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# The Highlander

Thursday **December 14, 2023** | Issue 620

**INSIDE: THE NUTCRACKER IN PHOTOS PAGE 15**

**FREE**



## Wasn't that a party...

Lindsay Watling holds Teaha at a public skate at the A.J. LaRue Arena Dec. 8 during the Haliburton Rotary Christmas party. See more coverage on page 12. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

## Ombudsman: closed meeting broke the rules

By Lisa Gervais

Ontario's Ombudsman has rapped the County of Haliburton's knuckles over an April 27 closed door meeting that Paul Dubé said should not have been held in-camera.

Dubé issued his ruling this month over complaints filed with his office. He said the council meeting, which dealt with the pending closure of the Minden emergency room, "did not fit within the closed meeting exceptions in the Municipal Act."

Council called the special meeting, inviting then HHHS CEO Carolyn Plummer and board chair David O'Brien, "to gather more information... and to attempt to reverse or delay the closure," Dubé said. "We were told that an in-camera discussion was planned because the County hoped the HHHS representatives would be more willing to have a full and frank discussion with council in closed session than in public," the ombudsman added.

He said the County claimed exceptions in sections 239(2)(g) and 239(2)(i) of the Act. Section 239(2)(g) allows a municipality to discuss a matter in which a council, board, committee, or other body may hold a closed meeting under another Act. Section 239(2)(i) is an exception for information supplied in confidence to the municipality by a third party.

According to the closed session minutes, and the people Dubé's team interviewed, Plummer and O'Brien had an opportunity to speak to council about the decision. O'Brien explained HHHS' rationale and shared information about staffing levels, labour relations, and bed capacity at the two County hospitals. Dubé said O'Brien and Plummer also provided a plan to ensure patients could access emergency services at Haliburton hospital following the closure.

Continued **'Warden'** on page 2



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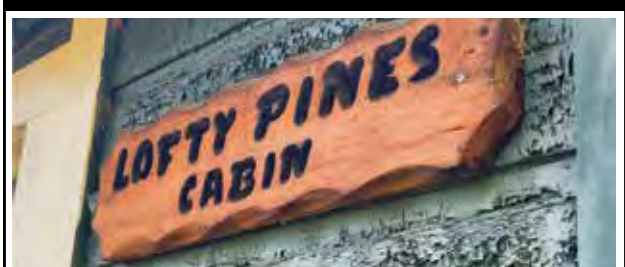


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# Warden: 'learning experience'

Continued from page 1

Several council members asked questions and expressed opinions, Dubé said, with most disappointed and disagreeing with the decision, and decrying a lack of consultation. Councillors questioned the plan to accommodate patients at Haliburton hospital and requested HHHS delay or reverse its decision, he said.

After Plummer and O'Brien left, Dubé said council continued the in-camera discussion. Chief paramedic Tim Waite talked about the potential effects on ambulance service levels and said he'd reached out to the Ministry of Health about additional funding.

The discussion then turned to possible legal action the County could seek to prevent or delay the closure, although council decided not to take legal steps at that time. Dubé said council then discussed public statements it would make on the matter, with staff told to prepare a press release. Council then came back into open session.

## County responsibility

Dubé said with regards to matters permissible under another Act, the exemption has limited application "because very few pieces of legislation contain exceptions that allow a municipality to hold closed meetings."

He added councillors and staff could not explain why the exception had been cited. "The clerk shared that the County may have assumed that legislation exists that permits the HHHS board to hold closed meetings, which also applied to council. However, the County could not cite the legislation that it believed permitted the closed meeting.," Dubé said.

To be transparent and avoid confusion, he said a resolution to move into closed session should include a clear reference to the relevant legislation and provision. "My review did not identify any legislation that permits council to discuss the emergency room closure in closed session. Accordingly, council was not entitled to rely on this exception for its in-camera discussion on April 27," the Ombudsman said.

As for council citing information supplied in confidence by a third party, Dubé said O'Brien told his office information given to council was not considered confidential by HHHS. Dubé said Waite's information about the ministry was not supplied in confidence either. Dubé did say that when it came to the legal discussion, council was within its right to be in-camera.

The Ombudsman said while the County was dealing with a community in crisis "the open meeting rules continue to apply."

"The open meeting requirements set out in s. 239 of the Municipal Act permit the public to observe the political process. I encourage the County to continue to strive to carry out their business in as transparent and open a manner as possible during all council meetings," Dubé said.

Warden Liz Danielsen said the meeting was called at an "extremely difficult time. Unfortunately, given the



The County of Haliburton office is located on Newcastle Street in Minden. *File.*

challenges we were facing, as well as our desire to understand an unforeseen hardship placed on our community, our discussions with the board chair and HHHS CEO went beyond what was permissible under the act."

She felt the Ombudsman was "somewhat" sympathetic to the situation. "However, as always, issues like this become a learning experience for us all." She said council accepted the finding and recommendations and had directed staff to update their procedural bylaw and provide training to council and staff "to ensure this situation will not be repeated."

Richard Bradley issued a statement on behalf of The Save Haliburton County Emergency Health Group. They said, "it is extremely disappointing, as we now look back to a meeting that occurred five weeks before the June 1, 2023 closure of the Minden emergency department, where information that all the stakeholders of Haliburton County could have, would have, and should have, had access to was not made available to us."

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# County looks to redevelop Wee Care property

## Could partner with Habitat for Humanity on housing

By Lisa Gervais

The County of Haliburton is in talks with Haliburton Wee Care, Habitat for Humanity and the City of Kawartha Lakes human services department about redeveloping the nursery property on County Road 21 for housing, expanded day care, and other uses.

Discussed at a Dec. 13 County council meeting, it was decided \$100,000 be transferred from the affordable housing targets program reserve to fund technical studies that will be needed to redevelop the site.

In a written report, director of planning Steve Stone said, “staff are recommending that childcare and housing are the primary goals of this re-development.”

He said it’s because “access to childcare has become increasingly challenging.” There are no licensed spaces available for infants in Haliburton village; only 15 per cent of children up to the age of five have access to a licensed childcare space; children in the County may start Kindergarten before receiving an available licensed childcare space, with a predicted 4.2-year wait, and most commuters in the County remain in the County for work, Stone said.

When it comes to housing, Stone said Dysart et al has said the site could accommodate 38 residential units, while Habitat for Humanity put that number at 63 residential units.

Stone noted the County had experienced a 300 per cent increase in the number of households waiting for community housing in the last 10 years; rental rates have risen by 72 per cent for one-bedroom apartments, and 23 per cent for two-bedroom apartments since 2018; only 50 units of affordable housing are in development towards the target of 750; and the business case for development of housing “simply does not work anymore due to increasing costs of construction, increasing interest rates and limited funding from other levels of government,” the County planner said.

Stone added partnering with Habitat for Humanity, and using its model, could work.

“Habitat for Humanity has some advantages that other developers do not. They are a registered charity which can receive donations. They estimate they can develop units for about two-thirds the cost of a traditional builder as they have preferential purchasing agreements with various suppliers.”

Stone added, “it is our understanding they would be proposing a condominium type development, where properties are purchased



Haliburton Wee Care administrator Denise Wolm. *File.*

and mortgages, condo fees etc. are capped at 30 per cent of the owners’ income. The model is truly affordable home ownership”

With a condo model, Stone said the County would have to transfer ownership of the property to Habitat for Humanity. “We could, in turn, request that the daycare building ownership be transferred back to the County of Haliburton as a part of the condominium,” he added. “In addition, the County could procure a few of the residential units for use by health care workers, municipal workers transitioning into the community etc.”

