, it's important to make sure your battery is working at optimal performance. Extreme cold or heat can decrease the battery's ability to provide sufficient power to run your vehicle. Signs of a weak battery include slower start ups than normal, dimming headlights as you start your car, lights on your dashboard illuminated, or even a rotten egg smell coming from the battery location.

Visibility can be a major issue during the snowy season, so do everything you can to avoid adding to the problem. Treat the outside of all your windows with a water repelling solution, which helps ensure better visibility during wet weather. Clean your headlights and taillights and replace bulbs for maximum light assistance, and consider fitting winter wiper blades. Wiper blades should typically be replaced at least twice a year for maximum efficiency.

Karberry Farm

by Joselyn Morley

Thirteen years ago, Karen Kauth moved away from heavy traffic and gangs, and landed in a red brick farmhouse between Winchester and Mountain. They had just enough land to warrant the purchase of a ride-on mower. She now raises Shetland sheep, with lovely soft, naturally coloured wool, for both their fleece and as breeding stock.

I discovered Karen and Karberry Farm when I was looking for local wool roving in order to felt some soap I had made. Roving, by the way, is a long narrow bundle of fibre, in this case wool fleece. It's wool before it's spun into yarn. She also sells fleece, yarns, socks, sock yarn, and spun wool for knitting and such. Her wool is gorgeous. She has hand-dyed, 100% Shetland wool, natural wool from other sheep, as well as a variety of brands.

Karen got into wool and sheep because she's an avid knitter, and she wanted to learn more about the process from sheep, to yarn, to clothing. She learned to spin, and tried spinning roving from a variety of roving from different breeds of sheep. She enjoyed the Shetland roving the best.

Getting sheep seemed the logical next step as she already had horses and chickens. It didn't seem a stretch to add a few sheep. She chose Shetland sheep because of her love for the wool. It is very versatile, and naturally comes in many colours, including black, brown, grey, cream, and white, with various diverse shades and markings within the colours. She likes the Shetland sheep themselves too, because they are relatively independent and smart. The ewes are good mothers and require very little assistance with lambing, if any.

There is a small local market for local wool. Some other farms in the area raise sheep with good wool, so she buys from them, then cleans it, and transforms it into sought-after fibre. This supports other local farmers, and provides more inventory and selection for her customers.

She does not sell homespun wool, because it is very time-consuming to produce. She skirts the wool (cleans it, taking out the hay, chaff, and poop). Washing wool can remove 40% of the weight, but if you send it unwashed, the mill charges to wash it. The mills charge on received weight, so the process involves either washing a lot of fleece, or sending a lot of fleece. Either way, it's a lot of work. The sheep get shorn once a year in spring.

Karen knits, spins, weaves, felts, and dyes wool. These skills help her to know what her customers are looking for in a product. They sell lambs and breeding stock, along with fleece and wool. Fleece costs more to produce than it can bring in. Like so many heritage breeders, it's the love and passion that keep the breeds, as well as heritage skills, alive.

Karen's last big event was attending the Chesterville Spin-in last February. March, 2020, saw the beginning of the fairs and festivals cancellations. This continued throughout 2020, and 2021 doesn't look much better so far. Some determined craft fairs tried to go ahead before Christmas, either outside, or inside with extreme social distancing measures in place, such as our Parade of Lights Vendors' Fair. It is fibre festivals and similar events that fuel the business and feed the sheep. Kemptville's Farmers Market continued as best it could, with pandemic restrictions in place. There she found supportive clientele, and, on hot summer Sundays, customers bought chicken and wool.

The pandemic has had a huge impact on wool and fibre sales. Like many others, Karen has done her best to shift her business in response to lock downs and closure orders. Her studio became a small wool shop where people could shop by appointment. She had a website, but in her words, it was more of a "landing page", rather than a full-blown, e-commerce capable, interactive website. The animals have to be fed, and she had worked hard building the business. The first thing out of every animal-owning business person I have talked to about the pandemic has been "I have to feed the animals!" Karen investigated and found the Cornwall & the Counties Community Futures Development Corporation. They were a huge help with finding out about loans and support. Through them, she also found out about the Technology Innovation Program (TIP), where she received the help she needed to build a user-friendly website with secure e-commerce capabilities. She has learned a lot about websites through them.

www.karberryfarm.ca. contact@karberryfarm.ca. 10792 County Road 43, Mountain. East of Winchester.

One week to World Cancer Day 2021

We are one week away from World Cancer Day 2021 on February 4. Led by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), World Cancer Day is a global initiative that aims to inspire greater awareness of cancer and action in better preventing, detecting and treating the disease.

Recognising the unique challenges the world has confronted with COVID 19, World Cancer Day 2021 will be dedicated to the courage and achievements of people living with cancer and their families, as well as the nurses, doctors, researchers, volunteers, advocates and others who care for them and work on their behalf. On February 4, UICC will highlight their stories, their battles and their successes, and shine the light on the innovative responses of cancer organisations around the world to the pandemic as they struggle to maintain progress in cancer care. Indeed, an analysis in The Lancet Oncology of a survey that UICC conducted with member organisations shows that many are facing significant sustainability issues.

World Cancer Day 2021 will be led by the theme 'I Am and I Will' for the third and final year, an empowering call for personal commitment to reduce the growing impact of cancer that encapsulates the spirit shown by everyone in the cancer community as they face the challenge of COVID 19.

This year follows on from the success of last year's campaign, which saw nearly 1,000 activities taking place in 113 countries, including 85 monuments in 52 cities lit in the colours of World Cancer Day, some 15,000 press articles published in 150 countries, over 720,000 social media mentions, more than 500,000 visitors to the website downloading over 120,000 materials, and 65 governments participating in 2020.

In the same spirit, UICC is pleased to announce a new initiative to raise much needed funds for the global fight against cancer. UICC has teamed up with the international sports marketing agency ORSEN SA and ZWIFT, a provider of a virtual cycling platform, to create one of the biggest virtual cycling events, the World Cancer Day Solidarity Challenge.

What to expect on World Cancer Day 2021:

Testimonies from nurses, doctors, researchers, volunteers, advocates and the private sector relating their experiences this past year and how they have adapted to challenges and innovated during the pandemic to continue providing care, supporting patients, delivering medicines and other services.

