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The Highlander

Thursday **February 3 2022** | Issue 526

INSIDE: ICE RACES RETURN TO MINDEN PAGE 18

FREE



Blues Cruise hits 300

"I didn't think I'd see 300 but here we are," said Patrick Monaghan, smiling into the microphone at CanoeFM. The host of Buckslide Blues Cruise recorded his 300th show Jan. 25. He's been battling cancer. The award-winning show, in his words, is meant to keep "your toes tappin' and your eyes wide open." *The Highlander* will share more of Monaghan's story in next week's edition. (Sam Gillett).

Short-term rental review gets underway

By Lisa Gervais

The public will have its say on the County's short-term rental review via an upcoming survey and public consultations, the outside firm hired to do the review told councillors at a Jan. 26 meeting.

J.L. Richards & Associates (JLR), who are also involved in the shoreline preservation bylaw, have been hired at a cost of approximately \$60,000 to do the work.

They presented an overview of their plan to council last week. County director of

planning, Steve Stone, said the intent is to help the municipality develop a policy and regulations.

"County council previously identified the protection of its settlement and lakeside neighbourhoods as a significant policy area," Stone said.

JLR's Jason Ferrigan said "Haliburton County has a thriving short-term rental accommodation industry."

He said the experience here and across Ontario has been quite varied.

There is a concern that unregulated rentals

can work against affordable housing targets, because as housing stock is taken out of the supply, it puts upward pressure on housing prices for people looking to own or rent.

The flip side is short-term rentals benefit tourism in communities without a lot of hotels or motels.

There are also "quality of life concerns," according to the planner, for example nuisance and public safety complaints. He said owners of commercial rental establishments "quite rightly are looking to bring consistency to the regulatory

framework between them and the short-term rental accommodation providers."

Another issue is economics, he said, with people looking to rent to raise extra income.

Figuring out how regulating relates to official plans, zoning bylaws, the Ontario Building Code, fire code, noise and property standard bylaws is another challenge but, Ferrigan said, "there's some really interesting stuff coming out of some other communities in terms of

Continued 'Fears' on page 2

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Highlander news

Fears over damage from 'cash cow' rentals

Continued from page 1

how to best regulate those short-term rental accommodation opportunities.”

He said they'd do a technical literature review, look at what is being done elsewhere, “and engaging the community and councils ... to ensure we're providing the County council with the best-informed recommendation that we can.”

They've already identified some stakeholders and will be looking for feedback from the County on whom else they should talk to.

It's a three-phase process. They're starting to collect preliminary research and checking in with councils until the end of February.

In phase two (March to May), they plan to liaise with the public through two rounds of consultations. The first will be to gather the various perspectives. He said they'll use that to come up with a draft framework. They'll bring that to council, then go out to the community again.

The third phase gets into implementation, taking the project into June.

Warden Liz Danielsen said the most important thing for her is “fulsome” discussion, talking to as many people as possible to gain a full understanding of all sides of the issue.

“We want to see our economy enhanced. We also want to ensure that the lifestyle here that people wish to enjoy is protected.

We do have the issue of lack of housing in all sectors and it's challenging to see that the other, existing, accommodators are suffering as a result of some of the activity that has been going on. It's going to be a tough one.”

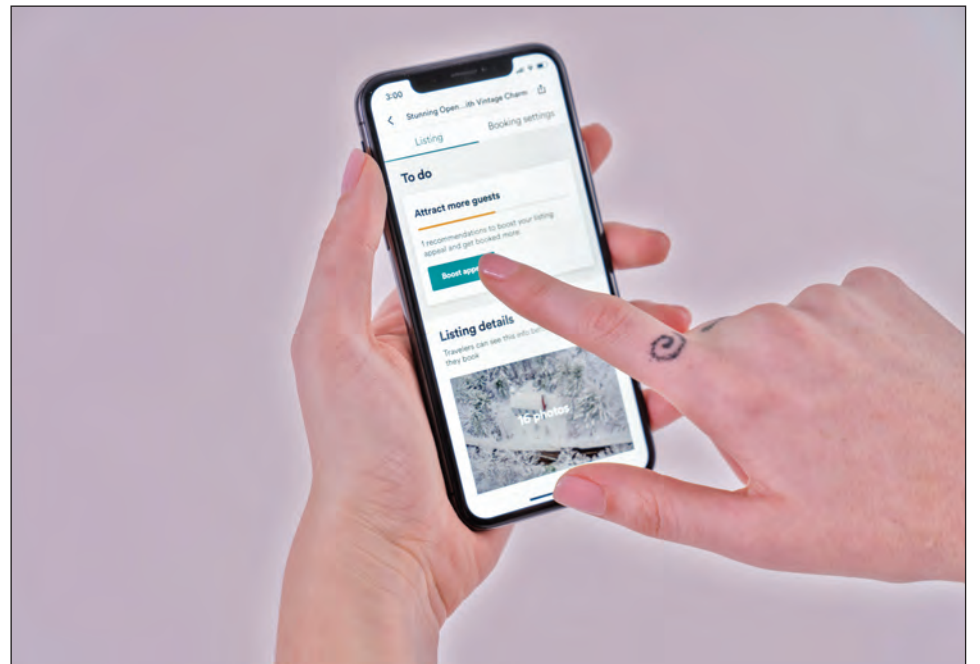
Councillors weigh in

Coun. Pat Kennedy asked if they would be looking into municipal accommodation taxes (MAT). That's when short-term rental operators must collect and remit a portion of rental revenues to the municipality. The City of Toronto, for example, has set its MAT at four per cent.

He added he is worried about the historical rental market the area has had for generations where people lease their cottage for two to three weeks a year to pay the taxes or put a new dock in or roof on, versus the recent commercialization of rental property.

Ferrigan said they will look into MAT and differentiating, perhaps, via the number of nights an accommodation can be rented.

Coun. Andrea Roberts said regulating the industry locally might not be as controversial as some people think since the lower-tier municipalities have been talking about it for years. She added there are local cottage rental agencies that are “for the most part supportive of something like this.”



The County has a thriving short-term rental accommodation industry. *quotecatalog.com*

In her opinion, a MAT tax is a good opportunity to help offset costs to provide infrastructure. She noted Whistler, Niagara Falls and the City of Toronto all have a MAT tax.

Coun. Carol Moffatt said while there are benefits to short-term rentals, her concern is “it's just turned into an unregulated cash cow” with long-term collateral damage.

Coun. Brent Devolin said while the issue is a potential “political minefield” council can't be “pansies.” He suggested looking at Tremblant, Blue Mountains and Whistler.

Coun. Dave Burton said the environment is first and foremost for him with septic, but also parking, and the ability to keep people safe.

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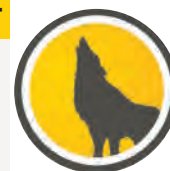
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MINDEN-HALIBURTON
HEARING SERVICE

Haliburton trucker makes trip to Ottawa

By Mike Baker

Walking along Wellington Street in Ottawa Jan. 30, Haliburton resident Kevin McColl said he saw lots of smiling faces and “good people pulling together for a great cause” as thousands of ‘Freedom Convoy’ protesters arrived in the nation’s capital.

McColl, who operates McColl’s Trucking and Logging, made the trip with friend, John McNeil. Together, the pair spent the day challenging vaccine mandates imposed by the federal and provincial governments.

While media reports from the event, which saw as many as 10,000 people attend, have been mostly negative, with images depicting protesters desecrating the National War Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and a statue of Terry Fox, McColl said his experiences were overwhelmingly positive.

“It was just the most amazing thing. I’ve never seen anything like it in all my life. I spent the whole day there and there were times that I just teared right up,” McColl said. “There’s always going to be a few people who spoil it, but from what I saw, and the people I spoke to, it was all very respectful.”

“The thing that upsets me, is all the negative stuff is being reported and talked about. But nobody shows, or is talking about the people cleaning up the statues, and cleaning the streets. There were many of us there doing that, too,” McColl added.

The convoy has received national attention in recent weeks. The event was

launched, initially, in protest of the federal government’s decision to reinstate COVID-19 vaccine requirements to re-enter the country by land as of Jan. 15. Prior to that, truck drivers and other essential workers had been exempt from the two-week quarantine for unvaccinated travellers crossing Canada’s borders.

While there were some in attendance who took exception to provincial regulations, such as Ontario’s latest lockdown and mandates stipulating certain workers must be vaccinated, McColl said his, and many others’ main gripe, was the border issue.

“It’s this new mandate that’s got everybody bent out of shape. I have no problem with masking. I have no problem with anybody who wants to get vaccinated. I’m not, and won’t be, but whoever wants to, that’s their choice,” McColl said. “The problem is when you lose your choice, you start to go down a slippery slope.”

Many people shared their personal stories, with McColl saying he heard from a nurse and former RCMP officer he said were forced to resign after refusing to be vaccinated.

McNeil said it was an emotional day for him being around so many likeminded people.

