

PORT ROWAN GOOD NEWS

Volume 36, No. 7 December 18, 2024–January 28, 2025



Santa greets more visitors.



Sparky joined the light-up crowd.



Snowmen photos were popular.

Big crowd at Long Point Chamber's Christmas Tree light-up

With snow falling, on Saturday, November 30, Long Point Country Chamber of Commerce held its Annual Christmas Tree Lighting at Port Rowan Visitors Centre on Bay Street. Community members were welcome to come and meet Santa Claus and Sparky the Fire Dog, warm up by a campfire, listen to Christmas music, sign the naughty or nice list, and enjoy hot chocolate and cookies.

"Santa made a special appearance, filling the evening with magic and cheer. The air was filled with festive music, the warmth of campfires, and delicious hot chocolate and cookies shared with our wonderful community," the group said in a Facebook post.

The Country Fork supplied hot chocolate for attendees, and Wiggans' Clover Farm baked cookies. Long Point Chamber of Commerce thanked all the volunteers and sponsoring businesses who make the event possible.

"This event was a beautiful reminder of the strength and warmth of our community. Thank you to everyone who came out to celebrate the season with us. Here's to a joyful and bright holiday season for all!"

Business sponsors this year were Stealth Environmental, Earth Angel Land-



Many people, including those in the groups shown here, enjoyed having their photos taken with Santa and his sleigh at the Long Point Country Chamber of Commerce annual Christmas Tree Lighting in downtown Port Rowan on Saturday, Nov. 30. *Photos: Long Point Country Chamber of Commerce*



scaping, Port Rowan Thrift Shoppe, Olde Tyme Deli and Eatery, Trillium Court R.V. and Trailer Park, and Port Rowan Home Building Centre. Volunteers included Sonny Pennington, Scott and Sheri Bouck, Brandon and Bre Vermeersch, Sheila and Susan, and Steve and Chelsey Geier.

THE GENTLEMEN OF DISTINCTION CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE



The Greg Zinger/Gentlemen of Distinction Toy Drive for area families in need this Christmas and for The Salvation Army's Christmas Cheer Program was another success. Shown above with members of the group are a trailer and van filled with this year's donations.

Gary Bouliane reported to the Good News, "This year with the support of our entire Port Rowan community we will make Christmas very special for 62 children and 27 less-fortunate families."

"We couldn't have done this without the support of Port Rowan Public

School principal Robin Callens and secretary Dawn Havens, Villages of Long Point Bay board of directors, all our friends of the Villages and the Port Rowan area residents, Wiggan's Clover Farm, The Canadian Legion, Cheshires on Bay, Dizzy Lizzy's, The Y

Knot Shop, Doerksen's Country Store, The Country Fork Restaurant, Village Mixed Golf League, Councillor Tom Masschaele, and Norfolk County's Bill Cridland," he said, wishing everyone a Merry Christmas on behalf of The Gentlemen of Distinction.



The Good News wishes all our readers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Port Rowan Public School's Harvest Dinner enjoyed by all... story on page 3.



Local makers and artisans at show. See page 3.

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Rotary Holiday House Tour



At the close of the Rotary Club of Simcoe’s annual Holiday House Tour, tour chairperson Hadley Jackson presented Pat Montrose with a donation for Neal Memorial United Church. Neal Memorial served as the tour’s rest stop and host for a presentation on the history of rum-running, given by local historian Ian Bell. Shown above, left to right, are Hadley Jackson, Ian Bell, Pat Montrose, Rotarian Joan Shir-low, and pianist Gregory Martin.

By Wanda Backus-Kelly

Port Rowan and the surrounding area was the location for the Rotary Club of Simcoe’s annual Holiday House tour this year. Five local homeowners in and around the Port Rowan area opened their homes to ticket holders.

New this year as an added event, a talk on the history of rum-running in this area was given by local historian Ian Bell at Neal Memorial United Church.

Neal Memorial also served as the tour’s rest stop and offered a light lunch to tour participants.

Tour organizer and committee chairperson Hadley Jackson thanked the homeowners for opening their homes to the public and thanked Neal Memorial for their generous hospitality.

An estimated 350 people took part in the tour each day, with over 50 in attendance at each of the rum-running presentations.



Nativity display. As part of Neal Memorial’s participation in the Rotary Club of Simcoe’s Holiday House Tour, a display of nativity sets was created for tour participants to enjoy during lunch time. Posing with some of the sets are long-time members Gloria Brown and Marjorie Bouck, the creative duo who worked over two days to bring their idea to life.

Courtland development a step closer

A plan to build 24 semi-detached homes on a former agri-business site in Courtland is a step closer to construction.

Norfolk council has approved a subdivision agreement for the project.

One major hurdle remains. CN Railway needs to be on side. CN owns

an unused rail line through Courtland, next door to four acres owned by an Ontario numbered company.

County council has given the company permission to build two dozen semi-detached houses if CN officially abandons the rail line.

If CN doesn’t abandon the line, the project must meet CN’s conditions for

distance from railway property, fencing and noise control.

The proposed houses would have 1,500 square feet on two floors serviced by municipal water and private septic systems.

County council approved zoning on Feb. 21 and a subdivision agreement on Nov. 19.



Royal Canadian Legion Br. 379
12 Centre Street, Port Rowan
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Email: portrowanlegion@amtelecom.net

Merry Christmas & HAPPY NEW YEAR

BRANCH EVENTS

Branch Meeting: The next Branch meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 14th at 7:30 p.m.**

 **MEAT DRAW**
Saturday, January 18
starting at 3 pm

Regular Events

Wednesday Night Fun Dart League Arrive by 7pm, Play starts 7:30pm
• League Pot Luck on Wednesday, December 18.
• No darts on Wed., December 25 or Wed., January 1.
Zumba - Monday evenings at 7 p.m. - *Come check it out!!*
Yoga & Line Dancing Contact Katherine at kdcancoach@gmail.com

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The staff and students at Port Rowan Public School enjoyed the food and fellowship at the annual Harvest Dinner held at Port Rowan Community Centre. Shown above is a portion of the tables set up for the annual event.

Students enjoy Port Rowan Public School Harvest Dinner

By Jessica Tulpin

Port Rowan Public School’s Harvest Dinner is always a great time for students to come together to prepare a meal and set a table for the school community. This year’s dinner took place on November 19 at the Port Rowan Community Centre.

As always, the younger grades used their creativity to make centrepieces, a banner, and placemats. The middle grades cut onions, peeled and cut potatoes and prepared bread for stuffing. The Intermediates set up tables and chairs and took them down after the dinner.

Valley Heights Hospitality class, taught by Ms. Hevesi, cooked the delicious turkeys. The dinner of turkey and

gravy, ham, mashed potatoes, vegetables and rolls was served by parent volunteers.

Bus drivers, the school’s administrative assistant, school administrators and those who lend a hand throughout the school year were invited to share the meal as well.

Students in the older grades were paired with little ones and helped them fix their plates and carry them back to the table.

The annual dinner is a unique school tradition that allows all students to take part in the preparation of the meal. Students sit at the table with a sense of pride knowing they played a role in the success of the dinner.



Parent volunteers Shelly Wiebe, Colin Clarke, Mandie Schram and Tracy Mayo helped serve the hungry students at the harvest dinner.

Many hands worked together to make the dinner happen: from Valley Heights Hospitality class, to parent volunteers, to students from kindergarten to Grade 8. Everyone in attendance enjoyed the food and the fellowship.

Hometown Christmas Craft Show celebrates local artisans

By Care Lucas

Norfolk County residents had the opportunity to knock a few more loved ones off their shopping lists Dec. 7 and 8 with the annual Hometown Christmas Craft Show. The event, which took place at the Port Rowan Community Centre, featured local makers and artisans.

The idea for the show was inspired by the November Shop the Shore event. One group of friends enjoyed Shop the Shore so much, they wondered if it would be worthwhile to plan a craft show closer to Christmas. Three of those friends were Charlene Propper, Amanda Swackhammer, and Glenda Filmore, and they continue to co-organize the event today.

The friends started small, but the event has continued to grow since then.

“It took us [roughly] 10 days to fill the community centre with vendors for the Christmas one,” Propper said. It was such a success that they organized another



Port Rowan Community Centre was filled with over 40 vendors for the Hometown Christmas Craft Show on Dec. 7 and 8.

craft show in the summer. At one point the team had organized a craft show in St. Williams, but they quickly outgrew that location, with vendors spilling out around the building. “We had so many people interested in us doing another one that we decided to go to Port Rowan because the venue was [bigger].”

Propper said this year the show featured over 40 vendors with unique gift ideas—everything from knitting to food spices, Christmas wreaths to photos, wooden signs, tumblers and homemade blankets. There was also lemonade available for purchase. And Propper herself was there as a vendor, selling her one-of-a-kind ceramics.

But it’s the atmosphere that Propper said really makes the weekend feel special. “We have music playing, not very loud, but we still have music playing so that it’s more cheerful,” she said. “We make sure that everyone’s happy. So the vendors have come back to us and keep telling us, ‘We want to come to you again because you are [a fun] group to be with.’”