A call for renewed action to improve cancer awareness, practice cancer prevention, support innovations in diagnostics and treatment, and address inequities and weaknesses in health systems exposed by COVID 19.

Opportunities for interviews with global cancer leaders from UICC as well as cancer organisations in the US, the UK, Australia, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Malaysia and South Africa.

Global press materials available to download here: www.worldcancerday.org/press media

Social media graphics and video.

Hundreds of activities taking place around the world to generate support for the global fight against cancer.

Global landmarks around the world including in Australia, Brunei, Japan, Singapore and Turkey will illuminate with World Cancer Day colours, orange and blue.

Common Sense Health

W. Gifford-Jones, MD and Diana Gifford-Jones

Why doctors must think like Sherlock Holmes

A 57-year-old woman, receiving physiotherapy for an injured ankle, suddenly suffered a seizure, became unconscious, and was rushed to Emergency. The obvious diagnosis, a sudden stroke. But, as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the English doctor and writer who created the fictional private detective, Sherlock Holmes, wrote, "There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact."

A report in the Canadian Medical Association Journal shows that Doyle was right. Doctors must sometimes think like Sherlock Holmes. The ultimate diagnosis was not a stroke. Rather, a complication from the triple A disease, abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA).

It's a problem that doesn't receive much press. But it killed Albert Einstein, the famous scientist, Lucille Ball, the TV star, and the actor, George C Scott. Unless diagnosed early, before it ruptures, AAA is an efficient assassin.

The aorta is the main artery that delivers blood from the heart to the entire body. It's about the size of a garden hose, and after leaving the heart it extends to the neck a short distance, then down the back of the abdomen.

During the last 60 years, the risk of AAA has tripled. This is, in part, due to improved diagnostic methods and an aging population. It's also more common in males than females, and about 5% of men over age 65 have some degree of aortic aneurysm.

Increased blood pressure is a major risk factor for AAA. It's also more likely to develop in smokers and those suffering from chronic lung disease. But AAA can result from atherosclerosis (hardening of arteries) that gradually weakens the arterial wall and is a major cause of heart attack which ends the lives of so many North Americans.

An aortic aneurysm may be without symptoms until rupture occurs, in which case the hemorrhage is so sudden and severe that death is speedy. But, today, many aneurysms are diagnosed during other diagnostic abdominal procedures. This provides significant time to decide how these herniations are best treated, particularly since the majority of aneurysms expand at a very slow rate.

Since major surgery is involved to remove an aneurysm, it's prudent to monitor them every six to twelve months by abdominal ultrasound, CT scans, and MRIs to detect changes in dimensions.

In the final analysis, the decision depends on the size of the aneurysm. Surgery is normally advised when the aneurysm measures 5 to 5.5 centimeters, as this is when they're more likely to rupture. In some cases, a surgical stent is placed inside the aneurysm to decrease the risk of rupturing. Rather than using an abdominal incision, the stent is inserted through the femoral artery in the groin and then guided up and into the weakened aortic wall.

This operation is more serious than having an appendix removal, so surgical expertise is vital. It's the old story that practice makes perfect, whether in a plumber or a surgeon. For instance, in one study for aneurysms repaired by a vascular surgeon in a university hospital, the mortality rate was 2.2%. But in hospitals where surgeons were performing fewer cases and were less experienced, the mortality rate was 5.5%.

Remember the common Gifford-Jones recommendation. If you are told surgeon X is the best for the operation, and that surgeon has the personality of Dracula, don't look elsewhere. It's the hands that do the surgery, not the personality.

The story of the patient with the injured ankle had a happy ending. She was discharged in nine days. It reminds doctors that 30% of AAA have neurological signs, not pain or other symptoms. Like Sherlock Holmes, doctors need to be good detectives.

Sign-up at www.docgiff.com to receive our weekly e-newsletter. For comments, contact-us@docgiff.com. Follow our new Instagram accounts, @docgiff, and @diana_gifford_jones

Tid-Bit Musings

Isolation, Solitude, Evolution

by Elva Patterson Rutters RSSW

Strange words to lump together, yet full of relative connotations. With Covid, the order has been to "stay at home"; hence isolate. When we isolate, we step away from the masses, be it large or few in numbers. It means to withdraw within one's own limited boundaries. The image of a hermit or a recluse in the hills initially comes to mind. It does not have to be that extreme to isolate. Isolation can happen within your own home, and needs to be a time of being apart. On a personal note, when the "stay at home" order commenced, I thought this was not too bad. I had TV, computer, and phone. Then the hydro went out! I quickly re evaluated and settled down with a book until I broke my glasses. Thanks to crazy glue I continue on...

But to isolate is simply to gain control by stepping aside. Control over virus, infectious diseases, drama, or even circumstances in our lives. It incorporates solitude to reflect on our own beings. Who are we? What do we believe in? Where do we realistically want to be in life? Who do we want to be with? What is your mantra?

Solitude infers quietness, stillness, and silent reverie. Looking at a winter wonderland outside your window speaks of solitude. The perfection of snow balanced on the tree branches, the smooth, flawless ground surface, and the sun glistening on the ice particles: it resonates with peace. Where do you go to enjoy your solitude? It doesn't mean travelling somewhere, although it can (minus covid), but the recesses of your mind is your oasis. Enter with few expectations and enjoy the quietness to reflect.

It is sad and concerning to think mankind has evolved to the state of being shopaholics, consumed with constant activity, engaged in on going drama and external interactions. Children are immersed in this busyness, with over stimulation from numerous (electronics especially) toys, and activities.

That hive of activity continues throughout our lives, unless we put a halt to it. That entails a conscientious decision to stop and smell the roses. Perhaps, instead of turning on the TV as soon as our eyes are open, meditate, pray, or just be reflective, counting your blessings. First blessing being you woke up, woke up in a bed, a bed that is warm and comfortable, and on you go with the list. Indoor toilets sure beat the outhouse!

To contemplate that society as a whole is no longer able to distinguish between essential and non essential, demonstrates an evolution of priorities, and is concerning. Not a positive development for sure. How did society reach that inability to comprehend and differentiate? As much as the argument is "essential" varies from person to person, which is true, the baseline is that our "needs" versus "wants" are not being recognized. The basic grasp of "necessity" has been lost!