“People have had enough. We’re two years into this now, everybody just wants to have their freedom back,” McNeil said.

With protests continuing, McColl intends to return to Ottawa this weekend. This time, he wants to take his truck. As a show of solidarity standing alongside his fellow



Kevin McColl, owner of McColl’s Trucking and Logging, says his experiences participating in the ‘Freedom Convoy’ were overwhelmingly positive. *Submitted.*

truckers, McColl has decorated his vehicle with Canadian flags, something he says has been very well received in Haliburton.

“We’re not asking for much, we just want

to live. We want our businesses to operate,” McColl said. “People just want to get back to some sort of normal.”

Three people lucky to be alive despite no CO alarm

The Dysart fire department is reminding the public that smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are life-saving after three people were sent to hospital following an incident Jan. 27.

Fire chief Mike Iles said the department was paged out at 8:45 a.m. for three people possibly suffering side effects from exposure to carbon monoxide. He said when they got there, the three were outside but “very disoriented.” He said they were taken to Haliburton hospital but transferred

to a Toronto hospital where they spent a night.

“There was no working CO alarm within the residence. The three individuals were fortunate enough to have an alarm clock wake them up, or they might have succumbed to the presence of the carbon monoxide,” Iles said on Feb. 1.

He asked the public to ensure their residence, house trailer, hunting camp, cottage, “anywhere there is sleeping accommodation” have smoke alarms and

any required carbon monoxide alarms.

“It is the law and it is life saving. Please don’t become a statistic because you failed to install or inspect your smoke and CO alarms.”

As a minimum, Iles said, the fire code states that there must be a smoke alarm placed outside of every sleeping area and on every floor. Carbon monoxide alarms must be placed outside of every sleeping area, if there is fuel burning appliances (wood stoves, oil furnaces, propane

furnace/fridge/stove/hot water heaters etc.) or an attached garage.

He further advised that people only use heating appliances that are approved for indoor use. Portable heaters, unless electric, are typically not approved for indoor use. Propane cook stoves and ovens are not an approved heating source. They are designed for limited, short duration use. (Lisa Gervais).

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Highlander news

Minden roads study calls for 123 kms of fixes

By Sam Gillett

Minden Hills' 2021 Roads Needs Study suggests nearly half of the township's 278-kilometre road system needs work.

Tatham Engineering, a firm tasked with studying the area's road usage and conditions, provided two scenarios for future investments.

Total improvements to the road system could mean pulverizing and resurfacing or surface treating certain roads, while reconstructing others that are in the worst shape, for an estimated \$30 million over the next 10 years.

An alternative scenario could see more roads pulverized and resurfaced, rather than reconstructed, for a cost of about \$19.6 million.

Of the township's 21 kilometres of asphalt roads, 21 per cent are considered poor, along with 36 per cent of the area's surface-treated roads and 17 per cent of gravel roads.

The study was presented to council Jan. 27 for councillors to get a background on the shape of Minden's roads before upcoming budget talks. Staff will also consider a roads usage report, detailing an average amount of traffic on each road. Tatham Engineering recommended traffic volume, road condition, time of need, cost of improvement and work schedule to direct which roads are prioritized.

"I think it's important for [council] to have the same guidance as me as we work through the budget process," said acting director of public works Tara Stephens. "The next step for us as staff is to provide the simplified report."

Mayor Brent Devolin said the extent and cost of roads maintenance shows municipalities, that shoulder the full cost, need more help.

"We can only carry this burden on a certain extent on land-based taxation," he



A new study into Minden Hills roads showcases the necessity for fixes on roads such as Beer Lake Road outside the village. *File*

said. "There's no way on a municipal tax base that this can ever be paid for."

Needs-based water work

A performance-based review of Minden's water and wastewater systems predicts a boost in annual spending. Sixty per cent of Minden's infrastructure is considered "fair", meaning it has issues but is working. Ten per cent is "poor", meaning it needs further spending, and 30 per cent is in good working order.

"Now we're moving to a performance versus aged based spending approach," said Nick Larson of the Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA), tasked with evaluating Minden's systems.

OCWA predicts Minden Hills needs to spend more on water systems each year. Average past spending of \$122,000 on water infrastructure will need to rise to \$135,000, and current wastewater spending of \$93,000 will eventually need to rise to \$160,000.

"These are actually a lot smaller than what you'd see in an asset management plan if

you did an age-based forecast," said Larson. OCWA is preparing a rate study, which will show how much residents could expect to pay for water in the area to fund the water system's repairs and capital projects.

Larson said evaluating the growing population of an area is key, along with determining how new developments can fit onto existing water systems. "It's about optimizing the use of your existing infrastructure so you can have more ratepayers pay for the same quantity," Larson said.

INFORMATION PAGE

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(Virtual) Council Meetings

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted virtually via web conference meetings, until further notice. Meetings begin at 9:00 AM unless otherwise noted. The schedule of upcoming meetings are:

February 10 – Regular Council Meeting

February 24 – Regular Council Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by joining a live-stream link available on the township website at www.mindenhills.ca/council/ or by using the direct link provided in the notice. Meeting agendas are not displayed during the meeting, please download by visiting our website at www.mindenhills.ca/council/.

Please note the live-stream link provided for each meeting will only be activated while Council is in session.

Highlander news



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County could be one-stop shop for resources

By Lisa Gervais

According to the authors of the County's new community safety and well-being plan, the population of the Highlands is growing faster than the provincial average. We're also older, not quite as educated, have higher unemployment, food security issues and are poorer. We're challenged by a lack of affordable housing and, while crimes against people is trending down, property crime is going up.

The snapshot, as taken from the 2016 Census, is likely to change as the new Census rolls out later this month. However, it forms the basis of the "living" plan Strategy Corp. presented to County council Jan. 26.

Warden Liz Danielsen said, "This has been an important project for us all and it's been a long time coming for us all."

The County plans to hire a "navigator" to shepherd implementing the plan's goals over the remainder of 2022.

Strategy's Corp's Lauren Wyman said they began their work in April 2021, meeting with community service providers and liaising with the public about crime and socioeconomic issues.

They found housing and homelessness, poverty and employment, mental health, substance use and addiction and healthcare and system access were the main themes.

"The purpose of the plan is to offer strategic direction and priorities for the County to improve community safety and well-being," Wyman said.

She added it is about proactive approaches, such as breaking down silos and identifying risks while still taking advantage of "what is so great about the community and the County."

For example, a concrete action on housing and homelessness could be developing a

housing website that builds on existing platforms or sites to centralize information on housing providers, statistics on housing and homelessness and information on how to access housing, including applications and other documents, she said.

Coun. Carol Moffatt said the plan was a "tremendous opportunity for the County to have the portal, or one-stop clearing shop" for resources, as an example. Coun. Pam Sayne said the County of Renfrew has a good resource. "I think the models are out there. I'm very excited about that."

There are numerous strategies within the plan. With poverty and employment, one is working with potential employers, and training institutions, to develop employment and training placement programs for low-income groups and individuals.

With mental health, substance use and addictions, it was noted there are not enough resources in the County and the problem requires outreach. A permanent virtual care clinic was discussed as was utilizing people with lived experience.

With health care and system access, Coun. Bob Carter noted that many residents can't get a primary care provider.

It was also noted that the challenges often overlap.

Coun. Andrea Roberts said, "Everything's interconnected ... I can't afford daycare because I don't have a job, but then I have a job but it doesn't make enough money to afford a car, so it's transportation. So, I think that's why having a plan like this, with all the different players at the table, is going to be really valuable for our community."

Coun. Brent Devolin said there are already strong community resources, for example, the poverty reduction roundtable, which he said "have been doing a lot of this work kind of on the margins. They didn't have



Property crime is up in the Highlands, while crime against people is on the decline. *File.*

official stature or authority, but with a new mechanism in the community safety and well-being plan, somewhere all of this work, which has been going on for a long-time, can be plugged into. They've [the poverty reduction roundtable] had thoughts, and have been looking for a mechanism to move forward."

Moffatt said the public might want to know who is paying, and while the County

is budgeting for the navigator, she said it will come down to lobbying upper levels of government for human and financial resources.

CAO Mike Rutter said next steps include forming a steering committee and an advisory table and each target area will also have subcommittees. He added the plan must first be distributed to the lower-tier governments for their approval.

COUNTY OF HALIBURTON NEWS

Land acknowledgement

The County now has a land acknowledgement that will be read prior to the start of council meetings.

Last summer, council directed staff to research and develop a draft statement for consideration.

CAO Mike Rutter said staff from the County and local municipalities attended a cross-cultural environmental awareness training session where they collected a number of resource materials. Other sources included *The History of Indigenous Habitation in Haliburton County*. In addition, staff consulted with other local municipalities to ensure the County statement reflected the findings in their research. He credited Algonquin Highlands communication coordinator Chad Ingram for most of the work.