Propper said the event is becoming a tradition, attracting returning vendors and regular shoppers alike. The summer craft show welcomed shoppers from outside Norfolk County as well because seasonal campers and cottagers were in town. But Propper said her team focused on advertising in surrounding areas like Tillsonburg, Simcoe and Courtland before the Christmas show in the hopes that would generate new foot traffic. She expected more shoppers would be looking to shop local this year.

“[With] the mail strike being on right now, a lot of people aren’t shopping online

anymore. So to get those really neat [gift ideas], might help the vendors sell a little bit more for this Christmas,” Propper said.

The event also encourages vendors to connect with one another. In addition to the friendship she’s made with her fellow co-organizers, Propper said her favourite part about the craft show is meeting new people. She believes events like this are vital for local vendors but cautioned vendors who might be interested in getting involved with future events to be vigilant online.

Propper warned of an online scam where someone poses as one of the craft show’s co-organizers. Artisans could think they are talking to a member of the Hometown Christmas Craft Show team when in reality, someone is posing as them in an attempt to collect money from the unsuspecting vendor.

Propper said her team will reach out to vendors directly and when the spots are filled for the event, she will post that they are no longer accepting vendors.

“We’ve got to always be watching for that,” Propper said. “[Scams] are all over the place.”

Despite that, Propper and her team are excited to see more vendors at future events. It’s not just about shopping, some of the vendors are there for a great cause, including Purrfect Companions, Abel Enterprises and the Food Bank.

Propper said their craft show events are a great opportunity to find a loved one a gift they’ll cherish. “I try to think of the person [I’m buying for]... If I’m going to spend the money, it’s got to be something they really want.”



Hometown Christmas Craft Show photos contributed by Charlene Propper.





PORT ROWAN GOOD NEWS

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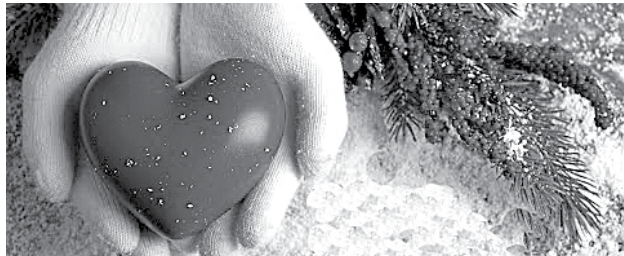
Paul H. Morris - Publisher

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Acts of kindness... Remember the supporting cast

By Jessica Tulpin

Every holiday season, we all run around trying to find the perfect gift for everyone on our list, to show our appreciation for those who are close to us. Teachers, bus drivers, co-workers and, of course, family and friends are always top of mind while shopping this time of year. One group of people who are often overlooked, not just at gift-giving time, but every day—those who do the little things that have a big impact.

The supporting cast are the assistants, “gophers,” helpers, and anyone who goes out of their way to make life easier and more pleasant. These are the people who do the small things behind the scenes that contribute to the success of others. Those who think of others before themselves and know just what they need. Those who are thoughtful and kind to the people they work with. Those who bring you coffee when you’re swamped and drop everything to help you find something important that you need.

We all have these unsung heroes in our lives and they are often overlooked. The jobs they do and the support they provide isn’t important on paper but often their actions are crucial to the success of those around them.

They might not be the official organizer of an event but they volunteered their time at the event.

This Christmas, take time to think about the ones in our lives who support us in these small ways. Ask yourself who in your life needs some recognition. Who always has a smile and a salutation on an otherwise miserable day? Who is willing to help get the job across the finish line, knowing the credit will not go to them? Who always has an uplifting and encouraging word on a hard day? Who shows kindness without asking for anything in return?

We all need to make sure that those who support us in any capacity are shown appreciation. Life is hard and any helping hand we receive along the way should be acknowledged. I’m not talking about gifts—the supporting cast often don’t expect or even want the attention. These helpers just need a thank you, or an “I see you” to show them that what they do matters.

Merry Christmas to the supporting cast!

WARD ONE MATTERS

Better together

Area health units merge to create Grand Erie Public Health

BY TOM MASSCHAELE
WARD ONE COUNCILLOR



As many know, approval has recently been given by the Ministry of Health for the merging of the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit (HNHU) and the Brant County Health Unit (BCHU) to create a new, singular organization.

This approval by the Ministry of Health follows the review of a jointly prepared business proposal, submitted by BCHU and the HNHU.

The new organization will be named Grand Erie Public Health. The new merged health unit will replace the two organizations under the Health Promotion and Protection legislation. It will represent the County of Brant, the City of Brantford, Haldimand County, and Norfolk County.

The full integration of the two health units into a single new entity is expected to take place gradually throughout 2025. On January 1, 2025, the delivery of programs and services for the public, in both communities, will remain the same. Programs and services will remain available across all of Brantford-Brant and Haldimand-Norfolk regions at current operating locations.

This initiative began following the Ministry of Health’s announcement in August of 2023, offering unprecedented one-time funding, resources, and support for local public health agency mergers, prompting BCHU and HNHU to explore poten-

tial alignments and options.

Throughout this process, BCHU and HNHU have identified several key benefits of merging, including enhanced public health capacity, improved service delivery, and a unified network of community partners such as school boards and children’s services providers. Both organizations already collaborate closely, with overlapping programs and shared geographic and demographic characteristics.

The merger’s focus remains on ensuring business continuity, retaining front-line expertise, maintaining a strong local public health presence, delivering high-quality services, and addressing health disparities.

The journey to this merger has been anything but simple. Over the past many months staff, provincial representatives and other officials have been analyzing the potential benefits and synergies of a merger.

Few people realize the extent to which members of Norfolk County Council are connected to the Board of Health. For some historical context, in 2001 Norfolk County was made solely responsible for health unit decision-making, which was a unique circumstance in Ontario’s health system. Norfolk made all decisions even though Haldimand County provided 40% of the funding. A circumstance that has made for some very awkward moments, particularly during the global pandemic.

It has always been more expensive to deliver services in Haldimand-Norfolk because it covers a much wider area with a lot of different population centres. This

voluntary merger can be just the solution to improve the delivery of services for both counties.

This merger offers unique opportunities. The province has committed to offering greater financial support to health units that choose a voluntary merger, meaning that our new health unit will receive a greater share of provincial funding to enhance and expand services. This is a benefit that non-participating health units would not receive, making it a sensible and strategic option for strengthening our public health services. This is a real benefit at a time when financial resources are already stretched very thin.

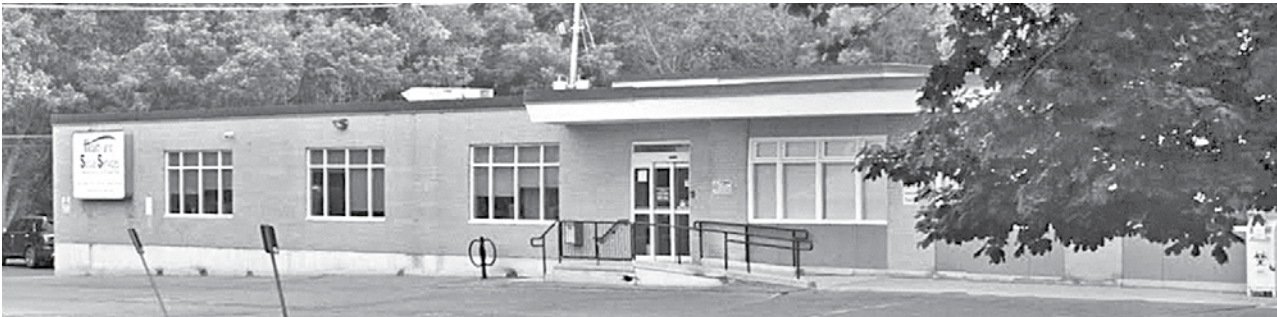
Mayor Martin has commented that, “Our strong partnership with the Brant County Health Unit has allowed us to effectively collaborate with a wide network of community providers, allied agencies, and healthcare pathways across our regions. Looking to the future, we are excited about our two health units becoming one and firmly believe that this merger will greatly enhance public health capacity, services, and overall impact. We are grateful to the Ministry of Health for this opportunity.”

This new entity may also be able to turn more concerted attention to expanded vaccination programs, reduced emergency room wait times, and doctor recruitment for small towns and rural areas. The possibilities are very positive.

The merger will be official on January 1. Another good way to start the new year.

□ □ □

Merry Christmas and happy holidays to all!



The Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit building on Gilbertson Drive in Simcoe.

Good News is good reading whenever you receive it!

Thank you to all our subscribers and readers for your patience during the strike at Canada Post. The paper was delivered to Port Rowan post office boxes, delivered to subscribers in Port Rowan and Long Point, on sale at stores in the area, and available to view for free at www.PortRowanGoodNews.com.

All editions of your paper will be delivered once regular mail service resumes.

The next issue of Port Rowan Good News will be mailed to subscribers on Jan. 29. The deadline for submissions is Friday, Jan. 17.