One of the first essential stress busters is to start that differentiation. Teach your child to use the terms "needs" versus "wants" from an early age. Other words like "should" and "could" are stressors as well. Re invent the wheel by saying: "I would like to", or "If I can". You will note a tremendous weight lifted off your shoulders. It doesn't evolve overnight, so keep practicing.

I encourage you to take this time of reflection and isolation to examine your internal messages, to determine if they are practical and worthwhile to you. Keep in mind: you may be isolated, but not in a vacuum. Your choices do affect other people. The art of looking for loopholes has created a world of critics and nay sayers. Instead of being just critical, come up with solutions. Are you thinking only of yourself? or others?

You are worth the effort!

COVID 19 vaccines arrive in EOHU region

The Eastern Ontario Health Unit (EOHU) is pleased to announce that the first batch of COVID 19 vaccines has arrived in the EOHU region. In accordance with the Ontario government's mandate for the immunization of priority populations, the vaccines are being administered to residents, staff and essential caregivers in long term care (LTC) homes, starting January 13. Local EMS paramedics and public health nurses from the EOHU will administer the vaccines within the LTC homes.

"This is excellent news for our region," says Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, Medical Officer of Health. "Vaccinating residents, staff, and essential caregivers in long term care homes will help protect our most vulnerable residents, who have been the most harshly affected by the spread of COVID 19."

The first batch of COVID 19 vaccines are Pfizer vaccines; however, it is expected that Moderna vaccines will also arrive in the EOHU region within the coming weeks.

Anticipated vaccination roll out:

Due to a limited supply of vaccines, the Ontario government's Phase One roll out of the vaccine prioritizes individuals who are at higher risk of being exposed to COVID 19 or of developing a severe illness or dying from COVID. Vaccinations will begin with residents, staff and essential caregivers at long term care homes and retirement homes, before moving on to other groups as more vaccine stock arrives in the region.

Vaccine delivery is expected to accelerate over the coming months. As vaccine stock increases, vaccination will expand to more population groups. It is anticipated that by this fall (or sooner), anyone who wants a vaccine will have access to one.

The EOHU will notify the public as the vaccine becomes available to different population groups.

Important to continue following public health measures

The EOHU urges residents to continue following public health measures throughout the coming months.

"While the arrival of the vaccine in our region is a great first step towards protecting our community, the reality is that it will be a number of months before the vaccine is available to everyone who wants it. In the meantime, we are seeing COVID 19 infections rapidly increasing in our area and across the country," says Dr. Roumeliotis. "We must continue to maintain public health measures like masking, physical distancing and proper hand washing to protect our community until enough of our population has been immunized and the pandemic is brought under control."

For more information and the latest updates on the COVID 19 vaccine, please visit the Eastern Ontario Health Unit's website at www.EOHU.ca/coronavirus.

Baldwin's Birds

I hope all is going well for all and everyone is staying fit and well. This lovely sunny 10C afternoon, I fed the birds and stood outside with my camera for a while, getting frozen hands and some shots of them. At the moment, we get mainly a huge flock of Red Polls, who, although very skittish, are using the hanging Niger seed feeders, my other mixed seed feeders, and are also ground feeding. It is lovely to see and watch them and try, I say try, to get pictures of them in flight. I have succeeded only a few times, but fast moving wings become just a blur, if you happen to get them in the lens, that is, and can press the button fast enough! In this shot, I even managed to get two in flight!

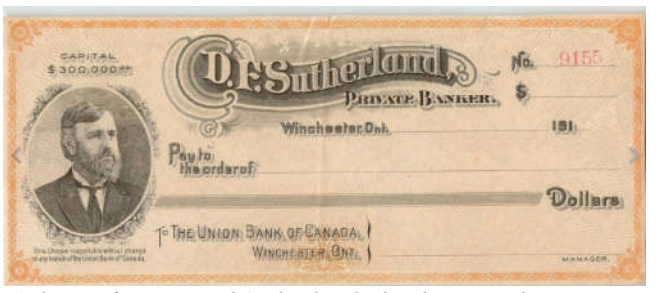
In the mornings, daily, our resident flock of pigeons descend to feed. About 20 of them sit on the hydro wires along the roadside, awaiting their chance, sometimes having to share with the squirrels!

Stay safe and well,

Cheers,

John Baldwin.

Notable individuals in North Dundas History



A cheque from Daniel Sutherland's bank in Winchester

by Susan Peters, Dundas County Archives

Piney Sutherland Corry Nat Heriteau: Banker, inventor and opera singer

In a search for notable people in North Dundas history, none can be more interesting than Piney Sutherland. She was born in Winchester in 1888. Her father was Daniel Fraser Sutherland who was living on St Lawrence Street. This is now the home of the Planted Arrow Flower and Gift Shop, owned by Kelly Windle. This stately home was the base for Daniel Sutherland's business as a Notary Public and Private Banker. When he died in 1913, he owned and managed 54 banks. These were then managed by his wife, Sadie, and daughter, Piney.

It was very unusual in 1913 for a woman to manage any bank, much less 54 of them. One source states that there were 24 banks in the estate, another noted 54; it is not certain which figure is correct. In any case, that is a sizable estate. It is also unknown exactly where all of these banks were situated. Piney had been sent to the Royal Victoria Ladies College in Montreal in 1905. What she studied while there is anyone's guess, however, this was a progressive move in 1905. In 1907, she was noted in the Windsor Star to be sailing on board a ship from Montreal, and modeling for a sculpture while on board the steamer en route to New York City. The Montreal Gazette stated on June 29, 1910, that she had returned from vacation in Ontario, to return to Paris from New York, in preparation for operas in France and Italy.

Sadly, we no longer have early newspapers for this time period. While the Winchester Press and the Mountain Herald were published at this time, the Dundas County Archives does not possess copies dating this far back. So, to understand what was happening in the life of Piney, we must resort to piecing together snippets from various sources. It appears that when her father died, Piney was married to Ensign William Merrill Corry Junior. The marriage was covered in the Washington (D.C.) Press, but took place in New York City. Nothing else has been found about what happened to this marriage, or to her husband. The next stage of her life is picked up in 1916.