The County forms part of the lands covered by the Williams Treaty, so Rutter said staff were recommending the land acknowledgement developed by Curve Lake First Nation form the basis of their statement. It also recognizes being part of

the Algonquin Land Claim.

The statement reads: "We respectfully acknowledge that the County of Haliburton is located on Treaty 20 Michi Saagiig territory, and in the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Nations, collectively known as the Williams Treaties First Nations, which are Curve Lake, Rama, Hiawatha, Alderville, Scugog Island, Beausoleil and Georgina Island First Nations. We acknowledge a shared presence of Indigenous nations throughout the area, and recognize its original, Indigenous inhabitants as the stewards of its lands and waters since time immemorial."

Councillors to get pay hike

The pay for the position of County of Haliburton warden will see a substantial increase in 2022, while all other councillor salaries are going up.

The warden will see a bump to \$44,114.73 in 2022, up from \$32,961 in 2021. However, CAO Mike Rutter said this

was "considerably less than the median" of \$63,011 when compared to other municipalities.

The staff recommendation came after the County's compensation consultant performed a market survey as part of a pay equity and job evaluation project. They compared themselves to places such as Peterborough County, Muskoka, Huron, Middlesex, and Renfrew.

The deputy warden (Coun. Dave Burton was acclaimed at the Jan. 26 meeting) will get \$19,687.61 - about \$1,500 on top of a councillor salary - and councillors \$18,161.36. Council members' remuneration was approximately \$14,250 in 2021. The median was \$17,849.

Centre Lake update

An application by Granite Shore, for a plan of subdivision/condominium project for Centre Lake in Highlands East, is now before the County of Haliburton.

Director of planning Steve Stone said during a Jan. 26 meeting they received a complete application for the seasonal

cottage and tourist commercial resort as of Jan. 12.

The County is the approval authority. Stone said a copy of the application and draft plan has been circulated to interested agencies and parties for their review and comment, expected back by March 28, with a statutory public meeting so far scheduled for April 27.

Stone said they'd also received notification from the Ministry of Northern Development, Natural Resources and Forestry about the proponent's wish for the disposition of a 200-foot Crown Reserve on the lake. The ministry is seeking County comment.

Council voted to defer taking a position on that "until such time as it has fulsomely evaluated the merits of the plan of subdivision/condominium."

On June 22, 2021, Highlands East resolved not to support the approval. Highlands East is a commenting agency to the County.

(County of Haliburton news compiled by Lisa Gervais).

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Report a 'strategy plan' for rural futures

By Sam Gillett

An action plan from the Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) could influence provincial decisions impacting Haliburton County's housing stock, workforce and development possibilities.

Released Jan. 24, *Opportunities for Rural Ontario in a Post-COVID World* is an 84-page "action plan" that digs into five themes they say are shaping life in rural Ontario.

"It's kind of like a strategy plan," said Coun. Pam Sayne of Minden Hills, who sits on the board.

"It's where we can stay on one page, and stay focused on what we want to accomplish based on what the ROMA mandate is."

The five themes include digital connectivity, housing affordability, access to services, workforce development and efficient growth of rural areas.

They emerged after consultation with municipal leaders and stakeholders across the province, who listed each theme as a key concern.

The report acknowledges that these themes are interdependent. For example, workforce development hinges on housing affordability. In the Highlands, some restaurants and Haliburton Highlands Health Services have cited housing as a barrier to finding sufficient staff.

Beyond laying out themes, ROMA said it will "engage with municipalities, the province and key stakeholders" to implement 23 recommendations.

For example, ROMA plans to "advocate with the province for review of the Provincial Policy Statement... to ensure that the legitimate development aspirations

of rural Ontario are not constrained by outmoded views of the economic and social potential of rural Ontario."

That could result in a push towards mixed-use developments in villages such as Minden or Haliburton, alongside a rethink of municipal zoning restrictions that don't permit tiny homes or basement suites.

ROMA can't create provincial policies. But similar to a municipal committee advising council members, ROMA has the ear of provincial and municipal leaders. Multiple mayors and County council members attended the ROMA annual conference when the action plan was presented, and Premier Doug Ford spoke at the virtual event.

A 'breath of fresh air'

Sayne said short-term rentals have been an "increasing problem" in Haliburton County that she's eager to work with the ROMA board on.

Specifically, she said addressing short-term rentals also means addressing a County-wide affordable housing shortage.

ROMA's action plan states that members could offer insight "on the ripple effects of the forces affecting urban housing markets on rural housing markets."

Sayne said short-term rentals are tied up with housing stock in the County, when it's profitable to sell houses or rent them on sites such as Airbnb instead of hosting tenants.

"New families and seniors are losing their housing," she said. "People have a rental place and all of a sudden when the housing market changed and they could sell off that asset and still be comfortable for retirement, we lost the housing stock in that process."



An 84-page "action plan" from ROMA lays out 23 recommendations that could impact communities like Haliburton. Photo by Sam Gillett.

She said solutions could include changing zoning and building policies, likely through research and advocacy on the part of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, an umbrella association which includes ROMA.

Since joining the board, Sayne said it's been "a breath of fresh air" to work alongside other municipal representatives across Ontario advocating for issues that will impact Minden Hills.

The ROMA board represents a wide

variety of rural regions. Sayne said collaboration increases the likelihood they'll be able to find solutions.

"When that happens you have a stronger analysis of what's going on."

ROMA is hosting a "teeny-tiny summit" March 22 that's open to the public, where speakers will chat about the report's findings.

To register: roma.on.ca/learning/events/teeny-tiny-summit-1v

To read the action plan visit roma.on.ca

MINDEN HILLS NEWS

Minden arena reopens

The S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena reopened at 50 per cent capacity Jan. 31.

Anyone heading to the arena must pre-book and pre-pay for their activity, by calling 705-286-1260 x 552. Walk-in visits are allowed but space isn't guaranteed.

Entry to the Minden arena will require an enhanced QR code vaccine certificate once facilities reopen, said director of community services Craig Belfry.

A QR code can be downloaded through the provincial booking system and presented on your phone or on a piece of paper. Staff will check it with a scanner. Those with medical clearance can download a QR certificate two, to show a medical exemption.

Insurance costs spiking

Minden Hills will see a 13 per cent premium increase in the township's insurance.

At a Jan. 28 meeting of council, March Insurance explained how insurance rates globally are high due to low interest rates, increasing risk of legal action, and increasing risk of repairs along with a host

of other reasons.

Municipal liability premium increased 19 per cent, so did user group liability (10 per cent), property breakdown (8.4 per cent) and volunteer firefighters accident insurance (2.9 per cent).

Mayor Brent Devolin acknowledged the costs are "beyond the power of insurers, their agents and municipalities."

Council will receive cost estimates for 2022 insurance rates at upcoming budget talks.

Scytl tackles election

Scytl Canada, an internet voting company, will handle web-based and telephone voting for the township's 2022 election.

It will cost \$2.75 plus HST per voter. For comparison, it would have cost approximately \$10,331.75 if implemented in the 2018 election.

Devolin said awarding Scytl the tender, in partnership with the other three municipalities holding an election at the same time, was a positive step.

"I could not be more ecstatic," Devolin said. (*Minden Hills news compiled by Sam Gillett*).



The SG Nesbitt arena reopened Jan. 31. File.

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Anti-mask protest at Minden school

By Mike Baker

Four community members participated in an anti-masking rally at Archie Stouffer Elementary School Jan. 31 following an alleged incident where a student was sent home after refusing to wear a mask during class.

Gerda Hammond, Denise LeBlanc, Gina Atkinson and Doug Smith said they felt compelled to attend the protest after hearing about the alleged incident on social media.

Gathering in front of the school prior to morning drop-off, the quartet handed out leaflets to parents discouraging the use of masks.

“Get the masks off our children, that’s the message we’re spreading here today,” Hammond said. “You would never put a mask on a healthy child until this pandemic ... It’s not healthy. It doesn’t stop you from getting sick. Enough already.”

According to Health Canada, properly worn non-medical masks can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 from an infected wearer to others. They can also help prevent the wearer from being exposed to the infectious respiratory particles of others.

There was a police presence at the event, with two OPP cruisers observing from the school’s parking lot.

LeBlanc said she and Atkinson have participated in several pandemic-related rallies in recent months, including in Peterborough, Whitby, Toronto, Bracebridge and Huntsville. She noted her motivations are clear: to set an example for her family, and stand up for what she believes in.

“Right now, I believe that COVID is over. There’s absolutely no reason for any measures,” she said.

Public Health Ontario reported 3,043 new cases of COVID-19 on Jan. 31, while further data shows there are 3,091 individuals currently admitted in hospital testing positive, with 568 individuals in the ICU.

Trillium Lakelands District School Board would not comment on the alleged incident. Hammond claims the student has a medical exemption granting her permission not to wear a mask. The student’s parents could not be reached for comment.



Gerda Hammond, Gina Atkinson, Denise LeBlanc and Doug Smith handed out leaflets condemning masking at Archie Stouffer Jan. 31. Photo by Mike Baker.