We know those editions delayed by the mail strike will be good

reading when you receive them. The Good News welcomes your news and photos from local events by e-mail to prgn@live.ca. For advertising info, contact prgn@live.ca or call us at 519-586-2291.

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The Wish Book allowed us to daydream anytime

First published in January 2011 issue of the Good News.

BY DOUG BELLAS

The mail order catalogue played a big part in our Christmases years ago. We loved that book so much that we gave it a special name: our Wish Book.

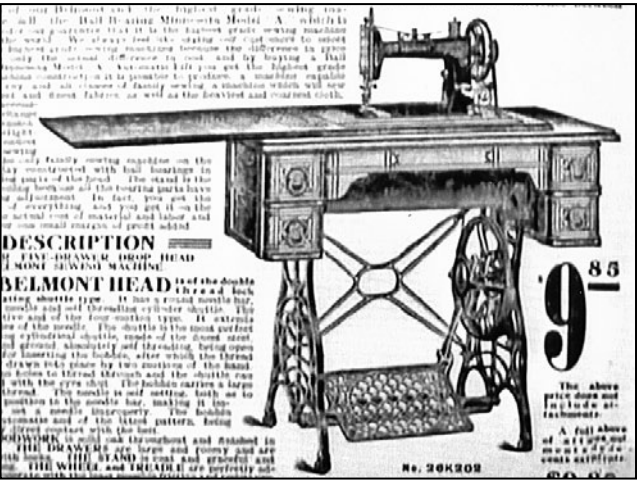
The fall catalogue from Eatons or Simpsons had hundreds of pages full of pictures, things you wanted or thought you wanted. Ideas galore for gift giving. You could order in plenty of time for Christmas. Having the Wish Book right there in your house allowed you to daydream anytime. Just reach for it and turn the pages.

Even on a winter's day, the Wish Book warmed the imagination. In your mind's eye, you could picture yourself on that new bicycle, riding off to school with the breeze in your face.

How could so much stuff be squeezed into one book? The catalogue amazed us. And it was free! Big corporations with giant warehouses full of anything you wanted – a dream.

Richard Sears started the dream in 1886 in Minnesota. He was one of those amazing people we now call an entrepreneur. No one knows for sure how their minds work. Somehow he figured out the concept of buying in volume and selling at a discount, much like Walmart does today.

The real genius was the catalogue and the descriptive words in it. Page after page of pictures, bargains and intoxicating phrases like “lowest prices,” “money-back guarantee,” and “largest selection.” Unsophisticated rural customers believed every word and filled out the order form.



Sewing machine – your feet supplied the power.



Supertone AM radio, you had to have one.

Merry Christmas



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It's said that even Henry Ford tried some of the concepts originating in the mind of Richard Sears. Later, these advertising ideas showed up everywhere, including Eatons, Simpsons and Canadian Tire Corporation.

Country folks were the biggest users of mail order. Poor roads, few cars and low prices really established the catalogue system of purchasing goods as diverse as rubber boots and wedding dresses.

Just as concession roads tied all the farms together, so too did the catalogue. It was a lifeline. When the new catalogue arrived, the old one moved to the outhouse to be useful all over again.

Just as Sears was to America, Eatons was to Canada and then Simpsons and Canadian Tire Corporation. Since advertising concepts could not be patented, Timothy Eaton was free to emulate the success of Sears. However, the Eatons catalogue was more sophisticated than Sears', because it used none of the circus-style graphics.

Canada, because of its British heritage, has always been more formal and low-key than America, from business to politics and to everyday life. Eatons catalogue, my first Wish Book, reflected this lifestyle. Growing up in Canada, most of us were unaware of the difference.

But at first, since it was part side-show, part huckster, the catalogue thrilled everyone. We couldn't wait to buy a bargain. The feeling is much the same today when we stop at a yard sale.

In 1902, Sears was giving away a one-thousand-page catalogue *free* to anyone who asked for it. The moment the catalogue arrived, the dreams began. From that first Wish Book, some examples: stereoscope 28 cents, women's fancy leather shoes \$3.95, sewing machine \$9.85, horse cart \$14.65. Everything sold with a money-back guarantee.

Here at home in Canada, besides Eatons and Simpsons, we had Canadian Tire Corporation (CTC). Its catalogue specialized in automobile repair parts and accessories and also items for the home such as paint, vacuum cleaners, and kids' toys. CTC sold a narrower range of products.

The Billes brothers started Canadian Tire in 1922. They were innovative entrepreneurs, using the Sears concept of buying in volume and selling at low prices. Their catalogue was much smaller than the others', however, it gave the customer the feeling of intimacy. Selling auto parts was their strength, as they advertised "parts for most makes and models."

A Canadian Tire catalogue from 1954 was purchased from a collector especially for this story. Thumbing through the pages of this special wish book brings back the memories of teenage years. There were bargains for your car or truck if you wanted to be "cool"—fender skirts, spotlights, and whitewall tires. Guaranteed to fit most Fords, Chevys and Chrysler models. Few other automobiles were for sale at that time.



The Sears Roebuck catalogue. It started us dreaming.

Why did all these wish books grab out attention and allow us to dream? Perhaps it was the first time ever that country folks had the same goods available to them as city folks, and at affordable prices. Maybe it offered the feeling of equality. In some catalogues, you could even buy full-sized houses, shipped to you in pieces with easy instructions for you to assemble on your own property. A house was the biggest dream ever offered by the Wish Book.

There were many dark days in the past, on both sides of the border. Worry about war, the economy, health and family welfare. It kept honest citizens working hard and counting their pennies. The catalogue or Wish Book was the shining light of hope that not only entertained but kept folks optimistic about the future.

Today the catalogue system of selling is gone. The old Wish Book is now in the hands of collectors. Our 1954 Canadian Tire catalogue cost \$20 from a collector. The Billes brothers would be shocked, but maybe not! After all, didn't they always say there was "value at Canadian Tire?"

The folks of long ago had little money for Christmas shopping but they did have their Wish Book with page after page of bargains and dreams. Today we have a new way to fantasize. It's called the Internet. Merry Googling.



Canadian Tire, a Canadian's best friend.

Merry Christmas!!!

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The sharp echo of that crunching ice was the beautiful sound of hope.

Godspeed neighbour, a safe journey for you and your family

BY **BILL WIEBE**

DECEMBER DAYS bring the resurrection of Winter – rousing itself with the same ancient rhythm of a bear shaking the frost from its fur in the light of a new dawn.

Fall is a shadow, now freshly behind us; Summer is a golden, faraway memory; Spring is just a promise perched on a sightline pointing to tomorrow.

These are the beautiful, barren moments that blend the ending of one year and the beginning of the next.

As temperatures decrease, our times of quiet meditation seem to increase: reflections and recollections; rejoicing and regretting; images and memories all gathering in a great mental ruck (heap) that we sift and sort through, amid the sweep and swirl of a season that starts festive and ends forlorn.

Life seems to be all the more bittersweet in these mid-to-late-in-life years. Or perhaps, as we grow older, we're all just a bit more mindful of how truly layered our time in this world is.

The blunt reality that catches most of us upside our noggins (usually more than once) is that virtually every good thing contains at least a measure of pain or sacrifice within its fibre.

We've all got our remembrances of Christmas past...

Our family was introduced to Doreen in the mid '60s. Like my sister, she suffered health affliction in the form of cerebral palsy. I was about ten when I first met our Miss Myers, she in her early teens. Jet-black hair framed a pretty face. She had a quick and dazzling smile, instantly endearing her to everyone. Her speech was soft and shy; her pace was halting yet determined, the cruel result of the leg braces she always wore.

More than anything, Doreen's wish was to return to her home. Life for the handicapped in those days was different than today – institutions, group homes, and independent living were all dreams yet to be realized – and so, out of necessity, her family brought her from the East Coast to Ontario, so that she might receive the best care available.

Distance was a difficult hurdle to overcome, but she never lost hope, never stopped talking about when she would be going home. As we visited my sister, Doreen was often present, as they shared decades as roommates and housemates. Over the course of 40 years, her smile never

faded, her optimism was never lessened, her spirit was never broken.

In a December of the early '00s, our visit to the girls' home held a deeply profound event. As we entered, there was something different, something palpable in the air. Doreen, usually somewhat reserved, was a bundle of excitement, her smile even more radiant – I believe she outshone the tinsel on their tree and the lights on their porch.

"I'm going home!" she gushed.

"Home, I'm going home! For Christmas, even!" "Home, home, home!" I hugged her, as I had done, countless times before, but this was new. I saw her hair, once midnight black, was now streaked with gray threads; her face, with its natural laugh lines, now contained just a few wrinkles around her eyes; and her steps, even in the joy of the event, just a bit slower.

"Home, home, going home!" she chanted. And in that moment, I felt a bittersweet mix of emotions: immense joy for this faithful and precious girl who was now going home and a deep sadness that her journey was taking her from our circle of life. I watched her revel and dance and celebrate, realizing in that moment what she had known all along. You really can still (no matter how long you have been away) go home.