Apparently, she had been performing as a soprano Opera singer. This would have connected her to the world of Opera and the famous pianist, Yves Nat. He was noted as the pianist for Luisa Tetrazzini, for whom the delicious dish called Turkey Tetrazzini was named. There is a connection with another notable person from Dundas County; Jean Munro, the wife of Lt Colonel Lorne Mulloy, had performed as a soprano in operas and acted as a companion to Madame Tetrazzini for a period of about eight years prior to marrying Mulloy in 1911. She traveled through Europe and America with Tetrazzini, so it is possible they were in New York at the same time as Pinhey. It is intriguing that two Dundas County opera singers would have a connection with the infamous Madame Tetrazzini at the same time.

Piney must have gained a certain level of notoriety by this time. When she married Yves Nat in February 1916, the story was covered in many newspapers across the United States. They were apparently married in New York City, and planned a honeymoon in France, where Nat was from. In 1916, at the time of the marriage, she is stated to have been actively managing the 25 Canadian banks her father bequeathed to her.

Yves Nat

The article also states that the couple had previously met in New York, Paris, and in Ontario, likely on the opera circuit. Piney was to serve during the First World War in organizing recreation centres for Canadian soldiers on furlough in France, while her husband devoted himself to the Appuy aux Artistes organization that aided families of destitute artists. Her mother's obituary mentioned that Piney had been performing in the Royal Opera House in Paris, at least until 1920. It is uncertain how long she continued to perform. It is also uncertain what happened to this marriage. Yves Nat died in 1954, but by 1925 he must have been history. Unless she was a bigamist, they must have divorced, as in 1925 she was married to a Marcel Heriteau and they had a child named Jacqueline. Her birth record has her place of birth as Western France.

The next phase of her life placed them back in Canada. An Order-in-Council dated 12 December, 1932, stated that Piney wanted to sponsor her husband as an immigrant to Canada, as she managed her father's estate. This included about 20 farms, banks, and an apartment house throughout eastern Ontario, and Winchester. Clearly, while she had been in France there was still a connection to Winchester.

A few years later, the document trail takes us to the Canadian Intellectual Property Office. For reasons yet to be discovered, Piney Sutherland Nat Heriteau is the proud owner of Canadian patent 379502. This is for toothpaste. It is intriguing that, in her long list of surnames, the first husband, William Corry, was omitted. It is even more intriguing to imagine why she would be compelled to apply for, and win, a patent for toothpaste. In any case, we know that she was based in Canada at this time. Her daughter, Jacqueline Heriteau, was living in Ottawa and writing dozens of books about gardening and cookery.

Piney died in Majorca, Spain, in 1953. Her husband, Marcel Heriteau, appears to have served as a diplomat, so one might assume that this is what brought them to Spain. It appears that while she was off traveling the world, she did always have her base in Eastern Ontario, perhaps even in Winchester.

dundascountyarchives@gmail.com.

Send in your letters, stories, events to editor@ndtimes.ca

North Dundas High School news

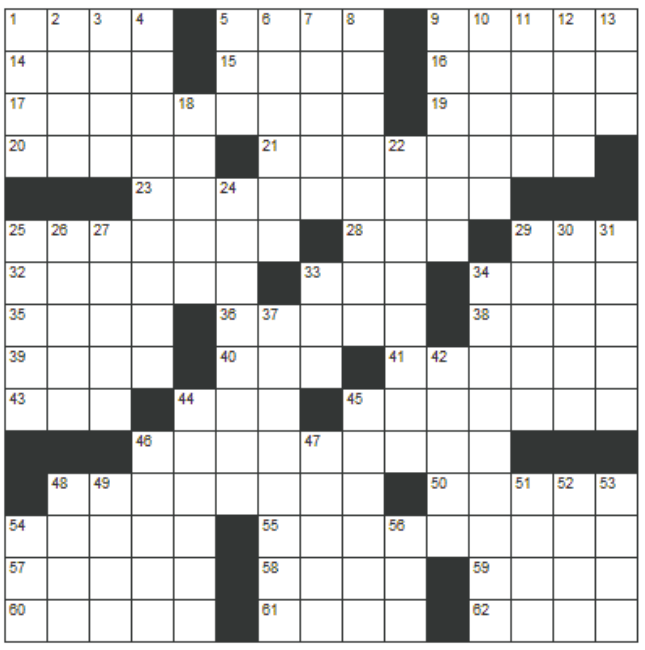
North Dundas is staying positive with virtual learning

by Jamie Wilson

We are now in the fourth week of learning from home, and classes are going well. Both students and teachers are putting their best efforts into online learning.

Thursday, January 28 is Bell Let's Talk Day. Bell Let's Talk is an awareness campaign created by Bell Canada to increase understanding and combat stigma surrounding mental illness. Mental health is always an important issue, especially in teenagers. The Covid-19 pandemic is taking a toll on people's mental health, and so this is a great time to reach out to your friends and support them. At North Dundas, we are continuing to post positive messages and words of encouragement to our students. As our Student Council has been promoting in their morning announcements, it is important to stay active, be creative, and keep in touch with friends during this time.

CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1. Dry riverbed
5. Hens make them
9. Hurried
14. Black, in poetry
15. A set of garments
16. Lower
17. Provisional
19. Heroic tales
20. Metal
21. Driver of a team of horses
23. Ornate candle holder
25. A strong swift horse
28. Frozen water
29. Ancient unit of measure
32. Directing homeward
33. Record (abbrev.)
34. Departed
35. Death notice
36. A drama set to music
38. Govern
39. Optimistic
40. Delay
41. Charred
43. S
44. 3 in Roman numerals
45. Self-regard
46. Beginner
48. Pilfering
50. Shooting sport
54. Jab or roundhouse
55. Talk terms
57. Master of ceremonies
58. Secluded valley
59. Percussion instrument
60. Boscs
61. Arid
62. Trim

DOWN
1. Dampens
2. Incite
3. Accomplished
4. Moral soundness
5. Eastern Standard Time
6. Stringed instrument
7. Donated
8. Less wavering
9. Bother
10. Wane
11. Wise one
12. Russian emperor
13. Aye
18. Array
22. American pit viper
24. Rocky material covering bedrock
25. Task
26. Vagabonds
27. Wrong
29. Nymph
30. Arm of the sea
31. Poverty-stricken
33. Regulation (abbrev.)
34. Grandchildren
37. Groupings of two
42. Excrete
44. 12 in a foot
45. Excavator
46. Canker sore
47. Anoint (archaic)
48. Be furious
49. Ancient Peruvian
51. Acquire deservedly
52. Decorative case
53. Office fill-in
54. Liveliness
56. In song, the loneliest number