Carolynne Bull, TLDSB manager of communications, said the board has strict policies regarding student masking.

“If a student refuses to wear a mask, they are asked to go home and/or the parents/guardians are called to pick up their student. In the event a student is refusing to wear a mask and the parents refuse to pick the student up, CAS would then be called,” Bull said.

She clarified that any request for an exemption is evaluated by school principals in consultation with a board superintendent. For a request to be considered, it must include a medical note, medical diagnosis,

or IPRC identification.

Atkinson says she hates the division the different COVID-related mandates and safety measures have created, saying she’s seen family and long-time friends turn against one another over the past two years. The pandemic has been especially difficult for her, as she’s had to watch her special needs daughter suffer after being “ostracized” from various community programs due to being unvaccinated.

“I think it’s important that we do things like this. Even if it’s just reaching one person a time... That’s why I’m here. To offer another perspective,” she said.



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TOWNSHIP NEWS

Hazardous waste events 'important'

Algonquin Highlands will spend an additional \$10,000 in 2022 maintaining five household hazardous waste collection events at municipal landfills.

Township staff worked with officials from Minden Hills, Highlands East and Dysart to develop an RFP for collective events across Haliburton County this year. Environmental coordinator Melissa Murray was unsure why costs had spiked so much, up to \$2,500 per event from \$1,200 in 2021.

“It’s hard to say whether it’s because of changes in the times, or any influence by combining the four municipalities together,” Murray said.

She suggested the municipality could

reduce the number of events it holds given that, due to the inter-municipal agreement, residents would be able to dispose of waste at other events held throughout the County. Council was not receptive to this idea.

“I think a lot of stuff would go into our landfill rather than people going somewhere else,” said Coun. Jennifer Dailloux.

Items that are corrosive, flammable, explosive or poisonous are considered household hazardous waste.

Events will be held from 1 to 5 p.m. on: May 21 at Maple Lake landfill, June 25 at Dorset Transfer Station, Aug. 6 at Oxtongue Lake landfill, Sept. 10 at Dorset Transfer Station and Oct. 8 at Maple Lake landfill. Materials will be accepted from households only, no commercial or industrial waste accepted.

Dysart Library temporarily closed

The Dysart branch of the Haliburton County Public Library is closed due to damage caused by frozen pipes in the facility’s septic system.

The library and administration centre will be closed until further notice.

Minden Hills and Wilberforce branches are open at 50 per cent capacity, with curbside pickup by request and computer use available.

Cardiff, Gooderham and Highland Grove are open for curbside pickup only. Holds can be requested online, over the phone, or via email. (Township news compiled by Mike Baker and Sam Gillett).

Editorial opinion

TheHighlander

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To tell the story of Haliburton County each week.

To be a source of information and inspiration through stories and ideas.

To report on issues, people and events important to the community.

To reflect and promote pride in the culture, people and landscape of The Highlands.

To encourage Highlanders to believe in themselves, in our community, and in their power to make our place in the world better every day.

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More police transparency



By Lisa Gervais

Raise your hand if you've heard about CPAC in Haliburton County?

I'd hazard a guess that many of you haven't.

It stands for the community policing advisory committee. Comprising the OPP detachment commander and the mayors of Algonquin Highlands, Dysart et al, Highlands East and Minden Hills, it had been in operation for a number of years.

That is until the Community Safety and Police Act in 2019, with the province advising municipalities they have until June 7, 2022 to determine what a new board will look like for their detachment areas.

It's all part of the new community safety and well-being plan that was presented to County councillors at a Jan. 26 meeting.

While the issue of a detachment board seemed like a minor add-on to the two-plus-hour meeting, it is an important one.

The initial recommendation was for a seven-person board, comprising the County warden, four mayors, a provincial appointment and one member of the public appointed by the County.

Minden Hills Coun. Pam Sayne commented that with five politicians out of seven places, it was top heavy. She also felt it important to have at least two members of the public so the one would not feel isolated.

Coun. Carol Moffatt, who deserves credit for her role on CPAC and the community

safety and well-being plan, defended the five-councillor representation. She argued the municipalities pay for policing so should carry the vote. Carefully choosing her words, she said well-meaning community members may make a decision that could cost the townships a lot of money, for example.

With all due respect to Coun. Moffatt, it is the taxpayers that foot the OPP bill.

She also said she feels citizen board members might not understand the complexity of the job, and is worried about the sensitivity of privacy concerns.

With that logic, one could infer that public members of the committee of adjustments, for example, could be disclosing confidential details about land transactions. We don't think that's happening.

In the end, the County opted for a board comprising the warden, mayors or designate, a County public appointee and a provincial appointee.

Sayne said she expected reports back from the board to council meetings.

CPAC members have done that in the past. At least Moffatt has to Algonquin Highlands. But, again, with all due respect, they are not detailed reports.

In the same manner, despite the press making the request, CPAC meetings have not been open to us in the past. The press can attend library board meetings, for example, but not CPAC. That is a concern.

And as a result, the public is largely left in the dark about what is going on with policing in the County.

We get that some things have to be private, such as a pending drug raid, but the public has a right to know things such as crime statistics, or worrying trends.

After all, these boards are there to provide civilian oversight.

The five-member police services board for the City of Kawartha Lakes Police Services is a good example. While not the OPP but a municipal force, they meet publicly once a month.

There are only two councillors, Mayor Andy Letham and Coun. Pat O'Reilly. The council appointee is a former police inspector, Don Thomas, who chairs the board. The two other civilians are long-time volunteer Wanda Percival and Valmay Barkey, who used to head up Community Care Health and Support Services (provincial appointees). They're not top heavy. They make good decisions.

The lower-tier municipalities must still approve the composition of the new board but one thing we do demand is greater transparency.

COVID CORNER

Endemic far from harmless

Fully-armed with our tools, we can beat the virus, agree the experts. But if we slack off, become complacent, let the virus spread, then it will do what it lives to do: replicate, find ways to evade our immunity, become faster and more unpredictable. Virologists caution that a more transmissible virus is not necessarily less dangerous.

Whether or not a virus becomes endemic, epidemic or pandemic depends on society's behaviour, public health policies and ability to control outbreaks. And if a virus becomes endemic that doesn't mean it is stable or harmless. Influenza is endemic but has seasonal peaks and occasional variations that cause dangerous outbreaks (H1N1). COVID variants Alpha, Beta and Delta resulted in increased hospitalizations and deaths, suggesting an evolution to milder versions is wishful thinking.

The four coronavirus strains that have been long-time endemic in humans (common cold) show how a virus' evolution increases its virulence. Blood samples from people taken in the 1980s contained high levels of antibodies against a 1984 version of coronavirus 229E. But when these antibodies were tested against the later, 1990s version of this same virus, they were less able to neutralize it. And they were far less effective against 229E variants from the 2000s and 2010s. Blood samples from the 1990s showed people had immunity to previous viruses, but not to those from the

future. Immunologists and biologists tell us the viruses are evolving to evade immunity, ensuring their survival.

The Alpha variant of SARS-CoV-2 that appeared in the UK in November 2020 spread at least 50 per cent faster than earlier lineages. Tracking the variants of concern has identified factors that cause some to die off and others to accelerate. In some cases, super spreader events were linked to viral evolution; large numbers of infected people allow the virus to flourish.

All three virus mutations were more infectious than the strains that preceded them. And then came Omicron, highly-mutated and able to rapidly spread through populations, it found a way to dodge human immunity.

"A vaccine is the most sure-fire protection you can get. By a lot," says Andy Slavitt, former senior advisor for COVID response in the Biden administration. In agreement is professor of viral evolution and genomics at Oxford university, Aris Katzourakis, who advocates for global use of our "formidable weapons": effective vaccines, antiviral medications, diagnostic swabs, improved mask wearing, distancing, plus air ventilation and filtration. He argues for better global vaccine equity and investment in vaccines that protect more broadly against variants. He is thinking ahead.

What do we know? No tool works perfectly but combined, their value

increases. Boosters wane, but data show the current booster is 90 per cent effective at preventing hospitalization.

(We can expect Omicron-specific vaccines coming in March. Vaccines for infants and toddlers are anticipated in June). At-home tests may not detect early illness, but their availability means diagnosis is early enough to ensure eligibility for antivirals. In April, we are told there will be enough antivirals for millions of patients. Masks that don't fit don't work. It is recommended to abandon cloth masks (unless four layers with a secure seal) in favor of layered medical masks or (K)N95s.

Combining the tools, used properly, plus proper ventilation, make most activities doable.

The virus is in many animal species. It proved uncontrollable on mink farms where animals are crowded in the thousands. It escapes with them to wild animals - skunks, deer, rodents - and it cycles back to humans. They call this "spillover" and spillover pathogens are considered more dangerous as the virus creates entirely new ways to evade our defenses. We need our tools to beat this.