□ □ □

Around Christmas of '64 we were heading home from Granny's house in Clear Creek when freezing rain began to fall – within the hour, a full inch covered hydro wires, fenceposts, and roads. Dad wrestled our big Chrysler up and down Clear Creek hill, fishtailing the next few miles and keeping us out of the inviting ditches. Each familiar marker passed meant we were that much closer to home.

Near the Hemlock Store, where the Lakeshore Road meets the North Road, the slippery road proved too much even for the Chryco's formidable mass. It was a familiar dip in the road, a gentle hollow and rise we had traversed a million times prior. With a steep gully on either side, Pa nursed his way down but we did not have momentum enough to make it up.

So, there we sat, tires spinning and sleet ticking down all around us. Three miles from home – we could have walked – no different than the walk Mom and Dad would have made to school each day as kids. But this was Christmas, one of the few times of the year my sister was home with us. The cerebral palsy that confined her to a wheelchair, now held all of

us captive. Carrying her three miles in that weather was unthinkable, not that my Dad wouldn't have tried – he used to carry her to the top of the Sand Hills during summer. Grab yourself a 50 lb. bag of potatoes and try that climb – he was a force, all right. Dad traipsed and slid to the nearest home and used their phone to call another neighbour who might be able to help us. It was late, a horrid night, dark, wet, cold, dangerous, who in their right mind would venture out in such a mess?

I remember that night, 60 years ago, like it was yesterday. There was a sound in the darkness, punching heavy holes in the black, frigid air: a Farmall Tractor with a corn picker still attached. The sheer weight of the implement was enough to break through the ice to gain traction. The sharp echo of that crunching ice was the beautiful sound of hope.

Driving the tractor was our neighbour, Ralph Butcher, as his two sons, Joe and Buck (Russell), flanked him, sitting on either fender of the great red machine. The Butchers, residing two concessions over, were true friends. Never missing an opportunity, Dad explained why Ralph had left the corn picker on. For me, it was a lesson never forgotten.

Ralph swung the Farmall around, his boys already unlooping the thick logging chain wrapped around the PTO sway bars. With farm boy skill, they hooked on and pulled us up that last rise and as far as the Norfolk-Elgin Townline. It was a flat stretch of pavement all the way to our driveway from there, and despite Pa's assurances, they followed us halfway home.

Sitting in the backseat, I turned to watch their two white headlights swing around and turn into a single red tail light, as they pointed their noses back east. They were the same as us – going home. I'm quite sure, even in the darkness, that I saw Ralph give us a wave, a raised arm that said, godspeed neighbour, a safe journey for you and your family.

Such was the fabric of my young years; such is the wonderful colour and texture that is the life tapestry woven by those who populate my memories, those who shaped who I would be and how I would think and act today.

In the true spirit of this blessed season, to each one of you, I echo the words of that distant night: godspeed neighbour, a safe journey for you and your family.

May the blessings of a Merry Christmas be yours, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.



SECRET SANTA BRINGS JOY

A reader emailed the Good News this photograph with the message "Secret Santa made a delivery today. Love it."

People across the community are helping others celebrate the Christmas season with joy. Best wishes for a Merry Christmas.

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As another holiday season takes wing, we'd like to thank you all for your generous support and wish you a very Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year.



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Breakfast with Santa at Port Rowan Legion was a great success. Many offered thanks to Tania and her incredible team of volunteers for organizing the popular event.

Legionnaires provide essential services in the community

Port Rowan Legion's next branch meeting is Tuesday, January 14, at 7:30 p.m. The canteen is open Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 2 p.m. with everyone welcome to attend. Watch the Legion Facebook page for dates of upcoming meat draws.

Zumba continues on Monday evenings at 7 p.m. For information on yoga and line dancing this winter, contact Katharine at kdcancoach@gmail.com.

The Wednesday night Fun Dart League starts at 7:30 each Wednesday evening. Please note there are no darts on Wednesday, Dec. 25, or Wednesday, Jan. 1. A potluck was planned for Wednesday, Dec. 18 for the dart league.

In other news, the Legion's upstairs

hall remains available for rental. Contact Melissa Hunt at 519-842-9008 ext. 317 to book an appointment with the Stonebridge Foot Clinic—dates and times can vary from month to month.

Poppy Fund dollars are used for many veteran services, one being support for service dogs. So far, funds have allowed for the training and assignment of 61 dogs ... 27 are currently in training ... with more puppies to be acquired as funds are available. Again, thank you for the community's generosity.

The Legion serves all Veterans

The Royal Canadian Legion was founded by Veterans and for Veterans. We advocate for the care and benefits for all who served

Canada, regardless of when or where they served. The Legion also provides representation and assistance to Veterans, including currently serving Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP members, and their families, and access to our services is available to them at no cost, whether or not they are Legion members. The Legion helps thousands of Veterans each year and makes significant positive changes in their lives.

The Legion exists so that Canada never forgets


The Legion understands the importance of honouring past sacrifices and acknowledging the courage of those who served and still serve today. Through Remembrance Day ceremonies, the Poppy Campaign, commemorative activities, youth

education programs and more, the Legion helps Canadians to honour and remember.


The Legion serves our communities and our country

Legion Branches are the cornerstone of communities across Canada, and provide one of the largest volunteer bases in the country. With 1,350 branches from coast to coast to coast, our members provide local services and supports to build a stronger Canada. Whether helping local Veterans, supporting seniors, providing youth sports programs, raising funds, volunteering to help those in need, or simply offering a place to gather for fun and celebration, Legionnaires provide essential services in their communities.

PAUL DECLOET PRESENTED NORFOLK SCROLL



Paul DeCloet (centre) receives a Norfolk County scroll from Mayor Amy Martin and Deputy Mayor Chris Van Paassen. The scroll recognizes Mr. DeCloet's contributions to forest conservation. In 2019, he donated to the county about 55 acres of prime Carolinian forest in the Clear Creek Valley. Two years later, he donated another 65 acres to form the Paul DeCloet Forest. Mr. DeCloet recently established a \$100,000 endowment to help maintain the forest.



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Salvation Army holds 2024 Kettle Campaign

By Care Lucas

If you're running holiday errands, chances are you may see one of the Salvation Army's iconic red kettles. The local campaign, which runs every year, originates from the community at The Villages of Long Point Bay in Port Rowan.

"We have two gentlemen that go [do pick up in Tillsonburg] ...They are the ones that are in charge of going and picking the kettles up. They bring them back to The Villages and then it's my job to make up a schedule where we're going to place volunteers, for instance, Wiggans, the pharmacy, Country Fork—or wherever," Sheila Seymour, the campaign's convener, said.

The same gentlemen will then set up the kettles and the volunteers are

tasked with being cordial while community members place donations in the kettles.

This is Seymour's second year in the role. She said all of the donations collected are sent back to Tillsonburg to be deposited into an account, but the account is tagged for Port Rowan so any funds raised are distributed back to the community.

She said it has been moving to see the impact the Kettle Campaign has on Norfolk residents. "I remember one time, a fellow came up to me," Seymour said. "He put \$50 in the kettle, and he said, 'I want to tell you that when I was 17 years old, my parents threw me out of the house and would not let me back in. I went to The Salvation Army, and I asked them for help. They gave me a place to stay, and they gave me a bed and a

little bit of furniture. And I've never forgotten that.'" The gentleman told Seymour that he now donates to the Kettle Campaign each year to pay it forward.

Seymour said her volunteers understand the significance of the campaign, which gives back to the community year round. "Across Canada last year, Salvation Army served over 3.2 million meals to the needy. That didn't even include what they gave in Christmas hampers, what they give in clothing or what the thrift stores make all year," she said. "It's a huge and wonderful organization."

But this year, there is a unique need for volunteers. For many years the volunteers were recruited directly from The Villages of Long Point Bay, but in recent years, there are fewer people able to step up from there. As a result, Seymour has opened volunteer recruitment up to the general public, bringing in a few volunteers through the Chamber of Commerce.

Those interested in volunteering this season or next year can connect with Seymour at 226-567-8994. If they provide their availability, she will schedule shifts around it. "It usually works out," she said.

It's a great opportunity to get to know your neighbours better and connect with your community through the holiday season. And it's for a great cause. Seymour says the volunteer role is a rewarding one. She moved to the area from a big city four years ago and said it has been an eye-opening experience.

"I am absolutely astounded and amazed by the charitable efforts that people do in this community. When somebody's down, they pick them up," she said. She referenced community service from service organizations and churches in the area. "Your heart grows [coming here]. I swear. I feel like the Grinch. My heart grew many sizes bigger."



A Salvation Army volunteer collects donations during the annual Kettle Campaign at Port Rowan Pharmasave. Photo contributed by Sheila Seymour.

Birds Canada restoring research station

Birds Canada plans to spend \$726,000 to renew its buildings at the tip of Long Point.

The non-profit organization has spent \$226,000 on the first steps of the project and plans to spend another \$500,000 by 2030, county councillors have been told.

The project includes demolition of three small buildings on an eroding, shifting beach and moving one cabin to a safer location.

On Nov. 19, county council changed zoning and Norfolk's Official Plan to accommodate the project.

Birds Canada plans to restore its research station in a five-year project starting next year.

Donations are funding the work, said Stu Mackenzie, the group's director of strategic assets.