As for next steps, Stone said they need to get a handle on what the site can accommodate. He suggested later this year,

and into early 2024, there be a survey, site evaluation report, environmental impact study, geotechnical study, hydrogeological assessment, environmental site assessment and a look into parking and sewer capacity. He thinks the County could do its own planning justification report and public consultation strategy. That’s where the \$100,000 would be spent.

Council received the report for information only, with warden Liz Daneilsen saying, “I know that there are a lot of moving parts to this particular project, but to me it’s a really exciting step that we’re taking and I certainly hope it’s a successful project.”



## She's back...

Algonquin Highlands mayor Liz Daniels was chosen as the warden of Haliburton County during a Dec. 12 County council meeting. She enters her sixth consecutive term after defeating contender, Coun. Bob Carter.

Warden Liz Daniels, in ceremonial chain and robes, chairs the end of the Dec. 12 meeting. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

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# P4P lauds successful bonds fundraiser



By Mike Baker

Places for People (P4P) has wrapped up its inaugural community bonds program, successfully raising \$850,000 – money that president, Jody Curry, says will help the organization bring more affordable housing to Haliburton County.

Speaking to *The Highlander* ahead of P4P’s annual general meeting Dec. 6, Curry said the bonds program sold out in less than three months. She noted this was a new record completion time for Tapestry Community Capital – the Toronto-based firm that assisted with the investment drive.

Haliburton County Development Corporation was the first to purchase a bond on July 10, and bookended the effort by picking up a second bond – the last available – on Oct. 3. Curry said 81 bonds were sold to 71 unique investors.

There were three options available – Series A for investments of at least \$1,000 locked in for three years, earning three per cent interest paid annually; Series B, which was a minimum of \$5,000 locked in for five years, earning four per cent interest; or Series C, which was \$10,000 locked in for seven years, earning five per cent interest.

Curry noted Series A investments totalled \$93,000, Series B was \$205,000, and Series C was \$552,000. “This was a great success. We’re very happy and feel this program puts us on a very good financial footing to move forward,” Curry said. “To all the people who helped get us to the point we are today: thank you.”

Curry noted the bonds are secured by P4P’s existing assets, which she says are valued at around \$2.5 million.

The money will be used to clear a handful of existing mortgages and private loans. Asked how this will help P4P bring additional housing units to the Highlands, Curry indicated it will improve the organization’s position for borrowing should any opportunities arise.

“The way I like to describe it is, it makes

everything look nice and neat and tidy on our books. We had little bits of money owing against all our buildings – those are now gone. So, when we go to borrow bigger dollars from bigger groups or organizations, or the government, for things we’re working on, we do have some unfettered equity,” she said.

P4P owns and operates five properties across Haliburton County, with 12 affordable housing units. Curry said the non-profit is aiming to more than double its inventory in the coming years, noting “we have a lot of plans in the works.”

Chief among those is a potential joint commercial and residential development fronting County Road 21 off Peninsula Drive. Paul Wilson, owner of Harburn Holdings, pledged one of four lots fronting Grass Lake to P4P last year. A proposal to develop the property has been supported by Dysart et al and Haliburton County councils but has been appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal. An initial meeting was held Dec. 11, with a three-week hearing scheduled for November 2024.

Curry said P4P hopes to build 16 new units there. The commercial space will be rented out, generating income the non-profit can use to subsidize accommodations and offer them at below market rates. Should this project proceed, Curry said another bonds program is likely, with the build expected to cost millions.

The organization is also looking for opportunities to invest in existing rental units, like it did when purchasing a five-plex in Carnarvon in October 2022.

“That would make sure units that are currently in place don’t go by the wayside. We are on the lookout for things like that, because right now it’s much cheaper to buy existing buildings and renovate them than it is to build new,” Curry said.

Jody Curry, Places for People president, said the bonds program was a huge success. *File.*

## INFORMATION PAGE

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#### CULTURAL CENTRE

The Agnes Jamison Gallery is now displaying selections from the permanent collection including new acquisitions by André Lapine ARCA (1866-1952). The Gallery is open to the public Tuesday – Sunday from 10 am – 4 pm. The Gallery will be closed from December 25 to January 1, 2024 for the holidays. For more information, please call 705-286-3763 or email [culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca](mailto:culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca)

#### WASTE DISPOSAL

The holiday season is right around the corner! By making conscious decisions about responsible holiday recycling this festive time of year, you can help reduce your impact on the environment while still enjoying all that comes with the season.

We encourage you to reduce, reuse, recycle, and donate where possible.

You can recycle the following at the Scotch Line Landfill:

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- Falling needles are your tree's way of telling you it's drying out. Water your tree daily.
- Be wary of heat sources near the tree including furnace vents and non-LED lights.
  - Don't "overextend" your outlets! Extension cords are a temporary.
  - Never run extension cords under a rug.
- Fires caused by cooking mostly happen when the stove is left unattended.

#### OFFICE CLOSURE

### Season's Greetings

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Dec 18th to Dec 22nd 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CLOSED Dec 23rd to Jan 1st

Cultural Centre/Agnes Jamieson Gallery  
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#### VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted with a hybrid model of in-person and electronic participation in accordance with the Municipality Act. Meetings begin at 9:00 AM unless otherwise noted. The scheduled upcoming meeting is:

**December 14 – Regular Council Meeting**

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or a live-stream link available on the Township CivicWeb Portal at [mindenhills.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx](http://mindenhills.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx) or by using the direct link provided in the notice. Meeting agendas are not displayed during the meeting; please download by visiting our CivicWeb Portal at [mindenhills.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx](http://mindenhills.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx). Please note the live stream file/video will be available to the public for the duration of one week after the Council Meeting.

#### WINTER PARKING

From Nov 1st to Apr 30th, overnight parking is prohibited between the hours of midnight and 8:00 AM on township roadways and parking lots. Furthermore, parking in the turning circle of a cul-de-sac is prohibited during all hours. Vehicles parked in these areas that prohibit the removal of snow will be towed away and/or ticketed at the owner's expense.

#### NOTICE: PUBLIC MEETING – COMPREHENSIVE FEES AND CHARGES BY-LAW

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills will be holding a Public Meeting on Thursday, December 14, 2023, during its Regular Council Meeting regarding the Comprehensive Fees and Charges By-law.



# Dysart sets rules for farmers market return

By Mike Baker

Dysart et al council has said it's happy for the Haliburton County Farmers Market to move back to Head Lake Park next season, providing the market's executive agree to new terms that mayor, Murray Fearrey, said protects the township from incurring additional costs and liability.

Angel Taylor and Ron Lofthouse, representing the market, told council Dec. 12 that the most recent season in Haliburton, which ran from May to October, was a disappointment for most vendors.

They said attendance dropped after the event was relocated to nearby Rotary Beach park.

"We count as best we can every person that comes to our markets. In 2022, there were 19,719 people that attended our market when it was in Head Lake Park. In 2023, we saw a substantial drop to 13,607. That's about a 30 per cent decrease," Lofthouse said.

Other market locations at the Minden fairgrounds and Abbey Gardens saw a big uptick in visitors, Lofthouse said. Attendance in Minden this year was 18,573, up from 16,004, while the weekly Abbey Gardens event attracted 6,394 in its first year since moving from Stanhope. Lofthouse noted 3,800 people attended the Stanhope market last year.

The pair said there was substantial support from the community to have the event, held every Tuesday from noon to 4 p.m., back in a more central location.