By Dr. Nell Thomas

Editorial opinion

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Lottie, at the back, and Jacob Clark fly down the hill while tobogganing this past weekend in the Highlands. Submitted by Marci Mandel.

LETTERS

Kudos to good Samaritans

Dear editor,

It is with a grateful heart and much appreciation that I extend my heartfelt thanks to Amy, Linda and Carter.

They came to my aid after a fall in the Valu Mart parking lot on January 21.

Amy and Linda assessed the situation and helped me to my feet and into the car.

Carter transferred the groceries from the cart into the vehicle.

The only part that was bruised was my ego.

Thank you again for your kindness to one in need of help.

Barbara Kaasalainen

Why protest now?

Dear editor,

This fill-in beside the rail trail has been an ongoing thing for well over 20 years, just look at all that nice lawn that used to be

swamp land.

So, why have these people waited until now to start to complain about it? Is it because the family put their home with the nice lawn that the deer love to graze on up for sale?

Don Outram
Tory Hill

Farewell, Ms. Vicki

Dear editor

I enthusiastically confirm Sandre Daoust's lovely comments about Vicki Fraser.

Indeed, she was a great asset for the patrons of the library system.

Since my move to Haliburton 27 years ago, she supported my many reading needs with cheerful competence.

When I was ill or couldn't drive, she could be counted on to choose books for me which were always spot on.

Many heartfelt good wishes for many rewarding book and crochet-filled fun days into the future. Be assured, Vicki, you

made a difference through your work and personality. You will be very much missed. Thank you.

Margery Cartwright
Dysart et al

Worried about a home equity tax

Dear editor,

If you have not heard, CMHC has been developing a possible home equity tax to the panic and fear of many Canadians.

Although the federal government refuted these claims and rejected the idea altogether one would have to wonder why there was no public awareness and presentation provided to Canadians.

Such a tax based on the net equity upon the sale of your home would have an impact on one's ability to purchase another home. Many people use their acquired equity to assist towards their retirement.

It almost sounds somewhat like a capital gains tax on your principal residence. The

federal government then paid academics at the University of British Columbia to produce a study that recommends a surtax on the value of your home. The academics suggest a surtax of 0.5 per cent per year on the value of a home above \$1 million. If you're an average homeowner that could mean a bill of about \$1,000 per year and could grow until you sell making such a tax come due upon the sale. There is really no difference between what CMHC is proposing and the academics at the University of British Columbia, both with federal government influence.

It is imperative homeowners and Canadians fight against such an attempt to ruin what one works so hard for in order to provide a reasonable lifestyle upon one's retirement. If we don't speak up now it will be too late once the federal government gets its claws on such an idea.

It is really time for a change in federal leadership.

Beverly MacDuff
Gooderham

Highlander health

7020 PEOPLE

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Vaccine clinic walk-ins open to all

By Sam Gillett

Anyone five years old and up can get a vaccine between 1-4:30 p.m. at the Minden arena without a prior appointment.

Clinics are scheduled Feb. 3, 4, 10 and 17. Walk-in appointments on Feb. 10 and 17 are open until 4 p.m.

"This is a natural progression to make COVID-19 vaccines more available and accessible," said HKPR District Health Unit medical officer of health Dr. Natalie Bocking. "We know vaccines, especially booster doses, provide excellent protection against COVID-19 and reduce the risk of serious illness and hospitalization. That is why we encourage anyone still waiting for a dose to walk in, or make an appointment, to get their shot."

As of Jan. 26, the health unit reports 53 per cent of the region's adult population is triple-vaccinated.

At a media information session Jan. 26, Dr. Bocking said the increase in vaccine clinic availability is due to increased space at the clinics. That's a contrast to early December when some Haliburton residents reported difficulty finding a booster shot appointment date before February.

Forty-nine per cent of HKPR residents admitted to hospital since Jan. 1 have not received any vaccinations.

However, since only 10-15 per cent of the population has not received at least one shot, the statistic shows a drastically higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 for



Walk-in appointments are now available at the Minden arena for anyone 18 and older. *File*

those unvaccinated.

"To be fully protected right now we need individuals to receive their booster dose when available," said Dr. Bocking.

You can also book an appointment through the provincial booking site at covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/.

There is also a mobile Go-Vaxx visiting

the County Feb. 12 at the A.J. LaRue arena in Haliburton and Saturday, Feb. 5 at the Lloyd Watson Community Centre in Wilberforce.

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Highlander health

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ERs to remain open through February

By Mike Baker

Emergency departments in Haliburton and Minden will remain fully operational through February, though HHHS President and CEO Carolyn Plummer indicated a service reduction in the near future is inevitable unless the organization is able to hire more nurses.

The Highlander reported on Nov. 25, 2021 that hospital administration was considering reducing hours at one of its facilities after struggling for months to adequately staff both emergency departments.

Since then, Plummer said the organization has been able to maintain services by using agency nurses. Since December, HHHS has relied on eight full-time nurse equivalents (40-hour weeks) staffed through third-party bureaus. This is costing the organization around \$20,000 more a month than it would if they had an additional eight full-time staffers of their own.

"Continuing on with this model is not sustainable over a longer period of time ... Our nursing coverage is OK into March, but we are still in a precarious position," Plummer said.

An added problem in recent weeks, Plummer noted, is a decline in the number of physicians able to work shifts in the emergency department.

"With this in mind, we are still continuing on with our discussions and plans for what a reduced service model could look like."

HHHS management are looking for

creative ways to alleviate the staffing issues, Plummer said, with a focus on enticing internationally-trained nurses and clinical externs. The organization recently held a virtual career fair, will be participating in a wider-scale fair next week, and is in the process of hiring a recruiter.

Plummer has previously told media the community would be given at least 48 hours notice before any service changes are implemented.

HHHS still in a deficit

Board treasurer David O'Brien said the organization's operational deficit by the end of November had crept up to \$633,000.

This marked an increase of \$20,000 from the previous quarter, which O'Brien said was encouraging.

"Normally, our deficit would have increased \$100,000-plus per month, so it's great that our situation hasn't gotten any worse," O'Brien said.

HHHS' cash position has been greatly enhanced in recent weeks, O'Brien noted, after the organization received around \$1.7 million in COVID-19 related expenses dating back to the first quarter of 2021.

After finishing his financial report, O'Brien commented on Bill 124, provincial legislation introduced in 2019 that limits wage increases for registered nurses, nurse practitioners and health care professionals to one per cent per year. He said the bill "is wrong" and criticized the current Ontario

government and previous administrations for the repeated cut backs to health care over a decades-long period.

"The consequence of that is that when COVID came along, we were ill prepared to deal with it from an operational end and a staffing point of view," O'Brien said.

Haliburton believes in magic of giving

For the second straight year, HHHS Foundation executive director Lisa Tompkins reported record-breaking results for the hospital's annual festive fundraising campaign.

The Believe in the Magic of Giving initiative raised \$243,910 in 2021, an increase of almost 50 per cent from the prior year. More than 800 donors participated in the campaign this year.

The money will be used to install a new nurse call bell system at Hyland Crest and Highland Wood long-term care homes, and support the hospital's new EPIC software.

The foundation was also able to contribute 993 additional meals to those in need through the Meals on Wheels program, and conduct 282 trips for patients requiring transportation for medical purposes.

"The extraordinary generosity of this community is amazing. We're very grateful to those who have made it very clear that health care is a high priority for them, and that our local health care matters," she said.



HHHS President and CEO Carolyn Plummer. File.



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CENTURY 21
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Solarino excited to get back on the ice

By Mike Baker

When Sam Solarino requested a trade from the Stouffville Spirit last summer, he hoped he'd land in a place like Haliburton.

Growing up in Markham and playing across the GTA throughout his youth, the Huskies' two-way forward was eager for a new challenge after hitting something of a brick wall in Stouffville. He played 44 games with the Spirit during the 2019/20 season, amassing 12 points and 89 penalty minutes as a rookie.

After a year on the sidelines, the energetic winger was determined to make up for lost time. Unimpressed by his prospects in Stouffville, he gave his coach a list of teams he'd be interested in joining. The Huskies sat right at the top.

"Coach Ryan called me, told me he'd traded for me and we had a really good conversation. He told me his plans for the team ... I was already pretty excited because I knew what Haliburton was like as a community," Solarino said. "It's a great town."

There were lots of familiar faces in the locker room too. Solarino played with the likes of Oliver Tarr, Ryan Hall, Joe Boice and Jack Staniland during a stint with the Central Ontario Wolves at minor bantam, making the transition to a new team much easier. Solarino is billeting with Kim and Kevin Hodgkinson in Gelert.

He became a key cog on a young Huskies outfit to start the season. His grit

and energy meshed well with the team's defensive game, and he plays a big role on the penalty kill. His game has evolved at the other end of the ice, too. As a middle six forward, Solarino also gets time on the team's second power play unit and is close to beating his rookie points total already, with 11 points in 29 games.