Birds Canada has had buildings at the tip of Long Point since 1960.

Start your holiday with a fun reading challenge at Norfolk County Library

By Belinda Smith

You're invited to read your way through winter with the Norfolk County Public Library with "Solstice to Spring: A Winter Reading Challenge!" From the winter solstice on December 21 to the day before the spring equinox (March 19), the library challenges readers of all ages to read for 10 minutes every day for a chance to win amazing prizes.

Using the Beanstack platform, participants can track their daily reading progress and unlock virtual badges for each day they read. These badges not only mark your journey through the 89 days of winter but also enter you into a grand prize draw. Three lucky winners will

receive a gift basket filled with local goodies from across Norfolk County – there's one for kids, teens, and adults!

Each badge in this challenge represents a single day of winter and is only available on its day. So, to unlock all 89 you must log 10 minutes of reading every day! Each badge is a step closer to the spring finish line—and another ballot for the grand prize draw, which will take place on the spring equinox, Thursday, March 20.

To participate, visit norfolklibrary.beanstack.org to register and log your reading minutes or download the Beanstack Tracker app to register and track your progress directly from your phone. If you don't have access to a device, stop by Port Rowan's

library branch and staff can register you as an offline reader and report your minutes at the circulation desk.

Reading just 10 minutes a day is a simple way to stay engaged and entertained through the winter months. Whether it's a gripping novel, an inspiring biography, or a beloved children's book, every minute counts. Plus, you'll discover that reading can help distract you from the cold and keep your mind active until spring arrives.

Don't let winter drag you down—read from solstice to spring. The challenge is open to all Norfolk County residents. To stay connected to all things library, sign-up for the monthly eNewsletter at <https://bit.ly/NCPLnewsletter>.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY 2025

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Twas the Game Before Christmas

By Patti Stark

’Twas the game before Christmas, when all thru the gym
The ladies were working with vigor and vim
The net had been hung and tested for play
In hopes that our team would be ruling this day!

Both teams took their places on the court to begin
Each player game-ready and hoping to win
Johrendt has the service, Prout’s court stands ready
The first set commences, game on! Hold steady!

Billo receives the hot serve and bumps to Montrose
Who sets to Marcyniuk who spikes Meyer’s nose
Hudson and Fick both attack at the net
The ball is in play for Hignett to set

Smith takes over the set and spikes the ball hard
Cayer and Dedrick block putting Bouck on her guard
Truax digs deep and keeps the hot ball in play
Robertson is ready and sends the ball to Haze

Matschke subs in to provide her best skills
Getting her team both aces and kills
Johrendt supports players with her constant chatter
Encouraging all to call out. “MY BALL,” and then “ take ‘er!”

“Now Donna, now Marilyn, now Deanna and Charlene
On Donna, on Jan, on Jane, and Marjorie
On Myrt, on Gina, on Pat, and Nancy
On Cindy, on Lynn, on Vija, and Debbie”

“Serve the ball hard, guard the top of the net
But remember to laugh and have no regrets”
Merry Christmas to all and best wishes for you
Looking forward to the New Year and more volleyball too.

Happy holidays Good News readers!



A surprise guest made an appearance when the ladies’ group at Neal Memorial gathered with supporters and guests for their annual Christmas social. Janice Baker got a chance to whisper her Christmas wish list to Santa.

Neal Memorial United Church Women (UCW) recently held their annual Christmas social where they took time to reflect on their year’s work and to thank their supporters. In total, the UCW raised over \$8,000 through their annual summer auction, with the help of the local community and members of the church, as well as a wider network of friends and helpers.

The UCW announced that proceeds have been dispersed to support the following beneficiaries: Long Point Country Bayfest, the Irene Leonard Memorial Bursary for a graduating Valley Heights Secondary School student, local school nutrition programs (Port Rowan Public and Valley Heights Secondary), school supplies support for Port Rowan Public School, Christmas Hamper support through the Tillsonburg Salvation Army, the Royal Canadian Legion’s Poppy Fund, The Healing Fund (United Church of Canada), Mission and Service (United Church of Canada), Ryerson Camp, Caribbean Outreach (Simcoe), Canadian Mental Health and Addiction, Church Out Serving, Holmes House, Norfolk Refugee Committee, Five Oaks Retreat, Dolly Parton Library,

through the Norfolk County Public Library, Canadian Red Cross for

Wildfire Relief, and the Port Rowan Public School Playground Fund.

Jonny K’s makes changes in time for the holidays

By Care Lucas

In a social media post on November 9, Mark Kozicki, owner of Jonny K’s, shared that big changes were coming to the fresh produce store. “Jonny K’s is going back to the original owners. [We are now under renovation] adding an in-house bakery,” Mark said.

On December 3, the updated location opened its doors to the public, just in time for the holiday season. Jonny K’s also announced they are now open from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

“We’ve built on to the side to accommodate more room in our kitchen baking area,” Bonnie Kozicki, co-owner, said.

But the in-house bakery isn’t the only change. Bonnie said the business is now offering produce box deliveries. “We will be doing them weekly, or whatever the customer wants. We have an online store,” Bonnie said. “And so that will help us keep the produce really nice and fresh in the winter months.”

The online store aims to add convenience for residents. Bonnie said they are willing to deliver any of their inventory, from wood to water.

There will also be some new but familiar faces in the market. From the Esso across the street, its former manager Masha Ann has joined Jonny K’s as the new store manager. Jenny from Esso is joining the team as well.

As for Mark and Bonnie, they’ve returned after taking some time off to spend with their grand-daughter in Waterford the past year. But Bonnie said they’re looking forward to reconnecting with the community and embracing all the changes.

“We will be offering pre-ordered charcuterie boards, [and] vegetable trays,” Bonnie said. She said customers can customize the meat and cheese included based on their preferences. They can also bring in their own charcuterie board if they would like the food displayed a specific way.

“We [also] have poinsettias,” Bonnie said. She hopes the community will be willing to reach out if there’s a product they’re looking for. “I listened to whatever the community asked for. So if they have any order ideas, [they can] give us a shout,” she said.

But amidst all the changes, there is one thing at Jonny K’s that will remain the same. Bonnie says the stock remains fresh and local.

“Right now we got to go to the food terminal in Toronto for our produce, but ... there’s no middle man. We go there ourselves and get it and bring it to the market. We do not go through a warehouse,” Bonnie said. “[And] if it can be, it’s from Norfolk County.”

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Long Point Lions held Turkey Raffle

By John W. Krestel

The Long Point Lions were pleased with the dedicated crew of supporters at their 87th annual Turkey Raffle held November 30.

We had changed our date to a Saturday in November!

We are now going to go back to our long-time date of the first Friday in December. Nevertheless, the dabbers were a huge success and made the cleaning at the end of the evening go very quickly. All the turkeys and other prizes were well re-

ceived by the winners. Just remember to keep dabbing along!

Valley Heights Secondary School has several projects on the go, such as cheerleading and the football team, who are in need of new equipment now that

they have started up again. They sincerely would like all past football players to donate generously to the equipment fund. The Lions donated \$1,000 to help them out. Included in the list is also a breakfast program.

A \$400 donation was received from the Lynden Lions Club for Camp Dorset. This was for two of our Lions— Barb and Gary Eves—helping them out at the Rockton Fair.

There was a good turnout of Lions for the Remembrance Day Service held at Port Rowan Community Centre and the Cenotaph. Once again, the Royal Canadian Legion, Port Rowan Branch, turned out for a solemn, dignified day to remember our Veterans.

The Lions are once again reminded of all the good things that happened in our community this year. Let's hope that 2025 is even better.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Long Point Lions Club recently presented Lions Camp Dorset with \$5,200, the proceeds from the Tia & Tommy Concert in October. Shown, left to right, are Zone Chair Lion Barb Margeson, Lion Gary Eves, Camp Dorset manager Lion Jeremy Schumacher and Region Chair Lion Blair Oatman.

DABBERS REPLACED CORN KERNELS TO DELIGHT OF ORGANIZERS



Long Point Lions Club held another successful Turkey Raffle event on Saturday, Nov. 30. Pictured at left is the event chairman, Lion Gary Eves, showing his excitement that everyone was using dabbers this year instead of corn. He also thanked the community for coming out and supporting the Lions' endeavours. Those who attended were treated to giveaways including door prizes, meat draws and, of course, turkeys. Over 40 turkeys were given away. Several boxes of food, along with cash, were donated to the local food bank. Treats also included the many provided for sale at the canteen operated by the Long Point Lioness Lions. The air fryer shrimp were popular with many of those attending! If you are service-minded and would like to become more involved, contact any Lion and come out and see first hand what the club does. "Thanks again to our great community for your continued support," said Lion Gary.

Wendy Cridland named Long Point Basin Land Trust Executive Director

The Long Point Basin Land Trust (LPBLT) recently named Wendy Cridland as its new executive director.

Ms. Cridland has over 30 years of conservation expertise, including nearly two decades with the Nature Conservancy of Canada as Senior Director of Conservation.

A press release from LPBLT said, "Her extensive experience in land protection, habitat stewardship, and building conservation partnerships will advance LPBLT's mission."