Solutions to last week's Sudoku

1	2	3	9	8	4	6	7	5
4	9	7	5	6	1	3	8	2
6	8	5	7	2	3	9	1	4
2	3	6	8	9	5	1	4	7
9	5	1	3	4	7	8	2	6
7	4	8	6	1	2	5	9	3
5	6	4	1	7	8	2	3	9
8	7	9	2	3	6	4	5	1
3	1	2	4	5	9	7	6	8

5	8	2	7	9	3	1	6	4
6	3	9	5	4	1	7	8	2
7	1	4	8	6	2	9	5	3
4	7	3	6	2	8	5	9	1
8	5	1	9	3	4	2	7	6
2	9	6	1	5	7	4	3	8
1	6	8	2	7	5	3	4	9
3	2	5	4	8	9	6	1	7
9	4	7	3	1	6	8	2	5

3	4	2	9	5	6	8	1	7
5	6	7	1	8	4	2	3	9
8	9	1	2	3	7	5	4	6
6	2	4	3	9	5	7	8	1
7	1	5	8	6	2	3	9	4
9	8	3	7	4	1	6	2	5
1	3	6	4	7	8	9	5	2
2	7	8	5	1	9	4	6	3
4	5	9	6	2	3	1	7	8

Easy

	6			8	3			
	1	2		4	6			
7			5					3
	2						4	8
			1	7				5
			3		4		1	7
				3				4
9				1			8	
			9			7		

Medium

		5				8		
	9							
1	8		4			3	6	
	4							2
	6		8			9		5
8	1			9				
			5		9			
				6	2			
							4	6

Hard

	1			2				4
	4	2						
6					5			
8	9							
							3	7
			1	7				9
	6							
			3		8			1
	5	1	9					2

Solution to last week's Crossword

A	D	D	S	■	E	T	A	T	■	M	A	S	K	S
F	A	R	O	■	T	U	B	E	■	I	S	L	E	S
A	D	U	L	T	E	R	E	R	■	S	H	A	P	E
R	A	M	I	E	■	B	A	R	T	L	E	T	T	■
■	■	■	C	A	T	A	M	A	R	A	N	■	■	■
L	I	A	I	S	O	N	■	R	A	Y	■	R	E	C
I	N	S	T	E	P	■	I	I	I	■	M	A	M	A
A	N	T	E	■	S	T	R	A	P	■	A	J	A	R
N	E	E	D	■	A	R	K	■	S	T	R	A	I	N
A	R	R	■	F	I	E	■	D	E	A	T	H	L	Y
■	■	■	B	E	L	A	T	E	D	L	Y	■	■	■
■	C	H	R	I	S	T	E	N	■	O	R	R	I	S
A	R	E	A	S	■	I	N	T	E	N	D	A	N	T
L	E	A	N	T	■	S	T	I	R	■	O	R	C	A
P	E	T	T	Y	■	E	S	N	E	■	M	E	A	T

Modernized program bringing fire training closer to home

The Ontario government is strengthening fire safety training across the province by increasing access to on site and online courses in communities where firefighters serve. Enhancing training opportunities offered through 20 regional training centres will help local fire services better meet the needs of their community and result in cost savings for municipalities.

"The varied and evolving needs of local fire services in Ontario require better access to training opportunities that are most responsive to firefighters and the communities they serve," said Solicitor General Sylvia Jones. "By expanding access to local fire training across the province, we are ensuring firefighters can count on the support and resources they need to keep Ontarians safe."

"This is an important initiative as I have heard from our municipalities of their need for increased training and modernization of their fire services," said Jim McDonell, MPP for Stormont Dundas South Glengarry.

Building on a regionally connected system of training centres, the Office of the Fire Marshal will deliver fire safety training through a combination of in person training at regional training centres, online courses, and through contracts with individual fire departments. Expanding local training opportunities will increase capacity for training and reduce the need for municipal fire departments to pay for travel and costs related to overtime and shift backfills.

As part of this plan, the Office of the Fire Marshal is also investing in two mobile units that will bring live fire training to local fire services. Specialized equipment will also be made available to regional training centres so training can be specifically tailored to local needs.

As firefighter training opportunities are expanded across the province, the Ontario Fire College location in Gravenhurst, which has not hosted on site training since the onset of COVID 19 in March 2020, will be decommissioned. Ontario Fire College staff will continue to play a leading role in developing training courses.

"We have listened to fire services about the need to increase capacity for training courses and modernize the fire training program," said Jon Pegg, Ontario's Fire Marshal. "Moving to a blend of online and on site training offered through regional training centres allows us to provide responsive, high quality training to fire services across the province."

"The Fire Fighters Association of Ontario is supportive of this new training model which is being released," said Kevin McNeilly, President of the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario. "We believe more firefighters will have greater access to valuable training which will protect our firefighters."

"The Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association supports the expansion of regional firefighter training centres and the modernization of programming centred around the needs of the fire service," said Carmen Santoro, President, Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. "Improved access to sanctioned education/training will greatly enhance the quality by standardizing the safe delivery of firefighter training."

"The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs supports the modernization of firefighter training in the province of Ontario," said Mark MacDonald, Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs Board President. "The potential to expand training through a model that allows access to all regions in the province will be invaluable to help ensure the continuation of public and firefighter safety at a reduced cost to municipalities and fire departments."

There are 441 fire departments in Ontario including 32 large municipal services consisting of full time fire personnel, 215 composite fire departments made up of full-time and volunteer personnel, and 194 small municipal fire services or communities without municipal organization and are made up solely of volunteers.

The Food Corner

by Paul Cormier, Salamanders of Kemptville

Ok, here we go again with another soup! I just had another bowl of this one a few moments ago, after coming in from -15 degree weather. When we got run over by a Ford and had to close Salamanders (again), we had lots of mushrooms left over, and since Liane's Mushroom Soup is so tasty, we have enjoyed having it for the past couple or three weeks. Our grandson, Ayden, really likes to cook up a batch of his mother's recipe. Try it with warmed up Naan Flatbread.