"Getting time at both ends of the ice is definitely making me a better player. I've really enjoyed myself this season. We have great chemistry as a team, and everyone pulls their weight. We really fight for each other out there," he said.

Reflecting on his highlight of the season so far, Solarino looks back on the tense, 2-1 come-from-behind victory over rival Lindsay Muskies Nov. 12. With the score level mid-way through the final period, the Huskies found themselves killing a penalty. After dumping the puck down the ice, Solarino gave chase, pressuring Muskies goaltender Ethan Fraser into making a bad turnover and scoring a wrap-around on an empty net.

It was a decisive victory for the Huskies, who haven't looked back and currently sit in second place in the OJHL's East Division.

After a month-long break, the blue and white are back in action this weekend, returning to Lindsay Feb. 4 before a home tilt with the Wellington Dukes Feb. 5.

"It almost feels like we're starting the season from scratch. There's a lot of hockey



Haliburton County Huskies forward Sam Solarino has been a key member of the team during its inaugural season. Photo courtesy of Tim Bates (OJHL).

left. And with our first game back being down in Lindsay on a Friday night, that's exactly the same as our season opener," Solarino said.

"Going into the second half of the season, I just want to be as positive as I can in the room and be someone that the younger guys can lean on as we go down the stretch.

I think we have what it takes to make a deep playoff run, but everyone needs to buy into their role," he added "We've got guys that can score goals, we've got guys that can be more defensive, and we've got great goaltending. I think everyone is focusing on one thing right now, and that's a championship."

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CENTURY 21
Equal Housing Opportunity

Volunteers help Huskies through first year

By Mike Baker

With Jr. A hockey set to resume at S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena this weekend, a group of 15 area residents are chomping at the bit to get back to work.

Each home game, the Huskies has its own mini-army of volunteers pulling together to cover a wide-range of responsibilities, including running security, manning the concession stand and even livestreaming games.

Klara Oyler was one of the first community members to offer her services last summer. Once it was announced the franchise would be moving to Haliburton County, ownership needed someone with computer skills to put together sponsorship packages and lay out all the paperwork for contract agreements. After doing a similar job with the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation for several years, Oyler said it seemed a good fit.

“A friend of mine was heavily involved with fundraising, and I’ve known Paul Wilson (Huskies owner) for a long time. I started out very informally last summer helping out here and there, and it was great,” Oyler said. “It’s a brand-new organization, and I think it’s important that the community get involved.”

Hannah Sharp, a Grade 9 student at Haliburton Highlands Secondary School, originally signed up to help as a way of completing the volunteer hours she needs to graduate. Helping to sell team merchandise, enforcing COVID-19 protocols and serving people at concession, Sharp said she’s really enjoyed the experience thus far.

Even though she completed her hours

during the opening half of the season, Sharp said she plans to stick around and continue helping.

“I really like interacting with the fans and seeing people happy, and it’s cool that I get to watch the games,” Sharp said. “It’s great to see how many people come out to support the team. The arena is always really busy on game days.

“This has been a really cool thing for the community,” she added.

When Mac Monk-Cray learned Haliburton County would be getting a new hockey franchise, he reached out right away to see how he could help. A recent graduate of Brock University’s sports management program, he was eager to learn anything he could regarding operations of a junior hockey franchise.

His primary responsibilities this season have been putting up the advertising signs along the glass in the arena, and running the live stream of games for HockeyTV.

“They’ve actually allowed me to do a lot of really cool things. Right away, they’ve welcomed me in and really made me feel like I’m part of a team. We’re kind of like a big family,” Monk-Cray said.

He said it’s been incredible to watch the Huskies’ evolution this season, going from playoff hopefuls to genuine championship contenders.

“You always heard about the usual OJHL beasts like Wellington and Trenton, but Haliburton has more than competed with them this season. It’s been so much fun being a part of this journey,” he said.

Oyler said she’s excited to head back to the rink Feb. 5. Now forming part of the ticketing team, she’s looking forward to



Hannah Sharp, left, has been volunteering with the Haliburton County Huskies since the first game of the season. Submitted.

greeting some familiar faces.

“I’m just itching to get back. It’s been great for me socially, being able to get out and see people again. You generate real connections,” she said. “I know all the regulars by now. There was a funny situation before the break when a gentleman came through with his wife, he reached into his pocket and panicked. ‘It was my job to

get the tickets off the kitchen counter, and I forgot them,’ he said. I told him don’t worry about it, I know who you are, and that you’ve got season tickets.

“Those are the kind of things you can do in a small town like ours. I feel like, during a difficult time with the pandemic, the Huskies have really brought our community together,” she added.

2021/2022 revised schedule

February				March				April			
4th	@	Lindsay	7:30pm	4th	@	St. Michaels	7:30pm	2nd	vs	Mississauga	4:30pm
5th	vs	Wellington	4:30pm	8th	vs	North York	7:30pm	3rd	@	Wellington	2:30pm
7th	@	Jr Canadiens	7:45pm	11th	@	Trenton	7:30pm	*March 26 game is the rescheduled December 11 power outage game.			
11th	vs	Patriots	7:30pm	12th	vs	Lindsay	4:30pm				
12th	@	Jr Canadiens	8:00pm	18th	vs	Mississauga	7:30pm				
15th	vs	Caledon	7:30pm	19th	vs	Trenton	4:30pm				
16th	@	Wellington	7:30pm	20th	vs	Caleson	3:30pm				
18th	@	Trenton	7:30pm	23rd	@	Mississauga	12:00pm				
19th	vs	Wellington	4:30pm	26th	vs	Wellington*	2:30pm				
21st	vs	Lindsay	2:30pm	27th	vs	Trenton	3:30pm				
25th	vs	Patriots	7:30pm	28th	@	Mississauga	12:00pm				
26th	vs	Trenton	4:30pm								





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With the Highland Storm taking a COVID-induced break, *The Highlander* is running team photos. This week we are featuring the U11 Rep team (top) and the U13LL team. Photos by Tim Tofflemire.

Highlander business

Bringing a little Italy to the streets of Dorset

By Lisa Gervais

Owner Mike Hinbest and employee Shelbie Schumacher adopt a Vanna White pose as they show off Robinsons Café and Gelato's main attraction - a Faema espresso and cappuccino machine, 'stile di vita italiana' that cost about as much as a new car.

And, why not? It's the heart and soul of the latest offering from Robinsons, which includes a general store with food, hardware, clothing and gifts, and a marina up the road.

It opened Jan. 11. As of Jan. 14, they had pastries. They have their regular coffee from Muskoka Roastery as well as the espresso machine for roasting beans. There are cold drinks, including Italian sodas. They will have gelato soon and will be adding breakfast sandwiches.

In discussing the \$40,000 espresso machine, Hinbest said, "to get the best coffee, the Italians do it best. That is an imported machine. We had an old Italian guy come up and get it all set up for us. It does make extremely good coffee. Once you have one, you're like 'this is better than home. I understand'."

He said they thought the café and gelato shop was a great idea since Dorset is "the in-between" of larger centres such as Minden, Haliburton, Huntsville and Bracebridge. Also, customers asked for it. "Where's the coffee? So, we thought let's get some coffee for them because this is the lifeblood of everybody in their town.

"There are some little coffee shops around and they do a great job as well. What we were looking to do for people is to bring them in. A coffee shop is not just about selling coffee. We had a customer come in who was 80 years old and this was his birthday present from his daughter. She brought him in to get a cup of coffee. Those are the stories of why we actually do this. It is a lot of community involvement, getting people out, a nice warm drink just soothes the soul on a cold day."

The space used to be the hardware store's old garage with a concrete floor and



Shelbie Schumacher makes a coffee. Photo by Lisa Gervais.

walls. They spent six months renovating throughout the pandemic. Hinbest said they went with a custom look that will last forever.

On a cold winter's day, he is asked to envision what it will look like inside and outside the shop in May when seasonal residents and visitors return.

He laughed and said, "I'm a little scared." He added it will be a learning curve to understand the traffic flow. However, they always hire a lot of students for the busy summer season. He anticipates they will have lineups, but they'll also have a mobile app so people can order ahead and not stand in line.

The Hinbests' ethos remains, "stick with tradition, bring in new pieces that people are looking for and get ready to ramp up for the busy season."

Robinsons Café and Gelato is at 1064 Main St. Dorset. They are open seven days a week, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. although they might adjust hours going forward.

Benoir Lake resort community breaks ground

By Sam Gillett

Work is underway on the Nomi Resort Club, a 51-unit recreational community on Benoir Lake, near Elephant Lake.

Dysart et al mayor Andrea Roberts, deputy mayor Pat Kennedy and Coun. Tammy Donaldson attended a ground-breaking ceremony Jan. 27.

"I think this has been a long-time coming. It's always been talked about," said COO of Nomi Resort, Susan Elizabeth (Elise) Blouin, who's directed multiple development projects with international firm Sieta and Pikes.