"Working at Long Point Basin Land Trust is like coming home for me," Ms. Cridland said. "I am very excited to connect with local volunteers and supporters and to focus on protecting the incredible forests, wetlands, and grasslands that make this area so special."

She envisions strengthening partnerships with



Wendy Cridland

local communities, enhancing outreach to inspire the next generation of conservation leaders, and advancing strategic land protection to address biodiversity loss and climate change.

"Together, we can amplify our efforts and ensure that treasured natural areas continue to thrive for the species who depend on them," she shared.

Peter Carson, president of LPBLT's Board of Di-

rectors, added, "We are excited to welcome Wendy as our new executive director. Her exceptional leadership in conservation, combined with her deep connection to this region, makes her the ideal person to guide the Land Trust into an exciting future of expanded impact."

LPBLT extended its gratitude to Rick Levick, the outgoing executive director who recently retired, saying Mr. Levick played a pivotal role in growing the organization and expanding its portfolio of protected lands.

"With Wendy's leadership and a shared commitment to conservation, LPBLT looks forward to continuing its vital work of protecting and restoring natural habitats, ensuring they thrive now and for generations to come," the organization said.

LPBLT is a charitable

non-government organization founded in 1996 with a mission to protect and restore functioning ecosystems in the central Carolinian Region. This is accomplished through land ownership, land management, and nature stewardship. LPBLT currently protects 17 nature reserves, totalling 1,267 acres (513 hectares).

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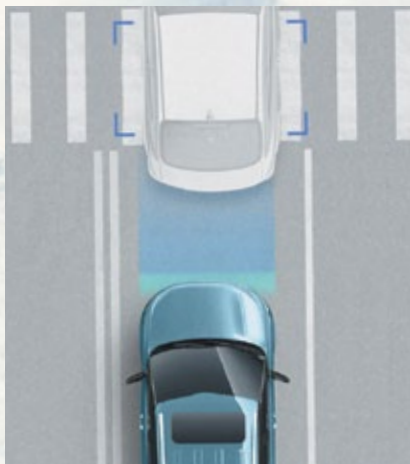
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Quick crackers

By MADALINE WILSON

The “wow treat” that’s quick & easy!

Here we go—crazy-time Christmas rush! The pressure to serve some “wow treat” when company’s on the way is common. Look in the cupboard... what to do? This is your answer — only four ingredients, looks smashing, tastes great, and it’s quick and easy!

Chocolate Cracker Treat

- 1 cup butter /margarine
- 1 cup white sugar
- Salted crackers
- 1 bag (300 g) milk chocolate chips

Line a cookie sheet with foil. (Can spray Pam, if you want.)

Place crackers touching in a rectangle with the salt side up.

In a pan over low heat, melt the sugar and butter until smooth.

KEEP AN EYE OUT, sugar can burn to carbon quickly.

Pour the chips over the crackers. As they start to melt, spread with a knife to smooth.

Want it Christmasy? Add sprinkles, crushed candy cane, dried fruit, (how about those edible silver BB gun bullets our grams had to break their teeth with?) Have fun.

Refrigerate until set then break into pieces; crumbs for the cook! Have the merriest Christmas; count our many blessings as we celebrate love, peace, and plenty.



By Inga Hinnerichsen

Earlier this month, Finland celebrated its independence day. This prompted me to write a Readers Digest version of its history. Lately, there has been a fair amount of publicity about this country, tucked into the north-eastern corner of Europe. North to south, Finland is 1,100 km long. The southern parts are on the same latitude as Whitehorse, Yukon! Despite this northern location, the climate is not as cold as you’d think. The warm Gulf Stream that crosses the Atlantic from the Caribbean up the Norwegian west coast has a warming influence on the climate. A traveller might enjoy anything from the northern lights, a visit to Santa’s village, tasting reindeer meat, going on an afternoon cruise in the islands of the Baltic Sea and exploring the now quite cosmopolitan capitol city of Helsinki.

Originally, the territory now known as Finland was a vast wilderness only populated by a few nomadic tribes. Nordic Vikings travelling east used the Gulf of Finland on their way to the Russian river systems. Finno-Ugric people from central Europe began to populate the south of the country, pushing the original nomads ever further north. They were the ancestors of the reindeer herders, the Lapps. In the early 1200s Catholic missionaries arrived from Sweden on the west. At the time Sweden was a

A brief history of Finland The happiest country on Earth



Helsinki waterfront market with the presidential official facilities and the Grand Cathedral in the background. Photo Google

mighty empire including large areas around the Baltic Sea. Sweden added the no-man’s-land, Finland, to its empire. This situation lasted nearly 600 years until the Napoleonic Wars in the early 1800s with France, Sweden, Russia and other European nations involved.

At the peace agreement in 1821, Sweden gifted the territory of Finland to the Russian Czar. It became the Czar’s personal property and he put a governor there to keep an eye on things. Note—Finland was never part of the Russian Empire or the USSR. The Finns never had to join the Russian army, but they had a duty to defend Russia against any enemy attack through Finland.

Then in 1917, the Bolshevik Revolution broke out in Russia. The Bolsheviks ousted the Czar and later murdered him and his entire family. With the

rightful owner of Finland gone, the Finns decided it was time to become independent. First it was decided that Finland would be a kingdom, like the neighbouring Sweden, Norway and Denmark. They had already selected a German prince to become the first king of Finland, but this nobleman declined the honour. Back to square one.

Plan B was to become a republic. So, on December 6, 1917, Finland declared independence as a new republic. The first president was Marshall Mannerheim, a highly decorated military officer. The president is elected by public vote for six years. He or she appoints a Prime Minister and other ministers holding various portfolios. The Parliament consists of 200 publicly elected members every four years. As many as nine different parties are represented in the Parliament. The Russians have always

had a thorn in their side about Finland. During WW1, WW2, and the Winter War in 1939, the Finns aligned with Germany against the Russians. As a result, the eastern border saw a few changes over the years.

Lately, Finland saw a new threat from the east with the war in Ukraine—they were afraid that they’d be next! They applied for membership in NATO, which was granted just recently. Today, Finland is a prosperous country enjoying a high standard of living. Health care and education are subsidized by the state. The school system is one of the best in the world. People are happy!

I’m planning a trip back to Finland next June. I haven’t seen my brother and his family and a couple of childhood friends for eight years. An old schoolmate of mine is organizing a 60-year reunion since our high school graduation. Time flies.

□ □ □

The Norfolk Field Naturalists continue their indoor presentations at the Simcoe Recreation Centre, Norfolk Room, every second Tuesday of the month. More upcoming field events will be posted on the Nature of Norfolk Facebook page closer to the dates. We welcome guests and new members to our events. Membership is very reasonable: \$20 for a single and \$30 for a family membership for a year. Updates will also be posted at www.norfolkfieldnaturalists.org. Stay tuned!

Help Birds Canada track birds this winter

As winter settles in, Canadians are once again taking part in Project FeederWatch, a citizen science initiative that helps scientists track bird populations across North America.

Running now through April 30, Project FeederWatch invites people of all ages and skill levels to contribute valuable data on winter bird abundance, a crucial tool for understanding how bird populations are faring during the colder months.

For the past 38 years, Project FeederWatch has provided essential insights into bird distribution and abundance dur-

ing winter—a critical time when many species face tough survival challenges.

The data gathered by participants helps scientists monitor long-term trends in bird populations.

“Winter is a vulnerable time for birds, and the data collected through Project FeederWatch is vital for understanding their survival strategies and the overall health of bird populations,” says Olivia Carvalho, Birds Canada’s program lead. “Every bird count helps us gain a clearer picture of how different species are coping with environmental changes.

This program is an incredible way for Canadians to learn backyard bird ID and make a direct impact on bird conservation efforts.”

Whether you have a bird feeder or simply enjoy watching birds, you can join the effort. Participants count birds in their backyards for as little as 15 minutes a week, recording their observations online or through the app.

This year, participants are also encouraged to report observations of mammals, sick birds, and any mental health benefits they experience from birdwatch-

ing as part of an ongoing study by Virginia Tech University.

Project FeederWatch is a joint program between Birds Canada and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, made possible with support from Armstrong Bird Food and Wild Birds Unlimited. It is through the dedication of thousands of volunteers across Canada and the United States and generous donations from supporters that Project FeederWatch is now in its 38th season.

To register, visit Birds Canada’s FeederWatch page and help ensure the continued success of this important initiative.

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Valley Heights Class of 2024

By Jessica Tulpin

The Valley Heights Class of 2024 gathered in the gym for their commencement ceremony on the evening of Friday, November 1. Graduates, decked out in cap and gown, crossed the stage to accept their diplomas and their hard-earned awards. Family and friends were present to witness the occasion.

Valedictorian Zoey Schultz opened the ceremony with a solo of the national anthem.

To close out the ceremony, Zoey gave a speech about the good, the challenging and the memorable moments of the class's time at Valley.

A time of refreshment followed in the cafeteria. Grads, staff members and families socialized around snacks and treats. The graduates took turns posing for photos in front of a special backdrop.