Liane's Mushroom Soup

Ingredients:

1 pound of mixed mushrooms; along with white mushrooms use a couple of Portobellos and if you can find them, dried Shitakes (check T and T in Ottawa); slice them all thinly

1 or 2 onions, finely chopped

Chicken or vegetable broth

18% cream, or for extra richness, 35%

A pinch of dried thyme

Salt and pepper to taste (go easy on the salt)

Preparation:

If you found the dried Shitake mushrooms, soak them in warm water until soft.

In a saucepan, using butter or oil, fry the onions and mushrooms, including the shitakes.

Once browned, add enough broth to cover the mixture.

Add some dried thyme and simmer for about 15 minutes.

Slowly add the cream of your choice (18% or 35%); start with one cup of whichever cream you have decided to use.

Using a submersible blender, make the mixture into a purée.

Add any additional cream or broth to achieve the consistency of soup you are happy with.

Taste and add salt and pepper (and more thyme) if you so desire.

Trust me, folks, this one is a winner. Kindly confirm by contacting me at pcormier@ranaprocess.com.

CDSBEO Board Public Health Update

by Amber Laberge, Communications Officer

Director of Education, John Cameron, welcomed Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, Medial Officer of Health with the Eastern Ontario Health Unit, and Dr. Paula Stewart, Medical Officer of Health with the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit, to present information to the Board regarding local COVID 19 case data. Both Medical Officers of Health have been instrumental in guiding the Board through the creation of the re entry plan, as well as in providing regular consultation.

Dr. Paula Steward began the presentation with information on local case data in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Counties.

"In our region we had a bit of a rocky Christmas season, as we had people who decided that it would be okay to have family gatherings, which resulted in a little spike after Christmas and the New Year," noted Dr. Stewart. "We currently have about 20 or so active cases, and we are not getting more than two or three a day, and sometimes none. This is very important with regard to reopening schools. Interestingly, data from public health Ontario shows that,when you compare children and adolescents younger than 20 with older adults, this age group didn't have as much infection as the older adults. Additionally, it is important to note that most children were exposed through family members. It was very unusual for children to become sick with COVID 19 in schools, and in our area we only had about two cases like this."

Dr. Stewart also noted that fever and cough were the most common clinical symptoms, and that most children experienced mild to moderate disease, with approximately 10 19% being asymptomatic.

"The big news of course, is the vaccine," continued Dr. Stewart. "The research shows that with two doses the vaccine is 95 per cent effective in preventing COVID 19 symptoms. The critical message about the vaccine is that the research has not yet shown whether people who get the vaccine are also prevented from transmitting the virus. The question is, does the virus still replicate in the back of the nose and throat, which would allow you to spread it even though you do not have any symptoms."

Dr. Stewart noted that because this information is still unavailable, people who are immunized must still follow the precautionary measures of wearing a mask, handwashing, and staying home if they are ill.

Dr. Paul Roumeliotis also provided case data for the Eastern Ontario Health Unit region, which he noted is quite different from what is taking place in Ottawa and in the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville region.

"In the EOHU region, we are seeing a completely different picture than what is happening in Dr. Stewart's region. We have now reached more than 2,200 total cases in our area, with active cases currently at 578, and multiple outbreaks in long term care," began Dr. Roumeliotis. "Our numbers peaked a few weeks after Christmas, and now we are seeing a downward trend which is promising, but we are still at very high levels."

Dr. Roumeliotis discussed where the EOHU region currently sits with regard to provincial averages.

"When we look at the seven day rolling average, the EOHU currently has approximately 135 cases per 100,000."

This average means that the EOHU is one of the areas in the province that is experiencing high numbers of COVID 19 cases, similar to areas such has Hamilton (130 cases per 100k), London (137 cases per 100k), and Durham (125 cases per 100k).

"One of my concerns is that since we are seeing such a high rate of positivity and high rates of infection within our community, along with the numbers we are seeing in our long term care facilities, reopening schools may not be feasible at this time."

In person learning return dates for UCDSB Students

by Stephen Sliwa, Director of Education, UCDSB

This school year has been about balancing our students' academic needs and the obligation to keep them, and our staff, safe while at school. Late this afternoon, the Ministry of Education informed us that schools in the Eastern Ontario Health Unit (EOHU) which are schools in the areas of Stormont, Glengarry and Dundas (SDG), Prescott Russell and Cornwall will continue to be closed with students learning remotely until February 10. In person learning for students who are currently attending school will continue.

Schools in the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit (LGL) will reopen to all students for in person learning on January 25.

If you are unsure which health unit jurisdiction your school is in, you can check the map. As a large school district that has two separate health units now operating under different requirements, the Upper Canada District School Board will proceed forward the following ways:

Elementary schools served by the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark Health Unit will welcome students back to in person learning on January 25. Your school principal will be sending out a welcome back letter and informing you of any changes in health practices that will be taking place at your school for the return. If a student lives in EOHU but attends school in LGL, then they can attend.

Elementary and secondary schools served by the Eastern Ontario Health Unit jurisdiction will continue with remote learning until February 10. If this extended period of remote learning requires your family to change how your child is receiving instruction, please talk to your teacher or school principal.

Grade 9 12 students in the LGL health unit area will continue with remote learning until the end of Quadmester 2 (Friday, Jan. 29). This delayed re start will allow Grades 9 12 students the opportunity to start with a new cohort of students at the beginning of Quadmester 3 on Tuesday, February 2, and limit their number of contacts.

Grades 9 12 students in the EOHU area will continue with remote learning until February 10. Students with special education needs who are currently attending in person may continue to attend school in person during the extension of the school closures.

As announced earlier this month, it is required that all students in Grades 1 12 will need to wear non medical or cloth masks indoors at school, including in hallways and during class times, on school transportation and outdoors during recess where students cannot maintain physical distancing. Masking in Kindergarten is optional but encouraged.

For Grade 9 12 students currently using non digital resources, new packages need to be picked up on Thursday, Jan. 21 and completed packages returned. The final package for the quadmester will need to be returned to your teacher no later than Thursday, Jan. 28 for evaluation. Please contact your teacher if you have any questions.