Haliburton Business Improvement Area (BIA) board chair, David Zilstra, wrote a letter in support of the move, saying several downtown merchants reported a decreased presence of shoppers on market days. He said the market is "tucked out of site" at Rotary Beach park.

According to Zilstra, Country Pickins sales were down an average of 40 to 60 per cent on market days this year, with Glecoff's Family Store noting a 15 per cent drop, and Russell Red Records a 30 per cent decline.

"The connection [between the market and downtown] is now broken, but it can be fixed easily by bringing it back to its old location," Zilstra wrote.

Taylor noted the market had been located at Head Lake Park for 11 years. She said there were many benefits to that site, primarily accessibility for older residents. Taylor said the market executive would be willing to work with council on a resolution, while offering the township a seat on its board.

Fearrey said he was concerned about damage to the park. He proposed a \$1,000 fee be applied to the market for each event in July, August, and September, with a \$700 fee applied for any other month. Deputy mayor Walt McKechnie supported that addition.

"I think that's fair. It will help us build a fund to fix things at the end of the season... we can't be subsidizing anything [extra] today. People are concerned this is costing taxpayers money," McKechnie said.

During the meeting, Taylor noted the



Some members of Dysart council have expressed some concerns about parking. *File.*

market has around 40 vendors during its summer peak, dropping to between 20 and 30 in spring and fall. All vendors pay \$300 per season to appear at the market.

Addressing concerns coun. Pat Casey and Nancy Wood-Roberts had about increased traffic in the downtown, and a lack of parking, Fearrey felt running the market earlier in the day could help. He suggested

new hours of 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., which Taylor felt was workable.

The mayor also stipulated that vendors should park vehicles in the Rotary Beach parking lot, freeing up space at Head Lake Park, and that the market assign an attendant to limit parking along Highland Street.

"If they don't like [the changes], they can get back to us," Fearrey said.

## MINDEN HILLS IN SEASON. EVERY SEASON.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills has received applications to consider by-laws to stop up, close, and convey those parcels of land more particularly described as follows:

- File No. PLSRA2022067:** Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of South Lake, lying in front of 1020 Capricorn Court located within Lot 4, Concession 14, Geographic Township of Snowdon
- File No. PLSRA2022080:** Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of South Lake, lying in front of 1161 Kendrick Creek Lane located within Lot 2, Concession 13, Geographic Township of Snowdon
- File No. PLSRA2022083:** Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of Kashagawigamog Lake, lying in front of 1058 Voyager Drive located within Lot 26, Concession 5, Geographic Township of Minden
- File No. PLSRA2023038:** Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of Pigeon Lake, lying in front of 3420 Deep Bay Road located within Lot 11, Concession 13, Geographic Township of Lutterworth

The above noted applications are available for inspection in the Building and Planning Department located at 7 Milne Street, Minden, Ontario by appointment only. Additional information may be obtained by contacting the undersigned.

**AND TAKE NOTICE** should you wish to provide comments with respect to any of the above referenced applications, please submit in writing those comments to the undersigned not later than **January 12, 2024.**

**AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE** any person who claims that their land will be prejudicially affected is asked to contact the undersigned at their earliest convenience.

**AND TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** if deemed advisable, By-laws giving effect to the proposed closure and conveyance will be passed by the Council for the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills. Please note that a Council meeting to consider a By-law for the above referenced applications will be scheduled at a later date following the requisite commenting period.

Amanda Dougherty, B.A. (Hons)  
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# Lochlin hall future in doubt

By Lisa Gervais

Minden Hills council, on Nov. 30, directed the Lochlin Community Centre advisory committee to meet to discuss the future of the beleaguered hamlet hall.

Manager of parks, recreation and facilities, Candace McGuigan, said, on Nov. 30, they'd hired Tulloch Engineering to have a look at the community centre and they have deemed it to be in poor to fair condition. They have recommended the township either repair it, at a cost of \$366,000, or demolish it and construct a new centre, at a cost of \$600,000.

The hall has been closed since the onset of COVID-19 for health and safety reasons, McGuigan said.

"Prior to 2019, the facility had issues with the roof leaking into one of the washroom areas. The repair to the roof had been budgeted, but due to staffing changes, and the pandemic, the necessary repairs were not accomplished," she said in a written report.

"The result was mould growth in one of the washroom areas, which required remediation, and the removal of wall and ceiling materials in that area. This closed that washroom to the facility, and to date is in an unfinished state. The roof was subsequently replaced in late 2021," she said.

In the spring of 2022, McGuigan said staff were preparing to open the facility for rentals once again, but during a cleaning inspection noticed there had been significant water leaks in the basement, and the kitchen area had some mould.

Staff contracted Pinchin Ltd. to investigate the mould and they said it was impacting the air quality in the whole facility. They also found other hazardous materials, including asbestos and lead paint, that will impact the remediation and necessitate precautions required by provincial regulations, in addition to those necessary for mould remediation.

Pinchin provided staff with a proposal to assist the municipality with the preparation of a scope of work, the selection of a contractor, oversight, and air monitoring of the mould remediation. The quoted price was \$12,625, plus H.S.T. McGuigan said that does not include the actual remediation or removal of materials, as that pricing would be determined through the RFP process with Pinchin. She said subsequently, Tulloch was contracted and completed a building condition assessment on July 20, 2023.



The Lochlin Community Centre. Photo by Lisa Gervais.

In the interim, McGuigan said the heat is set at 57 degrees and unused appliances have been turned off and cleaned. Hydro has been reduced from 553 kWh to 150 kWh. Internet is still being supplied as a report from IT showed large outside usage from August to October, and minimal usage the remainder of the year. McGuigan added rodent control continues and staff are monitoring the building regularly.

McGuigan said \$366,000 to \$600,000 was a "substantial cost" and they need to know what the community is looking for in terms of a hall going forward.

Deputy mayor Lisa Schell suggested coun. Bob Sisson, who is the ward councillor, and sits on the committee, convene a meeting. She noted the committee was re-established in 2023. "Have a discussion. It (the hall) has a lot of history within the community. A lot of the members of the committee are not going to want a new building plopped on the property. It won't hold the same. I think we need community input, especially from that committee, before this council makes any decision."

Coun. Tammy McKelvey said she also sits on the committee and has been trying to get a meeting, with full reports.

Sisson added, "is there such a thing as getting a second opinion? Just taking it for granted that these people are saying \$366,000, \$600,000, whatever." He suggested talking to a local engineering firm. "There's a lot of old things that get repaired. Why are we just going to demolish it? It doesn't make any sense." He said a number of municipal buildings have faults. "I don't understand why everybody is against this hall."

He noted the community centre was declared an emergency shelter in flooding, so has a use. "I think we owe it to these people to let them know what's going on. We've been dragging this on, and keeping it a secret from them for months. They need to know what's going on."

Mayor Bob Carter said the report was a starting point. He added he did not think anybody was against the hall, but it had been closed for over two years due to mould and asbestos.

He added, "the first step is to have this meeting, see where it goes, these people (the committee) can make recommendations but are not making decisions. Decisions will be made here."

## The spirit of giving

The Minden Hills Firefighters' Association (MHFA) has been running a community food and toy drive in the lead up to the holidays, in partnership with the Haliburton County Huskies. Volunteers from the fire department and Jr. A hockey team were stationed at Canadian Tire Nov. 26 collecting donations from the public. A 50/50 and silent auction was held during the Huskies' 2-1 win over the Stouffville Spirit Dec. 3, bringing in an additional \$3,705. All proceeds were handed over to the Minden Community Food Centre Dec. 4. The food and toys will go to families in-need to make sure all Highlands families can enjoy the holidays, said MHFA rep Jenn McGovern. (Mike Baker).