The project will be an addition to the existing Nomi resort. Buyers purchase a turn-key home near a stretch of private waterfront. Residences can be rented to Nomi guest members during seasons they are away.

The first 15 homes are expected to be completed this summer, along with a spa, gym, food emporium, Nespresso lounge and outdoor sports facilities.

Blouin said it's a marker of Nomi's dedication to crafting a destination, which might boost local tourism, too. "That transcends into Haliburton," she said. "We spend a lot of time marketing Haliburton, we put so much effort into that."

She said many buyers so far have been between 38 to 45-years-old, reflecting a younger generation eager to invest in rural tourism.

"They're looking at this for their own sense of wellness," Blouin said.

Construction on the private residences is expected to stretch into 2023, with plans for further buildings on the 850-acre property underway.



Development team members Renzo Martire, Hugo Saenz, Antonio Sousa, Dysart et al Mayor Andrea Roberts, Coun. Tammy Donaldson, Nomi COO Susan Elizabeth (Elise) Blouin, development team members Lorne Reano, and Benjamin Burns. Submitted.



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Highlander arts



From left to right: Nigel Milne, assistant store manager, Dan Moulton, owner, Glen Rickerby, district general manager, Paul Walker, assistant store manager, Dan Manley, HHACF president, and board members Drew Allen and Michael Clipperton. Photo by Sam Gillett.

Arts Centre Foundation casts first corporate sponsorship

Haliburton County's Home Hardware are helping build a Highlands arts hub.

The Home Hardware Building Centre of Haliburton and Minden has donated \$25,000 to the Haliburton Highlands Art Centre Foundation (HHACF), becoming the foundation's first corporate sponsor.

"We are very pleased and committed to supporting the HHACF in its mission to build and operate a world-class performing arts centre in Haliburton County," said dealer-owners Dan and Emily Moulton in a

press release.

"We believe strongly in the economic impact that this project will bring to our region, and we would like to encourage all local companies and individuals to pledge their support in the coming year."

The money will help fund follow-up steps to an ongoing feasibility study that will lay out the what, where and how of a large-scale performing arts centre in Haliburton County.

Nationally-acclaimed theatre consultants Janis A. Barlow &

Associates are conducting the study, expected to be published by Spring 2022.

"Word of the foundation is spreading, but in these early stages, it's donations like this that take our fundraising campaign to the next level," said foundation president Dan Manley. "We hope that fellow business owners share in Dan and Emily's economic vision for the Haliburton Highlands." (Sam Gillett).

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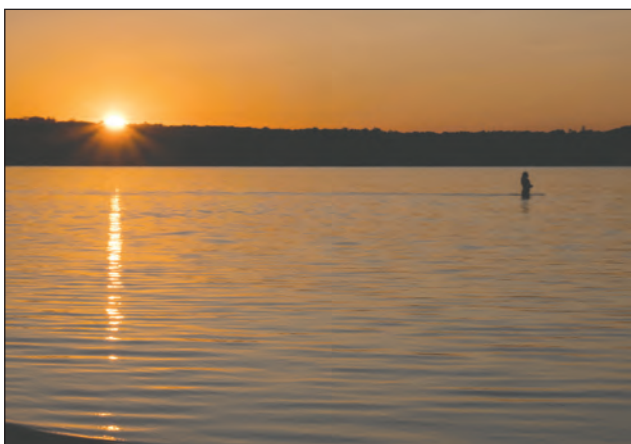
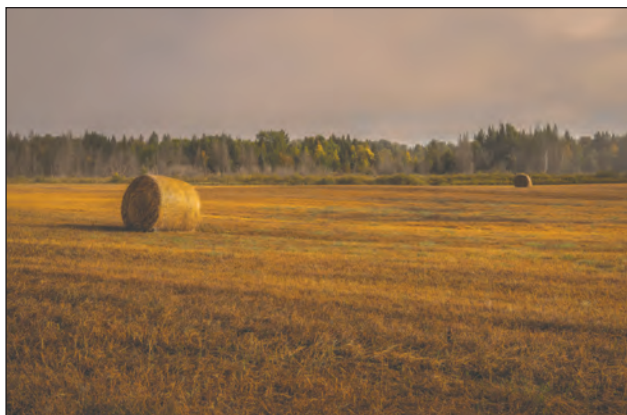
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Challenged to try new things

The Haliburton Highlands Camera Club has released the winners of its pictorial competition. Members can submit any image of any subject for the category. First advanced was "Stare Down" by Amin Shijvi; first intermediate was "Early Morning in a Hay Field" by Julie Jones and first novice was "Sunset Swim" by Jaan Luubert. The club is active online and welcomes photography enthusiasts of all experience levels. A new list of competition topics for 2022 will be announced soon. Competitions are meant to challenge members to try new things. Visitors are welcome to attend monthly Zoom meetings. See highlandscameraclub.ca for more. You can also follow them on Facebook.

(Lisa Gervais)

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Highlander outdoors

Ice drivers slide back into Minden

By Sam Gillett

After a two-year hiatus, racers will soon be sliding around an icy Minden Fairgrounds.

The annual Canadian Automobile Sport Club Ice Racing series was recently green-flagged by the Township of Minden Hills, who voted to allow the use of the fairgrounds.

They're aiming to begin racing Feb. 5 and 6, with five weekends of racing planned.

"I got the impression everybody on council was eager for us to go forward with this," said CASC ice racing director Brad Elkins.

During ice races, competitors drive cars outfitted with snow tires or spiked tires around a closed circuit. It requires precise handling and speed control.

Elkins has raced on ice on and off since 1978. He said he enjoys the camaraderie between competitors.

"It's a chance to get outside and do stuff in the winter time," he said.

Andy Rickard, president of the Kin Club of Minden, said racers are "extremely keen to go racing."

Rickard and other Kin Club members create the racetrack. It's built on layers of ice lined by tall snowbanks, twisting and turning much like an asphalt race track.

Last year the race was cancelled in the midst of COVID-19 restrictions, and Rickard said the return to racing also means a tourism boost for Minden. Drivers often eat at local restaurants and some stay



Drivers speed around a corner during a previous ice racing series at the Minden fairgrounds. *File.*

overnight. "It brings a lot of money into the community," he said.

The race is one of two annual Kin Club events. During COVID, Rickard said both events have been a "complete loss."

The Kin Club is already prepping this year's track and building up the snowbanks that line the course.

"It's very welcome, both for the financial good of the club and for the health of the ice race series," he said.

Driving school returns

The IRL Car Control driving school will resume its training programs at the fairgrounds with COVID safety measures

in place.

Council voted to allow the school to resume using the fairgrounds for its training courses. As of press time, the school will be limited to corporate training programs. The majority of current clients, said president and chief instructor Ian Law, are provincial or federal public servants.

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TheHighlander

Highlander community

Volunteers needed to bring memories to life

By Sam Gillett

A new SIRCH program is pairing local listeners with storytelling seniors living with dementia.

The Memories to Life program aims to collect the experiences of those who have early-stage dementia and package them in a scrapbook. Once the disease progresses, it can be a point of connection with loved ones.

"It's really about listening to people's stories of their lives," said SIRCH executive director Gena Robertson.

Volunteers train for a few days with SIRCH and are equipped with scrapbooking know-how as well as training on dementia and SIRCH best practices.

Then, they'll visit seniors to gather memories. They'll help collect newspaper clippings, photos and more based on the person's experiences.

"In one person's book: he was a pilot in a war, the volunteer had done research on the plane," Robertson said. "There can be pictures of families and friends and pets and whatever."

Jan Saugh, an activation coordinator hired by SIRCH to run the program, said volunteers must only "have a love of seniors, be able to listen and engage, and want to tell their story."

Compiling memories and experiences into a physical collection of items often unearths recollections in those with dementia.

"It's to spark recognition for the



Jan Saugh, program coordinator, said scrapbooks can help spark memories for people with dementia. *Submitted.*

client, help them remember their accomplishments," she said.

It's also for loved ones.

"Families can use the book for conversation pieces for family and friends, and it's a treasured memory they'll have forever."

The upcoming Memories to Life program

is funded by a donor who wished to remain anonymous, however Robertson said past experience shows how impactful it can be.

Over a decade ago, volunteers were able to come together with the people who told their stories and share what they created.

Robertson saw how much it meant to elderly residents to have their lives celebrated.

"I remember one man tearing up, saying before he'd done this project, he really didn't feel like he'd done anything of value in his life," Robertson said. "This made him realize how much he had."

To register as a volunteer or sign up as a participant to have your story told, contact SIRCH before the middle of February at 705-457-1742.



NOTICE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETINGS 2022 BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

NOTE: As a result of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak, as well as the requirements for social distancing, Council Meetings will be conducted electronically via web conference until further notice.

TAKE NOTICE that Council will begin its 2022 budget deliberations during a **Special Meeting on Wednesday, February 16, 2022** commencing at 9:00 a.m. conducted electronically via web conference.