For Grades 9 12 students who go to school in the Eastern Ontario Health Unit, teachers will be in touch on the designated PA day on Monday, February 1 to find out if those students want to proceed with Quadmester 3 synchronously or asynchronously with digital or non digital resources.

While we want to see all students back in our schools, we understand the government's decision to remain vigilant to slow the spread of COVID 19 and to keep our students and staff safe. We need to ensure that we continue with daily screening for symptoms and follow public health protocols that are in place.

Family Literacy Day held virtually

by David Shanahan

Created in 1999 by ABC Life Literacy Canada, Family Literacy Day is now in its 22nd year and aims to encourage reading and engaging in other literacy related activities as a family. Each year, groups across the country take part by hosting events that include fun filled learning activities. This year, most of the events were done virtually.

"We want to give kudos to all of the groups who are committed to celebrating Family Literacy Day once again, despite the challenges of hosting physical events," says ABC Life Literacy Canada Executive Director Mack Rogers. "Literacy and learning as a family should always be made a priority. Spending time together daily as a family to read, play board games, or prepare meals together can help increase the literacy skills of both children and adults."

This year's theme was "Travel the world together", which encouraged families to use their imagination to explore the world. This can be done through activities such as planning a dream vacation, learning about another culture, or following a recipe of an international dish.

Award winning Canadian author and modeling clay illustratord Barbara Reidd once again acted as Honourary Chair of Family Literacy Day.

"I am very excited to partner once again with ABC Life Literacy to spread the word about the importance of family literacy," she said. "You don't need to get on a plane to go explore something new and exciting. You can learn and discover amazing things in your own backyard. This year's theme is a great way for families to learn something new together from the comfort and safety of their own homes."

Family literacy focusses on parents, grandparents and other family members to improve the reading and writing skills of the whole family. By reading to children and engaging in fun literacy activities regularly, adults actively keep their own skills sharp and also help children improve their skills. Family literacy activities strengthen the relationship between family members which, in turn, encourages lifelong learning. Without adult support and a strong foundation at home, a child is less likely to be successful and engaged in school.

The statistics relating to family literacy are quite surprising. Children spend five times as much time outside the classroom as they do in school, so parents and caregivers need the tools to support their learning. Children whose parents are involved with them in family literacy activities score 10 points higher on standardized reading tests. One year of parental education has a bigger positive impact on whether a son or daughter will attend a postsecondary institution than an extra $50,000 in parental income. A mother's reading skill is the greatest factor to affect her children's future academic success, outweighing other factors, like neighborhood and family income.

Parents' reading habits play a large role in determining how often kids read: 57% of kids who are frequent readers have parents who read books 5–7 days per week, compared to only 15% of kids who are infrequent readers.

Empty Bowls event put back until 2022

by Jim Millard

Empty Bowls is an annual Community Food Share event that serves 150 guests homemade soup in locally handcrafted bowls. The event raises awareness about food insecurity in Dundas and Stormont counties, and is one of our organization's most important fundraisers. We regret that, due to public health restrictions, the 5th annual event scheduled for February 13, has been postponed until February, 2022.

We cannot wait to share this meal with our community when it is safe to gather again. To avoid in-person ticket sales, our Cash Calendar, another successful fundraiser, has also been put on hold.

Instead, Community Food Share has started running a monthly online 50/50 raffle as a contact-free fundraiser. The first draw is Monday, February 1. Visit www.communityfoodshare.ca/5050 to play, and spread the word for a chance to win even more! When you buy a ticket, you are helping feed your community.

We understand that many individuals and families in our community are struggling with challenges due to Covid-19 restrictions. If you need extra support during this time, please do not hesitate to reach out. It's a simple process, and you can visit us once, or continue longer term. We have food, and we're ready to help!

This is a marathon, not a sprint

by Jennifer Doelman, Director, Ontario Federation of Agriculture

As we persevere through yet another lockdown, the public health crisis of COVID 19 has turned into a marathon with an invisible finish line that continues to test our strength, patience, and resilience. In the early days of the pandemic, many of us viewed the challenges as a short term sprint. Adrenaline carried us through the initial hurdles; but now, as we approach the one year mark, mental fatigue, exhaustion and stress has set in. Families are being forced to balance competing roles of employee, parent, teacher, friend, and farm business owner, on top of the exhaustion of pandemic restrictions, decreased social activities, and a fundamental change in our community environment. If you're feeling as though you've hit a roadblock this week, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) wants you to know we care and you're not alone.

For many of our 38,000 farm family members, our homes have always doubled as a place of business. But now, nuclear families find themselves with children at home, juggling multiple virtual classrooms while meeting the demands of running a farm business. Many of us are attempting to work as if we don't have children, and trying to raise children like we don't have work.

These pressures have resulted in many people feeling inadequate and has created undue stress and guilt. If you are doing your job as an employee or business owner, you feel as though you are not doing your job as a parent. The pandemic has created an environment where it is nearly impossible to balance the needs and expectations of work and home life. Please give yourself permission to be human and accept that you are not a superhero.

Adding to pandemic frustrations is rural Ontario's continued patchwork of reliable broadband access. Internet capability seems to be the primary factor across the sector in determining the smoothness or difficulty of the transition to working from home and virtual learning. Social media is flooded with parents whose broadband is not strong enough to sustain both business and virtual learning meetings. The effects of unreliable broadband have been overwhelming, with children feeling anxious that they can't take part in class activities, and parents stressed that their children are falling behind on course work.

It's important that broadband infrastructure projects in rural, northern, and remote communities are prioritized to serve residents that experience regular interruptions, slow download speeds, and overall poor quality service. We appreciate the nearly $1 billion investment from the Ontario government to expand access to reliable broadband, but it's imperative the construction of these projects gets underway. OFA will continue working with the government to ensure these projects are prioritized. Fast, reliable broadband is an essential service, and the need for everyone to have equal access has never been more evident.

Mental health also continues to be a pressing issue for our rural communities. As we progress into the dark, dreary days of January and February, I encourage you to reach out to those around you. Many people choose to suffer in silence, but it is important to stay connected during these tough times. Take the time to send that check in message, or pick up the phone to ensure that neighbours and friends who feel isolated are reminded they are not alone. Talk about how you are feeling to set the tone and open the door for others to share honestly as well.