Members of the Minden Hills Firefighters' Association met with Jean Munroe and Don Veno, from the Minden Community Food Centre, Dec. 4, to hand over proceeds raised during the department's toy drive. Photos submitted.



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# TheHighlander

Published by The Highlander Newspaper Limited

OUR MISSION

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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Audited Circulation 8,871 (Jan 1 - June 30, 2017)  
Canadian Media Circulation Audit - Canadian Community Newspapers Association

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# Do the right thing

Ontario's Ombudsman this month made four recommendations to the County of Haliburton to ensure they do not send items into closed session they shouldn't.

It comes after a number of complaints were filed with Paul Dubé's office over a County decision April 27 to discuss the pending closure of the Minden emergency room behind closed doors.

The County felt it was appropriate, thinking if the Haliburton Highlands Health Services (HHHS) board of directors could discuss this kind of stuff in closed, they could too. Further, they thought then-HHHS CEO Carolyn Plummer and board chair David O'Brien were going to share some confidential information about the decision.

They got it wrong. The Ombudsman said the only thing that could have been in closed was a discussion about possible legal action.

It could be argued the decision was made under duress. After all, the County was dealing with an angry and panicky community. They wanted to see if they could get some answers, and perhaps even delay or stop the closure. However, they needed to do their homework a bit better.

In the grand scheme of things, would

having that meeting open to the public have made a difference? We don't think it would have. HHHS and its board were adamant about the closure then, and remain adamant about the closure now. The only chink in the armour has been CEO Veronica Nelson conceding they could have handled it better.

In his recommendations for better transparency, Dubé said councillors should be vigilant in adhering to their individual and collective obligation to ensure compliance under the Municipal Act.

Further, he said they should ensure no subject is discussed in closed unless it clearly comes within one of the statutory exceptions to the open meeting requirements. If they choose to use one of the exceptions, they have to include relevant legislation and provision. And if dealing with third parties, such as HHHS, they need to find out in advance what will be discussed to ensure they can use the exception.

Pulling back from this isolated incident, I am surprised there have not been more unfavourable Ombudsman rulings in our County. There have been times closed sessions have raised an eyebrow at all five governments: whether the County or

Algonquin Highlands, Highlands East, Dysart et al or Minden Hills. I suspect the reason we have not seen more Ombudsman rulings is there have not been many public complaints.

In the same vein, I believe some councillors in the County are on the knife's edge when it comes to declaring conflicts of interest. While the five governments have an integrity commissioner, I'm not sure he is being utilized to the full extent that he could be.

I encourage all politicians to review the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act. If anything tweaks at them, they must get an opinion. Simply thinking they are on good ground does not mean that they are on solid footing. Perhaps as a result of this Ombudsman's ruling, it will send a clear message that the public is watching and will not hesitate to file a complaint or complaints.

After all, politicians must not only do the right thing – but appear to be doing the right thing as well.

By Lisa Gervais

## CURTAIN CALL

# A Christmas tradition

*The Nutcracker* is a Russian ballet first performed in St. Petersburg in 1892. What is the appeal for this timeless tradition at this time of year? Is it the dancers? Is it the musical score? Is it the story?

The answer seems to be a resounding "yes" on all fronts.

When December comes, local dance troupes and professional ballet companies around the world tread the boards for yet another performance of *The Nutcracker*. It has become a tradition, but why?

Well, it depends on who you ask. From the point of view of the local dance instructor it is because many have danced it themselves when they were young and want to bring their love of it to their own students. It is being able to include all dancers from the little ones up to the star pupils and watching their journey from year to year. Sharing the magic of the dance with their own little take on it.

In Haliburton, Heritage Ballet presents *The Nutcracker* every year, and has been doing so for many years. And every year it brings the community together to celebrate this charming story. Parents, grandparents, friends from all over the area share in the magic this story conjures.

From a local dancer's point of view, it is the memories they make during the show. Getting to know each other and having fun doing it. Memories of their first performance as a snowflake or a mouse and then working their way up to the sugar plum fairy.

But what about those not involved in the production at all, what is it that keeps them going back year after year? It seems the music, and the magical quality of the story itself are a few of the reasons.

The most common reason, on a local level, is watching the children grow up and develop as dancers. To share in the joy of going from mice and snowflakes to all of a sudden being on point, then leaving for college and university.

The local performance has a place for all the dancers, at all different levels and development. Every year, there are dancers taking new roles and therefore individualized for whoever is stepping into the role. So, there is always a little bit of a difference year after year.

The kaleidoscope of colourful costumes is a delight for dancers and audience alike. The music and the elegance of the performers themselves as they tell the story through dance cast a spell of enchantment over the

audience.

The story itself takes place on Christmas Eve and involves festive parties, gift-giving, the dreams of children and the wonder of childhood, all wrapped up in the spectacle of a ballet. Tchaikovsky's original ballet had children playing a major role in it. If it was truly to be a ballet for children then the themes, the bright colours, the relatively short dances also play a part in its appeal to be performed by small, local dance schools, and attended by young and old alike.

Whether it is bringing a community together, supporting local performing arts, the lovely memories of attending the ballet as a child and wanting to recreate those same experiences as a parent, or grandparent, *The Nutcracker* continues to weave its magic and a Christmas tradition is born. It certainly has been in Haliburton County.

By Kimberly Strong-Knight

## HAVE AN OPINION?

Send your letters to [editor@thehighlander.ca](mailto:editor@thehighlander.ca)  
(300 words max)



## LETTERS

### Ontario needs to do better

*Dear editor,*

Ontario and its health system is plagued by a lack of transparency and accountability from its public stewards. When HHHS announced April 20 it was closing the Minden ER without public consultation, the community was left in the dark with neither rationale nor a reasonable public plan for implementation.

The decision appears to have been made in a vacuum and execution proceeded almost immediately. It was a dark time as fear and uncertainty was pervasive.

The Ontario Ombudsman was correct to point shortcomings of the political process at the County level, stating, “the open meeting requirements set out in s.239 of the Municipal Act permit the public to observe the political process.”

When the council went into closed, it limited the public’s knowledge and ability to participate. It was time lost, regardless of council’s intent.

While certain exceptions exist in the Municipal Act allowing closed sessions, exceptions should be carefully considered and if their use is in the public’s best interest. Closed meetings should be a last resort, not a preferred course of action.

The Ombudsman has investigated hundreds of closed meetings since 2008, it is complaint-driven. This is far too many. Ontario municipalities need to do better. The report does little to ease the pain of losing Minden’s ER, but provides a useful reminder to public officials - transparency is expected and required.

Even more perplexing is the Ombudsman does not have authority to review complaints about hospitals. They go to a hospital and/or a patient ombudsman, who generally review claims relating to patient care or patient experiences. It is under the Ministry of Health. Difficult to maintain the impartiality and level of transparency required. It enables boards of directors to manage public assets under a veil of secrecy without transparency or accountability. In the case of HHHS, repeated calls for a board chair to step down seem to have been ignored. We need to ask “why?” before it is too late to salvage our struggling healthcare system.

The Ontario Health Coalition released a report Dec. 5 that found 1,200 temporary or permanent closures across Ontario in 2023. This is far too many. Ontario needs to do better.

**Richard Bradley**  
**Minden Hills**

### Committee members not happy

*Dear editor,*

Members of the Minden Hills committee of adjustment have been told our services are no longer needed.