Port Rowan Good News congratulates the Class of 2024 and wishes them all the best in their future endeavours.

□ □ □

Following remarks by the school's principal, Alison High, graduates were introduced. Selecta honours those with an 80 per cent or above and the number indicates their high school year it was achieved.

Andrew Banman, Ontario Secondary School Diploma, Citizenship Award, Selecta 2, 3, 4, Canadian and International Law, Food and Nutrition, Introduction to Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology. **Ava Barham**, OSSD, Ontario Scholar, Barrett Services Bursary, G. Douglas Vallee Memorial Award, Michael Sinnaeve Scholarship, Ontario Power Generation Scholarship, Selecta 1, 2, 3, 4, Hospitality and Tourism. **Jake Bennett**, OSSD. **Logan Bennett-Fournier**, OSSD. **Joshua Biel**, OSSD, Selecta 4, Transportation Technology. **Jamie Block**, OSSD, Construction Engineering Technology. **Mady Block**, OSSD, Ontario Scholar, Living Hope Bible Church Bursary, Rotary Club of Simcoe Scholarship, Royal Canadian Legion Bursary, Stonkus Excellence Award, Selecta 1, 2, 3, 4, Healthy Active Living Education. **Jason Boese**, OSSD, Selecta 3, 4. **Lexy Bouck**, OSSD, Norfolk County Bursary, Soroptimist Visionary Award, Townsend Lumber Bursary, Selecta 3, 4. **Calie Boughner**, OSSD, Doerksen Country Store Bursary, Ed Zamecnik Memorial Bursary, Lou Kociuk Bursary, Charter Member, Port Rowan Firefighters' Association Bursary, Royal Canadian Legion Branch #379 Bursary, Healthy Active Living Education. **Alex Butler**, OSSD / SHSM, Selecta 2, 4.

Allen Carroll, OSSD. **Kyla Cassibo**, OSSD, Ontario Scholar, 1st Long Point Ladies' Ducks Unlimited Bursary, Langton Lion's Club Bursary, Langton Women's Institute Bursary, Martin Doerksen Memorial Agricultural Scholarship, Royal Canadian Legion Branch #379 Bursary, Three Great Lights No. 104 Lodge Memorial Bursary, Selecta 1, 2, 3, 4. **Calder Cleland**, OSSD, Construction Engineering Technology. **Matthew Coulombe**, OSSD, Selecta 1, 4. **Shay Cromwell**, OSSD.

Jesse De Witt, OSSD, Selecta 4. **Luke Dockx**, OSSD / SHSM, Ontario Scholar, Norfolk Auto Parts Award, Secondary School Award, Selecta 3, 4, Manufacturing Technology. **David Dyck**, OSSD, Student Excellence Award, Selecta 4. **Jenny Dyck**, OSSD.

Cara Ellwood, OSSD. **Devon Friesen**, OSSD. **Trudy Friesen**, OSSD. **Sarah George**, OSSD, Ontario Scholar, Long Point Lioness Club Bursary, Ontario Belgian Fair Association Bursary, Selecta 2, 3, 4, Core French. **Brady Godby**, OSSD, Selecta 4, Learning Strategies, Skills for Success in Secondary School. **Jennica Green**, OSSD, Long Point Lioness Club Bursary, Selecta 2, 3, 4. **Henry Guenther**, OSSD. **Isaak Harder**, Ontario Secondary School Certificate, Mathematics for Work and Everyday Life.

Kaitlyn Hecker, OSSD, Ontario Scholar, Governor Gener-

al's Academic Medal, VHSS - University Pathway Scholarship, Canadian Federation Of University Women Mabel O'Brian Scholarship, Nancy M. A. Miller Award, Selecta 1, 2, 3, 4, Visual Arts - Photography, Visual Arts, English, Core French, Challenge and Change in Society. **Gretje Heide**, OSSD. **Danny Hildebrandt**, OSSD. **Helena Hildebrandt**, OSSD, VHSS Workplace Pathway Scholarship, Selecta 4. **Aaron Horlings**, OSSD. **Riley Howick**, OSSD.

Adrian Janzen, OSSD, Selecta 4. **Dylan Kirr**, OSSD / SHSM, Hospitality and Tourism. **Elisabeth Klassen**, OSSD. **Isaac Klassen**, OSSD. **Junior Klassen**, OSSD. **Nellie Klassen**, OSSD. **Aaron Knelsen**, OSSD, Long Point Lions' Club Bursary, Sammy Cline Bursary, Selecta 1, 2, 4. **Alex Knelsen**, Ontario Secondary School Certificate. **Lisa Knelsen**, OSSD. **Laurens Kroneman**, OSSD.

Megan Lalonde, OSSD. **Brooklyn Mayo**, OSSD, Selecta 4. **Carley Mayo**, OSSD, Selecta 1, 2, 3, 4, Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course, English. **Eytan Mirie**, OSSD. **Justina Neufeld**, OSSD, Experiential Learning Bursary, Sandy Shore Farms Bursary, Student Excellence Award, Selecta 3, 4. **Noah Neufeld**, OSSD. **Everett Nichol**, OSSD, Sharon Elaine Sienko Memorial Award, Fairground Firefighter's Association Bursary, Royal Canadian Legion Branch #379 Bursary, Selecta 2, 3, 4, Foundations for College Mathematics, Mathematics for Work and Everyday Life.

Adea Oud, OSSD, Ontario Scholar, Courtland & District Lions' Club Bursary, Langton Catholic Women's League Bursary, Langton Women's Institute Bursary, Port Rowan Pharmasave Bursary, Royal Canadian Legion Branch #379 Bursary, Bilingual Certification. **Hailey Peters**, OSSD, Selecta 4. **Matthew Peters**, OSSD. **Yolanda Peters**, OSSD. **Logan Propper**, Certificate of Accomplishment.

Annika Reimer, OSSD, Ontario Scholar, Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes - Cremation & Burial Services Inc. Bursary, Norfolk Retired Teachers' Award, Walsingham Women's Institute Bursary, Core French - University Preparation, Bilingual Certification. **Ava Reimer**, Ontario Scholar, Lieutenant Governor's Community Volunteer Award, Don Krestel Memorial Scholarship, Royal Canadian Legion Branch #379 Bursary. **Dylan Reimer**, OSSD, Environment Club Award, Bear of the Week, Langton Firefighters' School Citizenship Award, Multicultural Heritage Association of Norfolk Bursary, Royal Canadian Legion Branch #379 Bursary, Stonkus Excellence Award, VHSS - Students' Council Bursary, Selecta 4, Challenge and Change in Society, Physics, Visual Arts - Photography.


Cody Schram, OSSD. **Zoey Schultz**, OSSD, Principal's Leadership Award, VHSS - Outstanding Student Award, Wanda & Scott Salverda Memorial Honouree, Bear of the Week, Chartwell's Dining Bursary, diverseABILITY Bursary, Muslim Association Student Recognition Award, Three Great Lights No. 104 Lodge Memorial Bursary, VHSS - Students' Council Bursary, Selecta 1, 2, 3, 4, Raising Healthy Children. **Mika St-amarria**, OSSD, Ontario Scholar, Langton Showtime Bursary, VHSS AMANDA - Award, Visual Arts, Bilingual Certification. **Slade Stewart**, OSSD / SHSM, McDonald Chapter - Order of the Star - Tillsonburg Bursary in Memory of Lillian Oatman, McDonald Chapter - Order of the Star - Tillsonburg, No. 166 Bursary, Michael Sinnaeve Scholarship, Neal Memorial United Church Women's Bursary, Transportation Technology. **Hailey Stilwell**, OSSD, McFarlan Rowlands Insurance Brokers Bursary. **Amy Suderman**, OSSD, Selecta 4.

Christina Teichroeb, OSSD. **Emilie Tulpin**, OSSD, Ontario Scholar, Selecta 1, 2, 3, 4. **Peter Unger**, OSSD. **Zack Vezina**, OSSD. **Avileah Wall**, OSSD. **Isabella Wall**, OSSD, Selecta 4, Visual Arts, Visual Arts - Photography. **Lisa Wall**, OSSD. **Brooklyn Ward**, OSSD. **Ri White**, OSSD, VHSS - College Pathway Scholarship, Selecta 1, 2, 3, 4, English - College Preparation, Foundations for College Mathematics. **Carolyn Wiens**, OSSD, Hospitality and Tourism. **Sam Wilson**, OSSD. **Jacob Wolf**, OSSD.

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Happy Birthday

Happy Birthday!



John and Mary Lou Krestel recently celebrated their 93rd birthdays!

They are still living it up with smiles, love and lots of laughter.

This photo was taken on Mary Lou's 93rd birthday enjoying the closing dinner of the Port Dover Yacht Club in October.

Keep sharing your lifetime of stories with your friends and loved ones as we all treasure them.

Best wishes from all your family and friends.

In Memory

In Memory of
William Kenline
and
Marie Kenline

The Ones We Love

The ones we love remain with us,
for love itself lives on,
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Because a loved one's gone... see,
The ones we love can never be
More than a thought apart,
For as long as there is a memory,
They'll live on in the Heart.