Our greatest currency as farmers is access to the outdoors. We have the green space to get outside, go for walks, tour our fields, and visit with animals. As fellow caretakers of the land, I challenge you to take advantage of your connection with nature. Personally, I find that my nighttime star gazing grounds me and provides the opportunity to see the big picture. We are all under the same sky, working collectively together to put an end to COVID 19.

With no set finish line for this pandemic, it is not easy to see the end of this exhausting marathon we are in, but we encourage you to remember we will get through it together, one step at a time. If you or someone you know is in distress and needs help, there are people and resources available that can help. For resources and updates on OFA's mental health advocacy, please visit ofa.on.ca/mental health.

Ontario expands workplace enforcement campaigns

The Ontario government is expanding the current workplace inspection campaign to further protect workers and customers at essential businesses. Following the big box store blitz, provincial offences officers will be now be visiting an expanded range of workplaces across Ontario to educate and ticket businesses that are not complying with COVID 19 health and safety requirements.

Starting last week, more than 300 officers are supporting these blitzes, and will be visiting a variety of workplaces that are allowed to be open during the provincial shutdown such as:

- Retail establishments, including big box stores
- Restaurants providing take out meals
- Essential service sector establishments (such as gas stations); and
- Farming operations

Over this past weekend a team of approximately 50 ministry inspectors, as well as local bylaw and police officers, visited 240 big box stores across the Toronto region. Enforcement officials found 76 contraventions, and that 69% of these businesses were in compliance with public health requirements.

These efforts also build on the province's recently announced "Stay Safe All Day" campaign, which focuses workplace inspections in areas of high transmission such as break rooms. The campaign provides resource materials to employers and workers to promote safe behaviour before, during and after work.

"We know, from inspecting over 23,000 workplaces during 34,000 field visits, that the vast majority of Ontario businesses are following COVID 19 requirements to protect the health and safety of their workers," said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. "However, if we find any employers are putting the safety of workers and customers at risk, we will not hesitate to take immediate action."

The campaigns were developed in consultation with local health units and support Ontario's COVID 19 provincewide shutdown. The length of the safety campaigns can range from a few days to several weeks, depending on local circumstances.

Inspectors are also visiting farming operations across the province, focusing on locations that employ temporary foreign workers to ensure that health and safety laws are followed and that measures are in place to prevent the spread of COVID 19. Ontario is expected to welcome thousands of foreign agricultural workers, mostly from Mexico and the Caribbean, under the federally administered Temporary Foreign Worker Programs this growing season.

"Our farmers, agri food workers, greenhouse operators and food processors are working hard to protect the health and safety of our agri food workers while continuing to provide us with a steady and reliable food supply," said Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. "Since last spring, we have taken several measures to support them, including reinforcing public health protocols, making investments to increase operational capacity and helping to address labour challenges. Agri food workplace inspections are part of our continued efforts to raise awareness, prevent and control COVID 19 outbreaks to protect workers' health and safety and maintain our strong food supply."

Corporations can be now be fined $1,000 for failing to comply with the orders under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID 19) Act and the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. All individuals, including employees and patrons, can also be fined $750 for failing to comply with orders under the acts.

If a violation is more serious, a person can be charged with failing to comply with an order under the acts. If convicted, the court can impose fines as high as $100,000 for individuals, and directors and officers of a corporation can be fined up to $500,000. Both could also receive terms of imprisonment of up to one year. The maximum fine for a corporation on conviction of an offence is up to $10,000,000.

Additional campaigns are being planned for 10 other communities including Leeds Grenville Lanark, Niagara, Halton, Huron Perth, Peterborough, Toronto and Durham.

Results from COVID 19 workplace safety campaigns held in December in seven communities across the province, showed that approximately 67% of workplaces were in compliance with the requirements. The most common issues were not wearing masks, not having a safety plan and not screening people in the workplace.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, the Ministry of the Solicitor General is continuing to encourage local police services and municipal bylaw enforcement officers to focus on COVID 19 related enforcement. To help businesses comply with the public health measures, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development has developed more than 200 business guideline documents.

UCDSB Family Feedback Survey

Majority Supportive of Staff Efforts and School COVID 19 Precautions in Place

From November 30 until December 9, the Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB) surveyed UCDSB parents and guardians seeking feedback about the school year, specifically regarding the student program experience and COVID 19 precautions in place within our schools. The survey received feedback from 5,170 parents/guardians from across all UCDSB schools and learning models, providing representation of 20% of UCDBS students.

Overall, the majority of respondents, across all learning models, are supportive and appreciative of staff efforts in both the classroom and online. Seventy nine per cent of respondents with students in the in person and synchronous models (K 12) agree/strongly agree their child is getting what they need to be successful, while 63% in the asynchronous digital and 67% of those in the asynchronous non digital models reported the same.

Respondents also had the opportunity to provide feedback about improving the student experience. Common suggestions include: more access to school staff for remote learners, improved communication between parents/guardians and teachers/school, increased supports for student well being, as well as more virtual field trips and school spirit days.

Other key survey findings include:

80% of respondents agree/strongly agree their school has taken appropriate precautions to prevent or limit possible exposures to COVID 19.

75% of respondents say their child enjoys school or is interested/excited about school most of the time.

30% of respondents with students in the asynchronous digital model and 27% asynchronous non digital disagree/strongly disagree their child is getting what they need to be successful.

"The feedback we received from our families is truly valued as it gives us insight into what we are doing well and where we can improve. The fact that the majority of respondents felt that their child is receiving what they need to be successful is positive and motivating news for our entire school district. We recognize there are areas that need our attention and we have already turned our attention to seeing where we can improve the learning experience for our students," says Stephen Sliwa, Director of Education.

The UCDSB is assessing feedback from respondents with students in the asynchronous learning model – a form of independent study to determine how the learning experience can be improved, including providing clarity on delivery of instruction and improved materials. In addition, the UCDSB is working with staff to find ways to further connect with students who are learning remotely and encourage more interaction between synchronous students and their peers. Staff will continue to check in on student well being and assist students and parents with managing expectations and workloads.

Additionally, the school board, in partnership with the Student Senate, will conduct a secondary student survey by the end of February for direct student feedback.