No reason was given and an ad posted to accept applications for the committee. We have had calls asking what the committee does. It adjudicates decisions for minor variances, if you are seeking a building permit and your application is outside the

## PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Fred Pyziak took this photo of a deer on the Drag River.

zoning regulations. It could be a house, porch, garage, additions or structures etc.

A member should have some knowledge of the zoning regulations, be able to navigate the town and cottage roads, and determine things like – is it too close to the water? Is the proposal really minor in nature? What is the impact on the surroundings?

The committee meets about once a month if there are applications. The town planner gives their opinion, and the applicant explains why they need a minor variance. Often the applicant brings a contractor, planner, engineer, architect, their neighbours and the committee determine if the application is minor, and makes a decision.

Normally, the committee has the final say but clearly that is not the case now, as the planner advises if it should be approved. The reality is the municipality has the same right as any others to object to decisions.

At our last meeting, we had five applications. We agreed with the planner’s recommendation on three. However, after listening to the applicants’ planners and engineers, we approved two applications that were not recommended; a variance on hazard land which was really in rural but the mapping was incorrect. The planner would not listen to our explanation. The committee was told the town planner was seeking to

overturn our decision, and appeal it.

There was a closed meeting, then we were dissolved. Chairman Dick Schell has been with the township 40 years, as an employee and volunteer, and on the committee 23 years. Most of the others have 10 years committee experience.

**Marilynne Lesperance**  
**Minden Hills**

### Targeting STR properties

*Dear editor,*

I have followed the progress of the proposed STR bylaw reported on extensively in this newspaper. The proposal is a bureaucratic overreach that will likely have significant unintended consequences.

I have enjoyed several vacations at properties rented via rental platforms like Airbnb. We (renters) are not all bad, noisy people and we do contribute to local economies.

One of the safest benefits of the status quo is that there is privacy for both owner and renter until money is exchanged.

You can get a vague sense of a cottage’s location through rental platforms, but actual

identifying details are withheld until a commitment is made. Signage or advertising of addresses, ownership contact details and license information anywhere public puts people’s property at risk.

All an unscrupulous person will have to do is a Google search with identifying STR details against a rental platform’s booking calendar to find a convenient unoccupied cottage, drive their truck up to the front door and empty it out before anyone could arrive to stop them.

As a tourist, I would not like to see my vacation ruined because the cottage I wanted to rent was vandalized, suddenly giving me nowhere to go. As a taxpayer, I do not want to see my tax dollars go to lawsuits against the municipality because their bylaw makes it easy to find properties to rob. As a neighbour of a rental, I do not want to see an increase in crime because the municipality has made theft safer and easier by painting targets on rental properties.

If some people are noisy, then improving the noise complaint process would likely be sufficient. It would allow the municipality to address specific issues rather than creating expensive bureaucracy for everyone.

**Sandra Whittle**  
**Haliburton**





Boshkung Smokehouse co-owner, Mathew Renda, recently announced the lakeside location is closing. *File.*

# Boshkung Brewing closing Lakeside locale

By Mike Baker

The Boshkung Lakeside retail operation in Carnarvon is closing permanently Dec. 31. Once the flagship location for the Boshkung Brewing Co. brand, the space has been noticeably less busy in recent years, says co-owner Mathew Renda. A decline in sales, rejig of the company’s brewing practices, and renewed focus on food services, has rendered the site redundant, Renda added. “It’s a difficult decision and not one we’ve taken lightly... this pivotal establishment has been the birthplace of numerous flagship

beers over the years. But it was time for us to say goodbye,” Renda said. “It used to be super popular and busy, but that’s slowed down over time.” When he and business partner, Mike Rae, bought the business earlier this year, one of their primary goals was to establish Boshkung as a leading player in the Highlands’ food and hospitality space. That was going to be a practical impossibility at Lakeside, given it operated out of the same building as Rhubarb Restaurant. “We couldn’t do our own food there, so that limited us,” Renda said.

With Rhubarb being on the market, there was uncertainty over what a potential sale could mean for Lakeside, which Renda noted also factored into the decision. Boshkung Brewing Co. was launched by Chris and Teri Mathews-Carl, who also own Rhubarb, in 2014. The brand expanded into downtown Minden in 2016, with the opening of Boshkung Social. After Renda and Rae bought the company, they brought Truss Foodworks into the fold, rebranding as Boshkung Smokehouse in fall 2023. The company has a restaurant located in Haliburton Forest, and a seasonal operation

on Kennis Lake during the summer. Around 90 per cent of Boshkung’s business this year has been done at the Social and Smokehouse, Renda said. Renda paid homage to the previous owners for helping to establish the Boshkung brand, in the Highlands and beyond. “We are super appreciative for all they’ve done – they started the business; this was their vision and now we’re trying to push it forward. This felt like the right time for us to move out on our own and start to build our own empire,” Renda said.

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# New business about empowering women

By Lisa Gervais

When Wind in the Willows owner Sylvia Holland noticed the former Evergreen Gallery was closing, she began to imagine a new space for women that would heal their mind, body and spirit.

The long-time Haliburton spa owner went to have a look at the soon-to-be vacant digs at 158 Highland St.

She recalls thinking, “you know what? We could have three rooms here. We could do this. We could do that.”

The ‘we’ included long-time Wind in the Willows client, and new employee, Shannon Feir, a nurse with more than 30 years’ experience.

They contacted the owner, the same owner of the Wind in the Willows building, to say they were interested in taking over the lease up the street, “and the rest is history,” Holland said.

History – or in this case herstory – was made the night of Dec. 7 as Willow Organics held its grand opening.

The Feir family did a lot of the renovating, with help from a drywaller, and finishing work by ACM Designs.

Holland and Feir are co-owners of the new enterprise.

“Shannon is the nurse and I’m the aesthetician,” Holland says while showing off the space.

One room features a new laser machine, and staff have been trained on how to use it for various treatments. Feir has been trained to do injectables.

“She’s great at what she does,” Holland says. “She has 30-odd years of nursing experience. That’s what I wanted.”

She added, “Shannon and I work very, very well together. Our mindset is very much the same in that we wanted to be eco-conscious. We wanted it to be organic.”

They are featuring an organic line of products from Hungary (Eminence Organic

Skin Care) with a head office in Vancouver. Holland enthuses that the company plants a tree for every product sold. Another item is Chloe and Crown candles, with a pledge to feed a child for every product sold.

For Holland, who has been in business 30 years, the new venture is “exhilarating. I love what I do. I love working with people because when I give, I get.” She will continue to run Wind in the Willows and split her time between both businesses. Feir will also be at the spa doing non-organic injections.

Feir said for the two, it’s all about empowering women. “It’s more than just beauty. It’s just connectedness.”

For example, she said some women come in for Botox injections, and she sometimes talks them out of it, because she senses they have come because they are angry with their husband or struggling with their children and “they just want to feel better.

“From a nurse’s perspective, everyone’s nervous system is a hot mess. They’re putting chemicals on their face that are giving them cancer. It’s not healthy. If you look at organic services and organic products, we believe it’s about education about those products, and about the nervous system. Everyone is stuck in fight or flight, which causes chronic disease.

“So, if you can come into a place where you can drop your shoulders, take a deep breath, reset your nervous system, and learn how to do that in a place that’s safe, since a lot of people don’t want to go to counselling or other modalities. But they will come for what we offer.

“Women need to be empowered to put themselves on the priority list. Coming in here for treatments is putting themselves on the priority list. It’s why we created memberships,” Feir said.