Lovingly missed by
Sandra and Guy
Ross and Nicole
Dave and Judy
and Families

Greetings



Canteen at Long Point Lions Turkey Draw with Lioness Sue Knighton, Annette Coderre, Laurette Lisabeth, and Lauren Nightingale .

Long Point Lioness Lions sponsor free skating Dec. 24

By Sue Green

2024 is quickly coming to a close as everyone is preparing for the Christmas and holiday season. The community has been very busy raising funds and working on ways to help those in need. The Club is very thankful for the community support and interest in their fundraising events. Every event organized by the Club raises funds to give back. The Long Point Lioness are working on their new year plans and look forward to a busy 2025.

The last Club dinner meeting took place on November 18 at The Country Fork. Special guests were Region Zone Chair Blair Oatman, Kelly Oatman, Bill Walker, Terry Flemming.

Recap of Events:

Tuesday, Nov. 19 – The Lioness Club was honoured with an invitation to the Port Rowan Public School Harvest Dinner. Lioness Eileen Bloomfield and Sue Green attended the dinner. It was a delicious meal and a fantastic display of the school's community spirit. The whole school attended the lunch—every class and student had a role to play, including the staff and parent volunteers. From buttering buns to preparing and slicing food, designing artwork, thank you cards, setting up and cleaning up the hall. The children were excited and so proud of their accomplishments. "It was heartwarming to see the senior students sitting with the little ones and helping them line up for the buffet and assisting while they ate." The Club is proud to support the school and thankful for the acknowledgement of our Club support.

Friday, Nov. 22 – The Lioness Club, attended the Port Rowan Farmers Holiday Market at Port Rowan



Lioness Sue Green and Eileen Bloomfield displaying thank you cards prepared by the students for the Harvest Dinner at Port Rowan Community Centre.

Community Centre. Lioness Deb Shaw and Sue Green displayed and sold the club cookbooks. This project was convened by Kendell Zajac and 250 cookbooks were printed and sold. Thank you to the community for their support. The club also extends a special thank you to the Port Rowan Farmers' Market for their support. The market is a wonderful venue for community support and a friendly gathering place for vendors, family, friends, and visitors.

Saturday, Nov. 30 – The Long Point Lioness Lions Club hosted the canteen at the A2 Long Point Lions Club Turkey Draw. This annual event is a fun evening of bingo to help raise funds for the local food bank and community needs. Convened by Lioness Sue Knighton and Christine Prentice, the Lioness Club served hot food, snacks and beverages while participants focused on dabbing their way for a chance to win a turkey for the holiday season.

Upcoming Events for Winter

Tuesday, Dec. 24 – Long Point Lioness Lions Club is sponsoring a Free Family Skate from noon to 1:00 p.m. at Langton Arena, 30 Albert Street. What a great way to burn off some of that Christmas energy for your family and friends.

The next cooking class will be in the new year, date to be determined. Chef Kendell & Chef Michael have a busy Christmas season and feel that an event in the new year will spice up the cool winter season.

The club has received approval for their 2025 raffle draw, details will be announced early in the new year.

Long Point Lioness Lions Club is a like-minded group of women who come together and find ways to serve our community. If you are new to the area or if you feel it is now time to be involved and give back, please contact Lioness Lynda Hendel, membership chair at 519-983-4319, or send a message through the club Facebook page "Long Point Lioness Lions Club" and one of the directors will respond to you.

The next regular dinner meeting for potential new members to attend is Monday, January 13, at 5:00 p.m. with dinner at 5:30 sharp followed by the meeting at 6:30 p.m. To reserve your seat to learn how you can serve, please contact any club member or reach out to Lioness Lynda Hendel.

The club wishes everyone a very Happy and Healthy Holiday. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



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ICE CRYSTALS SYNCHRONIZED SKATING

Langton Skating Club synchro teams, which skate under the name of Ice Crystals, held a short simulation skating evening to prepare for their first competition. In total, five teams skate for Langton in the following categories: Elementary, Star over 12, Star over 12 competitive and two adult-level teams. The teams will also skate at the club’s annual Gala showcase, happening December 20, at the Langton Arena beginning at 6 p.m.

'Tis the season: more families in need this holiday

By Madison Brazeau
VHSS Student Reporter

When the wind starts to chill and fat flakes flutter from the sky, people young and old begin the all too quick countdown to Christmas. For many, Christmas is a time to make memories that will be cherished forever and to spend time with those they love. For others, however, the holiday season can bring feelings of anxiety and dread and a question of how they will meet their families’ basic needs on top of gifts for their children. It is no surprise that life is expensive, but now more than ever we need to embody the season of giving to spread the holiday cheer.



Grade 12 students at Valley Heights with some of the collected canned food.

Over the past few years, as prices have increased, so has the number of people in need. Food, housing,

and basic needs costs keep rising. Lacking essentials for survival can influence mental health, wellbeing,

and children’s nutrition, health, and education.

It was estimated that in 2021, 12.5 per cent of individuals could not provide enough food for their families. This may not seem significant but in proportion to the estimated population of Canada this would indicate a significant number of people did not have enough food to feed their families. Along with this, there was a 24.5 per cent food insecurity rate in Ontario alone.

Food Banks Canada saw over two million people in March of 2024 which is the highest number in history. As we sit around our tables and this year, it is important to remember and appreciate all that we have, but also

to help support the many causes that help families in need.

In Norfolk County, we have five food banks, 14 thrift and secondhand stores, and two homeless shelters. These are all great resources to access for families in need, however, many don’t get the help they need. This can be for personal reasons, but many are afraid to access food banks or other resources because of stigma and guilt.

In a survey by Food Banks Canada, 54 per cent of people felt too ashamed to access food banks, 41 per cent were afraid of being unwelcome or judged, and 46 per cent felt that others needed it more than they did. There was a common

theme though with all the participants’ answers, it was that nobody else should feel ashamed for getting help. With this mindset we can encourage those in need to get help, and by removing judgement and the stigma of asking for help we can ensure families are well cared for.

This holiday season, the call goes out to help those in need. This can be donating to food banks, donating gifts or clothing for young children, or just providing a listening and non-judgmental ear to those in need. If you don’t have anything to spare, give the gift of compassion, respect, and kindness to make sure that everyone can understand the reason for the season.

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Santa Claus waves as he rolls through Langton in the annual Langton Lions Club Christmas parade held on Saturday, Dec. 14. Photos by Jessica Tulpin



Santa and Mrs. Claus had a good time visiting with residents at the Langton Community Centre after the Christmas parade on Saturday.



Norfolk County Mayor Amy Martin with Langton firefighters Jeff Hill, Andrew Dyck, Ryan Jamieson, and Mike Yeo at the Christmas parade.



Long's Lumber Atoms in the Christmas parade.



The parade had many floats and participants.

Port Rowan groups receive \$80,000 from Amplify Norfolk

The Long Point area will be the big winner for Amplify Norfolk grants next year.

Norfolk County councillors on Dec. 10 voted to give Long Point Country Chamber of Commerce \$40,000 to continue Sandpines Campfire Concert Series on June 28.

And Long Point Country Bayfest will get \$40,000 to create an annual community concert in celebration of Bayfest.

Port Dover Board of Trade in collaboration with Norfolk County Championship Wrestling received the \$20,000 grant to hold two live professional wrestling performances, a family friendly matinee and an evening show for teens and adults.

Next year will be Amplify Norfolk's second—and final—year offering matching grants to not-for-profit organizations to produce new live entertainment

events any time of the year, except the prime months of July and August.

The idea has been to cut risk for groups seeking to create permanent events that will boost tourism in Norfolk.

Amplify Norfolk has had a roller coaster ride over the years. In 2021, in what was then known as Project Microphone, council set aside \$375,000 for grants in 2021, 2022 and 2023. No grants were awarded in the first two years because of COVID.

In 2023, under the new name of Project Amplify, the county granted \$50,000 to the Norfolk Agricultural Society to start a Fairgrounds Festival in June and \$30,000 to Waterford's Old Town Hall and Waterford Lions to help with a Pumpkinfest concert in October.

In June 2024 councillors voted to discontinue the program. In

July they had second thoughts and, by a 5-4 vote, authorized a final year of grants for 2025.

Seven groups applied. At their meeting, councillors disqualified four of them for not meeting criteria.

Port Rowan Coun. Tom Masschaele defended the two top grants going to groups in the same corner of Norfolk. He said discussion shouldn't be ward versus ward. Either grants are worthwhile or they're not.

Delhi Coun. Mike Columbus was glad to see an end to Amplify Norfolk grants. "I hope it's buried," Coun. Columbus said.

Ironically, last Tuesday's committee meeting opened with celebration of Norfolk winning national marketing and provincial tourism awards. One award from the Economic Developers Association of Canada honoured Amplify Norfolk.

ST. WILLIAMS TOUR OF LIGHTS



Sparky said hello to the kids who attended the St. Williams Tour of Lights presented by the St. Williams Firefighters on Saturday, December 14. Seen here are Emmie and Jack with the famous fire dog. Photo by Jessica Tulpin

Merry Christmas

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