Council will continue its 2022 Budget Deliberations during its Regular Council Meeting being held on Thursday, February 17, 2022.

If required, Council will continue its 2022 budget deliberations during a **Special Meeting on Tuesday, February 22, 2022** commencing at 9:00 a.m. conducted electronically via web conference.

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by joining a live-stream link. The live-stream links can be accessed on the published Council Meeting Agendas found on the Township's website at

<https://algonquinhighlands.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/200688>

Dated this 3rd day of February, 2022.

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Sarah Moret
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sarahmoret@trentu.ca

Dr. Naomi Nichols
(705) 878-7297
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If you are 18 years of age or older, have experience with an eating disorder, are caring for a loved one with an eating disorder, or you are a service provider with experience in eating disorder treatment, and are interested in participating in this study or would like more information, please contact Sarah Moret or Dr. Naomi Nichols via text or email.**

WHAT?

You will be asked about what you did to support yourself or your loved one, and what factors may have made it more difficult to access treatment. You will also be asked how your efforts to seek help may have changed during COVID-19. Participating service providers will be asked to speak on their experiences in helping people locate services for eating disorders in rural communities.

HOW?

Focus groups and interviews will be held online, via Zoom. Interviews will require 60-90 minutes of your time. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed during focus groups. No identifying information or features that would allow a person to be identified will be used in this project.

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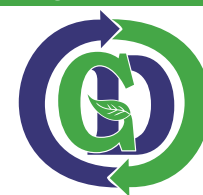
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Highlander classifieds

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Township of Algonquin Highlands requires a By-Law Enforcement Officer

The Township of Algonquin Highlands is seeking applications from qualified persons for the position of By-Law Enforcement Officer.

Algonquin Highlands offers a competitive salary and excellent benefits package. Join a dedicated team that strives to make us the best place to live, work and play.

Visit our website at: www.algonquinhighlands.ca for the full job description.

Please submit your resume and cover letter by
3:00 p.m. on Friday, February 25, 2022 to:

Dawn Mugford-Guay
Human Resources Coordinator
Township of Algonquin Highlands
1123 North Shore Road
Algonquin Highlands, ON K0M 1J1
Email: dmugfordguay@algonquinhighlands.ca

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or calling 705-457-2900.

\$8 for 25 words.

DEADLINE TUESDAYS AT 5PM

HELP WANTED



Full-Charge Bookkeeper (Contract)

RPM Marinas is looking for a full-charge bookkeeper to join our fun, friendly team.

This is a great opportunity for a team-player who wants to get their teeth into the books of two companies
- one of which has multiple locations.

You'll be an experienced self-starter who is happy multitasking, and you'll have first-class communication,
organizational and customer service skills. You'll also be good at software such as Microsoft Excel, the Google
platforms, and QuickBooks. Experience with CDK LightSpeed is an asset.

This is a 12-month contract to cover a maternity leave, with potential to extend.

Typical Duties include:

- Managing the full-cycle accounting functions, working closely with the team to prioritize deadlines and business needs
- Processing accounts payable and accounts receivable
- Managing bank/credit card and general ledger reconciliations, as well as payroll processing
- Analyzing balance sheet accounts on a regular basis
- Preparing government remittances for payroll, HST, EHT, WSIB, and subsidy.
- Payroll processing bi-weekly, including all remittances and reporting
- Preparing month and year-end working documentation
- Researching and reconciling discrepancies and ensuring that the accounting is in good order.
- Support team members with other duties and task as required such as answering phones etc.
- Occasional weekend, evenings are required, plus travel to other locations.

Job Type: Full-time 44 hours/week (contract with potential for extension)

Salary: based on experience

TO APPLY, EMAIL CHERYL@HALIBURTONRPM.COM

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LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS								
5	6	1	2	4	3	9	7	8
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58	E	E	C			59	B	L	U	E	S		60	B	E	E	F
61	L	A	H			62	S	Y	N	C	S		63	E	S	S	E

A Case of the DTs

by Barbara Olson
© ClassiCanadian Crosswords

- Across
- 1 DocuSign's online banking form
 - 6 Utter airhead
 - 10 Loch Ness Monster, some say
 - 13 From around "these parts"
 - 14 Yesterday, to Yvette
 - 15 Santa in California
 - 16 Little old lady?
 - 18 Certain CFL linemen
 - 19 ___ Mae (Whoopi in "Ghost")
 - 20 Honcho's numero
 - 21 Hue of antique photos
 - 23 Raining on the nuptials?
 - 27 Encls. for RSVPs, maybe
 - 28 Lead-in to "on TV!" in ads
 - 29 Purring leg warmer
 - 33 Capital of Canada?
 - 34 One who resents using eBay?
 - 38 Canadian URL endings
 - 39 Usual way of doing things
 - 40 Label that dropped Milli Vanilli for lip-syncing
 - 43 "If I ___ Rich Man"
 - 47 Putting linen on the line?
 - 51 "Take ___ breath"
 - 52 Atop, to Shakespeare
 - 53 Prefix meaning "ear"
 - 54 Ship or sea-related: Abbr.
 - 55 Quirkier river critter?
 - 59 Molson Export, for one
 - 60 Podiatrist's concern
 - 61 Old Olds Cutlass model
 - 62 Camera type: Abbr.
 - 63 Some are saturated
 - 64 Wasting no words

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12
13						14					15		
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51						52					53		
54				55	56				57	58			
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62				63					64				

- 5 Famed English cathedral, or its town
- 6 Person or place alternative
- 7 Murder suspect in some whodunits
- 8 Iraq War roadside bomb: Abbr.
- 9 Ashley Madison hookups
- 10 One of two on a stethoscope
- 11 Track pro?
- 12 Garfield's "most perfect food": Var.
- 17 Granny knot?
- 22 "Out there" types, for short?
- 24 Shoulder muscle, to a gym rat
- 25 The wolf ___ the door
- 26 Weird AI's take on a Jackson hit
- 30 Pie nut
- 31 Fine wine label word
- 32 Washboard or six-pack
- 34 Revealed everything
- 35 "Yeah, big time!"
- 36 Stewart's role in "Harvey"
- 37 Used the envelope icon on Twitter, briefly
- 38 Riviera change rooms
- 41 Sault ___ Marie, Ont.
- 42 Give a bit of inside info
- 44 Tear gas target, maybe
- 45 Comes onstage
- 46 Old Greek haggling hubs
- 48 No-show in a Beckett play
- 49 Veggies used in natural lipstick
- 50 Do wrong
- 56 Vancouver hardcore punk band
- 57 Mo. of "World Smile Day"
- 58 No-win situation?

- Down
- 1 Macaroni noodles
 - 2 "Haven't the foggiest"
 - 3 Maids a-milking groups
 - 4 Body image, for short?

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- \$849,900 25TH LINE**
- 3 bedroom, 1.5 bath, 1622 sq ft custom home
 - 9.17 acre parcel, close to Minden and Haliburton
 - 10kw 42 solar panel free standing solar stations on contract
 - Large garage/shop with loft, wrap around decking, hot tub
 - Must be seen to be appreciated – rare opportunity



- \$349,900 GEEZA ROAD**
- 20 acres of nature's paradise with existing cabin and shower house
 - Easy access off year round cul-de-sac township road
 - Gentle sloping, private, Dahl Forest and trails at your back yard
 - Year round flowing spring, stone fencing
 - Adjacent lot also for sale for \$279,900



- \$279,900 GEEZA ROAD**
- Mature treed 15 acre lot on year round cul-de-sac township road
 - Several options for home or getaway development
 - Dahl forest (nature reserve) with trail at your back yard
 - Abundance of wildlife, very quiet setting



- \$249,900 INDUSTRIAL PARK**
- Double lot with 375 ft frontage
 - 2.5 acres of cleared, level land
 - Drilled well in place, underground hydro
 - Close to amenities, rare opportunity
 - Build the business of your dreams



- \$169,900 QUEENS LINE ROAD**
- Mature treed 5+ acre parcel ideal for dream home
 - Year round township road
 - Services easily available
 - Close to Minden Village and all amenities
 - Price includes any applicable HST
 - Must be seen to be appreciated – rare opportunity



- \$149,900 SILVERWOOD RD PT 1**
- 436 feet frontage, 2.369 acres, on cul-de-sac
 - Beautiful creek on property, year round municipal access
 - Short drive to Minden Village and all amenities
 - Services easily accessible across road
 - Adjacent lot also for sale for \$149,900



- \$149,900 SILVERWOOD RD PT 2**
- 424 feet frontage, 2.047 acres on year round municipal road
 - Very private setting, upscale neighbourhood
 - Short walk to Canning Lake access and scenic dam with falls
 - Ready for you to build your dream home
 - Adjacent lot also for sale for \$149,900

MEET THE TEAM



Chris Smolarz*

Chris James*

Marcia Bell*

Anthony vanLieshout**

Erin Nicholls*

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