Holland agreed it’s all about nurturing. “Our nervous systems are up to here... if



Shannon Feir and Sylvia Holland. Photo by Lisa Gervais.

you can find a little sanctuary, somewhere you can go and be nourished, mind, body and spirit, whether it’s a laser... and I’ve done laser and had someone crying on the bed, which had nothing to do with laser – it was a safe place to let it go. We want to create that space where they can let their hair down, let it all out, or just let us hold a space for

them. It’s a place where, when they walk out, they’re going to feel better than when they came in.”

Willow Organics is at 158 Highland St. Haliburton. You can find out about their offerings at willoworganics.ca. You can email them at info@willoworganics.ca or call 705-457-1416.



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Thank you, Carol, for your years of service, hard work, and commitment to raising funds for the health of our community. May your retirement be filled with joy, relaxation, and new adventures.

With gratitude and fondness from the Foundation and HHHS teams.





**Haliburton Rotary throws community Christmas party**

The Haliburton Rotary club hosted its annual community Christmas party at A.J. LaRue Arena and the Haliburton Legion Dec. 8. The club offered free skating at the arena, and then food and drink at the legion, accompanied by music, face painting and a visit from Santa Claus.

Above: Ursula Devoin spins cotton candy. Top right: The Haliburton Rotary Club rented the ice for skaters this past Friday night. Right: There were plenty of Christmas carols.

*Photos by Lisa Gervais.*



**Fill-a-cruiser**

The auxiliary unit of the Haliburton Highlands detachment of the OPP held its annual fill-a-cruiser event in Haliburton and Minden Dec. 9. Once again, the Haliburton locations were Park's Foodland and Todd's Independent Grocer, while the Minden venues were Easton's Valu-Mart and Dollo's Foodland. The public came to the grocery stores to donate a food item to support local food banks. The stores also made up bags with needed items for purchase, and were accepting cash donations. "All food items stay in the communities where they are collected," said provincial constable Michael Melnychuk. He added, "the OPP would like to thank the public for their on-going support for this event, as well as the grocery store owners, managers and staff." They'll be at Wilberforce Foodland Dec. 16 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. *(Lisa Gervais).*

The fill-a-cruiser event returned to the County this past Saturday. *Submitted.*

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Sapling, by Byron Hodgins  
(oil on panel, 8x14) \$1,200



Minden Rapids, by Byron Hodgins  
(oil on canvas, 24x36) \$1,400



Fall Sunset, by Al Van Mil (oil on  
acrylics mixed media, 48x24) \$1,150



Monarchs of the North, by Charles Pachter  
(framed print, 12x16) \$1,100



Green Barn Reflected, by Charles Pachter  
(acrylic on canvas, 18x14) \$10,000



Arboreal Observation #2 - Birch, by  
Corin Ford Forrester (archival digital  
print, 12x18) \$795

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**Santa comes to Wilberforce**

Santa Claus came to Wilberforce on Sunday, Dec. 10 with a parade at 12:30 p.m. and everyone then invited to the Lloyd Watson Centre for lots of fun. Children 10 and under registered at the door to receive a gift, photo with Santa and more. The event was sponsored by the ward 4 volunteer fire department and the Santa Fund Committee.  
(Lisa Gervais).

Top: The Foulds family. Middle: South Algonquin Trails made an appearance. Above: A fire hydrant and a Dalmatian. *Photos submitted.*





**From Russia with love**

Haliburton’s Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion was converted into 1920s St. Petersburg, Russia this past weekend as Heritage Ballet presented its iconic *The Nutcracker*. Skyline Dance Studio students presented three shows Dec. 9-10. Director and choreographer, Julie Barban, led the children through their paces with help from parents, Dani Smolen for tutus and alterations, Highlands Summer Festival, and Haliburton Lions Club. This year’s production was dedicated to the late Lisa Kerr. *(Lisa Gervais).*

Top left: A bit of Russian dancing by the boys during the Dec. 9 matinee of *The Nutcracker* at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion. Top right: Marie’s godfather, Drosselmeyer, with rag doll presents (played by Jayson Leslie). Left: Lily Manning played a peacock. Above left: The mouse king, Wilson Klodt Wong. Above right: Marie sleeps on a settee with her nutcracker. *Photos by Lisa Gervais.*

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# Huskies hold on for fifth straight win

By Lisa Gervais

The hometown Huskies' Izayah Luddington scored his third goal of the season Dec. 9 to secure a blue and white 3-2 win over the Pickering Panthers.

The assists on the game-winning goal went to a red-hot Patrick Saini, his 27th helper of the season, and Lucas Stevenson, with his 14th dish.

Saini was named Warrior East Conference player of the month for November, after he led the entire 24-team league with 22 points in 10 games.

"Those are cool awards to win. You never really see them coming but when you get them, it's cool," Saini said Dec. 11.

It was the captain who opened the scoring in this game at the S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena, potting one home at 9:05 from Stevenson.

In the second frame, Ty Petrou notched his eighth on the year, from Saini and Luddington.

While the Huskies looked to have this game in hand, the Panthers had other ideas. Joey Zhang scored at 9:32 of the second. Then, Joey Crngarov scored at 7:36 of the third to notch it at twos, before Luddington broke the tie and sent the Huskies to a record of 17 wins, 13 losses and two ties for 36 points, and seventh in the East Conference. It marked the Huskies fifth straight win.

Brett Fullerton was between the pipes, stopping 27 of 29 shots.

It was another three-point night for Saini, who now has 22 goals, and 27 assists, for 49 points on the season.

He felt the whole team "was going" and played with "excitement" Saturday afternoon. "It was a big game. We're trying to climb the standings. We've been playing really good. I think everybody was really working and motivated to get that win. Now we're starting to look forward to this weekend as well, going into Christmas."

Saini said coming back after giving up the two-goal lead – including the Panthers second on a bounce – was huge. "It shows



Patrick Saini looks for a tip in front of Panthers goalie Ethan Beattie. Photo by Lisa Gervais.

how much we've grown as a group because those goals can be back-breakers and send you into a bit of a spiral. I think it brought us closer together and we made sure we were able to score not too long after and hold onto the lead."

Saini said they are "not out of the race by any means. It's such a close race that if you keep going on this tear, you might be able

to jump up quite a few spots. I think we're really starting to come together as a team. All the boys are close. We had a lot of younger guys at the start of the year. It was a whole new level for them. I think they're really starting to figure out how they need to play in their role, the speed, and it's starting to show on the ice for us."

The Huskies are at home Dec. 16 to the

North York Rangers. Puck drop is 4 p.m. The squad then travels to Markham Dec. 17 for a 1:30 p.m. tilt before heading into their Christmas break. After Christmas, they are home Dec. 29 to the Toronto Patriots at 7 p.m., and then Dec. 31 to the Wellington Dukes at 2 p.m.

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Top: The Huskies celebrate the first goal of the game. Above: Lucas Stevenson battles for the puck. Photos by Lisa Gervais.

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The Storm celebrates a goal in a Dec. 9 win. Photo by Lisa Gervais.

# Storm U15 silver stick champs

On Sunday, Dec. 10, the Pepper Mill Steak and Pasta House U15 LL team faced off against the Kemptville Royals at the A.J. LaRue Arena for the semi-final game of the U15 LL Silver Stick tournament.

In the first period, both teams were back-and-forth in each end but no goals were scored. Next, Eric Mueller finally scored his first goal of the game with only two minutes remaining in the period. It was 1-0 Storm going into the third period.

The third period started with Mueller scoring his second goal of the game. With five minutes left in the third, Brayden Hamilton scored to make it 3-0 Storm, propelling the team

into the finals.

The championship game was against the Brock Wild. The first and second period saw both teams battling to get a goal but neither could get one between the pipes.

In the third period, however, the Storm got a powerplay opportunity where Isaac Borgdorff scored a goal 33 seconds in. Unfortunately for the Wild, another penalty was called and the powerplay continued. The Storm capitalized as Mueller scored to make the final score 2-0, leading to the home town team heading to Niagara Falls in January for the Silver Stick International Finals. (Submitted).

SCOREBOARD		
<b>Dec. 5</b> U11 rep Curry Chevrolet VS Sturgeon 7-3 W  U18 rep Tom Prentice & Sons VS Millbrook • 3-1 W  <b>Dec. 6</b> U11 LL Minden Car Quest VS Cottage Country Building Supplies • 2-2 T	<b>U13 LL Cheryl Smith RE/MAX VS Up Right Roofing • 5-5 T</b>  <b>Dec. 8</b> U15 rep Haliburton Timbermart VS Newcastle • 5-2 W  U18 rep Tom Prentice & Sons VS Orono 3-2 W  <b>Dec. 9</b> U11 Cottage Country Building Supplies VS South Muskoka • 6-2 W	<b>Dec. 10</b> U11 LL Car Quest Minden VS Almaguin 8-2 L  U18 LL Sharp Electric VS South Muskoka 7-0 L U15 Rep Haliburton Timbermart VS Lindsay • 4-3 L  U11 LL Car Quest Minden VS Almaguin 4-3 L  U18 Rep Tom Prentice & Sons VS Millbrook • 4-3 L

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## STARS of the WEEK



### Zach Lowe

Zach recorded back-to-back shutouts in the semi-final and final. Zach had to be strong in net as the shots came fast and furious. He made several game-saving stops.



### Eric Mueller

Eric's speed and hard shot resulted in timely goals this weekend that were instrumental in his team's victory. Eric scored six goals in the tournament, including the game-winner in the semi-final.



### Isaac Borgdorff

Isaac was "Captain Clutch" scoring the game-winning goal to send his team to the international finals in January. His solid play and leadership in the dressing room is invaluable. Photos by Tim Tofflemire.



EVENTS

**Dec. 15, 2 to 4 p.m.**  
It's Tea and Talk time at Rails End Gallery. Fay Wilkinson and Arlene Stiles will be on hand to lead and stimulate discussion about the theme of 'dream', using simple art materials, and guided conversation. Spaces are limited. Pre-register by emailing [info@railsendgallery.com](mailto:info@railsendgallery.com).

**Dec. 16, 10 a.m to 3 p.m**  
Wrap it Up student exhibition at Haliburton School of Art + Design. Taking place in the great hall, featuring students enrolled in ceramics, artist blacksmith, drawing and painting, fibre arts, photo arts, and visual and creative arts programs.

**Dec. 16, noon to 4 p.m.**  
Turtle Tropical holiday open house at Turtle Guardians, located at 6712 Gelert Rd. Shop for nature-inspired gifts and met live turtles and snakes. Drinks and light snacks provided.

**Dec. 16, 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.**  
Children's Christmas Party at the Stanhope Firefighters' Community Hall. Featuring snacks and drinks, live entertaining, a gift for each children 12 and under, and a visit with Santa Claus. This event is free and limited to those living in Stanhope township. In-person registration is required. Hosted by the Stanhope Firefighters' Association. Email [sthanhopefirefighters@gmail.com](mailto:sthanhopefirefighters@gmail.com) for more information.

**Dec. 20**  
Stop by the Haliburton County Public Library for socialization and jigsaw puzzles. Offered at the Stanhope location from noon to 3 p.m. and Wilberforce from 3 to 7 p.m. No registration required.

**Dec. 22 to Jan. 6**  
Drop into any Haliburton County Public Library branch over the winter break for a fun selection of free crafts and colouring pages. Children of all ages welcome. Visit [haliburtonlibrary.ca](http://haliburtonlibrary.ca) for branch locations and hours.

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION EVENTS

**Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 129 Haliburton weekly activities**  
**Mondays:** Bridge at 1 p.m. in the Schofield Rm.  
**Tuesdays:** League darts 7 p.m. Haliburton Army Cadets practice 6:30-9 p.m.  
**Wednesdays:** Bid euchre 1 p.m. Main hall, and bingo, doors open at 5 p.m, with games starting at 7 p.m. Weekly jackpot of \$500.  
**Thursdays:** General meeting third Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. & ladies auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.  
**Fridays:** Meat draw, five draws, five prizes each draw, first draw at 4:30 p.m., last draw at 6:30 p.m., tickets \$2 per draw. Ed Pickard, MC. Friday fun darts 4:30 p.m. onwards.  
**Saturdays:** 50/50 draw 4 p.m. Tickets \$1 each, available in the Clubroom.  
  
Clubroom hours: Mon 3-6 p.m., Tues 3-9 p.m., Wed/Thurs 3-6 p.m., Fri 3-7 p.m. & Sat 3-6 p.m.  
  
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**Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 624 Wilberforce**  
Tree of Warmth at Branch 624 is now accepting donations for the Wilberforce and Cardiff elementary school children. Homemade or store-bought socks, scarves, mittens, gloves, and socks would be appreciated. Take your donations to the Legion Wednesdays to Saturdays between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. or drop off at Agnew's General Store.  
  
President's Levy Dec. 30 from 3 to 6 p.m. Drop in, refreshments available.  
  
If you are planning an event, our Ladies Auxiliary would be pleased to cater. Please call the branch at 705-448-2221 to arrange your event.

**Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 519 Coboconk**  
**Second Monday of the month:** General meeting - 7:30 p.m. No meetings in January or February.  
**Tuesdays:** Soup and sandwich lunch, 11:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Euchre - 1 p.m. Open Darts - 7 p.m.  
**First Wednesday of the month:** Big Buck Bid Euchre from 11 a.m. \$15 per person.  
**Saturdays:** Meat Roll at 3 p.m. Dec. 16 will be turkeys and hams. This will be the final Meat Roll for 2023, starting up again Jan. 6, 2024.

**Royal Canadian Legion - Mabel D. Brannigan Branch 636 Minden**  
**Monday - Thursday:** Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. with regular menu and daily special including Liver Lovers' Tuesday.  
**Friday** Fish & Chips & Wings. Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and dinner 4-7 p.m.  
**Saturday** all day breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with meat draws at 11 a.m.  
  
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Tuesday: Euchre 1-3 p.m.  
Thursday: Cribbage 1-3 p.m., Darts 7-9 p.m. and euchre 7-9 p.m.



PHOTO CONTEST

The Highlander is looking for your best photos for inclusion in this year's The Highlander Handbook.

We are looking for pictures that show the best the Highlands has to offer in all of its seasons. The best submissions will be printed on this year's cover and others inside. We are looking for good quality, high resolution photos (JPEG, 300 dpi).

Please limit 3 entries per person. Deadline April 10, 2024 by 5 p.m. Please ensure the photographer's name and contact details are in the email. Send entries to [production@thehighlander.ca](mailto:production@thehighlander.ca)

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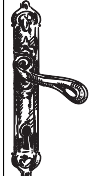
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**Thank you**

The family of **MARY STIVER** would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who came out to wish **MARY** a happy 90th birthday.

Mary could not believe how many people came to visit with her, she felt so special. (over 175 people came through on Saturday).

Mary is a very humble person and was so moved that she has touched the lives of so many people in this community both locally and as cottagers.

To the extended family and friends that drove so far to visit with her, **THANK YOU**. Special recognition and appreciation to:

- Lynn Nelson for doing Mary's hair that day. She looked beautiful and she felt beautiful.
- Steven Nipper Stevens ~ the food was amazing.
- Jessica Rider ~ thanks so much for tending the bar.
- Independent Grocers ~ the cake was perfect.
- Stanhope Fire Department for the special presentation.

It meant so much to Mary.

90 years is a landmark year and we were so pleased to receive greetings from PM Trudeau, Governor General Mary Simon and Algonquin Highlands Mayor Liz Danielson.

Also want to thank those who sent birthday wishes via email and text messages. All have been printed off and shared with her.

*Advice on a long healthy life from Mary: Love nature, enjoy wine, and go fishing every chance you get.*

*Advice from the children of 90 year old parents: Love them every day, you are lucky to still have them.*

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47	A	S	S	D						49	O	P	T	S	O	U	T											
51	S	C	H	O	O	L	C	H													53	A	P	E	R	O	N	E
56	D	R	E	W	N	E	A	R													57	E	L	I	D	E	S	
58	R	E	E							59	E	T	T	A							60	N	U	D	I	E	S	
61	Y	E	P							62	G	A	S	X							63	S	P	E	E	D	O	

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

B	M	T			P	L	O			I	T	S	E	E	M	S						
14	R	O	I				15	I	O	U			16	N	E	W	S	D	A	Y		
17	I	N	A		18	S	N	I	T			19	S	T	A	T	I	N	S			
20	C	O	M	E	A	N	D		21	F	O	R	G	E	T	I	T					
		22	T	A	R				23	I	A	M			24	F	O	S	S			
25	F	O	R	B	I	D	D	I	N	G	28	W	A	R								
30	O	N	I	O	N	Y			31	L	I	E	O	N								
32	Y	E	A				33	F	I	G		35	A	T	M		36	I	B	M		
							39	H	E	N	R		40			41	S	A	R	N	I	A
													44	E	A	N	U	D	G	E		
45	T		46	A	R	T					47	M	A	G			48	E	E	E		
49	W	R	E	S	T	L	I	N	G	52	F	O	R	M	A	T						
55	E	M	S	P	A	C	E			56	S	E	N	S	A	T	E					
57	R	E	C	O	R	D	S			58	O	T	C			59	N	E	D			
60	P	R	O	T	E	S	T			61	N	A	E			62	D	R	X			

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



**OBITUARY**



*In Loving Memory of*  
**Blair Hanthorn**  
*Canada/Europe - RCAF*

Passed away peacefully in Ross Memorial Hospital, affectionately known as “Poppie”, he was just shy of his 100th birthday. Predeceased by his wife Vivian, his sister Beulah Robson, and brother Gayle. His brother Closson lives in Ohio and sister Lorna in Fenelon Falls. Son Christopher lives in BC, daughter Lou (Weber) in Gelert, grandsons Endres, Max, Hansel, Jordan and Bradley, great grandchildren Misa, Elsie, Chloe, Max, Fenris, Ravi and Soren.

Blair always called himself a Burnt River boy and loved being busy outdoors. He was an educator for 35 years and retired as Vice Principal of Mariposa Elementary school in 1985. He served in WWII as a WAG and stayed close to his crew for the rest of their lives. He was an avid “Barbershopper” and directed the local chapter.

Blair loved to play piano, drive, eat his cornflakes and keep daily notes and drawings. He spent 3 years at Lakeland Extensicare after Vivian passed away in 2020, he was loved and well respected there and had dear friends and caregivers.

Donations to the Veterans Transition Network can be made through the Lakeland Cremation/Funeral Services in Lindsay on Moose Road, a service will be held there for both Blair and Vivian on Dec. 22nd 2023. A more detailed obituary is also posted at <https://www.lakelandfuneralcentre.com/obituary/GrenvilleBlair-Hanthorn>

**SERVICES**

**INVITATION** – An introduction of the Bahai Faith “A pathway to World Peace” Your home or mine. Call Gord 705-754-0939 or e-mail to 5050guitarhero@gmail.com. Thank You, Gord Kidd

**KITCHEN AID STAND ALONE MIXERS** Does your Kitchen Aid Stand Alone Mixer leak oil, is it noisy or needing repair? We repair and service your machine with a warranty. We also sell new and refurbished mixers with warranty. Call Cliff - 705-286-3351

**FOR SALE**

**FOR SALE** – 4 Michelin Snow Tires LTX-A/TM LT275/70R18 – 125/122R used 1 season. \$400. Call Dan at 416-985-0597

**FOR RENT**

**FOR RENT** – Clean 1 bedroom apt across from Shoppers Drug Mart, Haliburton. Available Dec 1st Call 705-341-1710

**FOR RENT** 2 bedroom, 2 bath condo in Haliburton. Large kitchen & living area. Private outdoor patio. Includes parking space and storage locker. Located in lovely Granite View complex within walking distance to amenities and lake. Available January 1st. Call 705-854-0103

**BEDROOM FOR RENT | SINGLE PERSON** – Large bedroom for rent in a beautiful, shared home in the village. Close to all amenities and college. \$1,000/month, utilities and wifi included. Please text Sue on 647-824-5734. References and security check required.

**SELF-CONTAINED STORAGE UNITS** for rent - Industrial Park Road, Various Sizes. Call (705) 457-1224

**GOING AWAY?**

Read the complete paper online each week. Sign up at [TheHighlander.ca](http://TheHighlander.ca)

**HELP WANTED**



**WE ARE HIRING!**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSOCIATE**

Would you like to be part of the fundraising team working to optimize health and wellbeing in Haliburton County? Do you have a passion for community building and local health care?

We are looking for a dynamic full-time Administrative Associate to be the first point of contact in the HHHS Foundation office and to support a small fundraising team. Duties range from reception to donation processing, financial reporting to volunteer management and more. The successful candidate will be well-organized, computer savvy, and able to juggle multiple priorities.

We look forward to hearing from interested applicants by 6 pm Monday, December 18, 2023 to

**Melanie Klodt Wong**, Executive Director  
HHHS Foundation, [mklodtwong@hhhs.ca](mailto:mklodtwong@hhhs.ca)

Please visit [hhhs.ca/about/careers](http://hhhs.ca/about/careers) for the full job posting and [hhhs.ca/foundation](http://hhhs.ca/foundation) to learn more about the HHHS Foundation.



**HIRING**

**Full Time Food Services Manager**

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- Benefits
- Positive Work Environment
- Professional Atmosphere
- Experience in Management a must
- Job shifts are as needed

Please apply via our website, by email at [jobs@gardensofhaliburton.ca](mailto:jobs@gardensofhaliburton.ca) or by calling 705-457-4848 for more information.

**WE ARE HIRING**

DRIVERS NEEDED

**HOME TO SCHOOL AM/PM**

- GOOD WITH PEOPLE?
- LOVE TO DRIVE?
- HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE?
- WILLING TO LEARN?
- LIKE AN ENJOYABLE / HAPPY WORKPLACE?

Send Your Resume To:  
[ascheffee@haliburtonbuslines.ca](mailto:ascheffee@haliburtonbuslines.ca)

More Information Call:  
(705) 457-8882



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**WANTED**

**J & D TOWING & SERVICE STATION** - will pay top dollar for scrap cars. We also provide towing services as well as flat bed. Call Jim 705-447-2113

**WANTED** – 1942 to 1947 Ford or Mercury ½ ton parts but will buy complete vehicle. Call 705-286-3823  
**ALSO:** Any suggestions on someone I could contact to do a weekly massage. Please let me know. Call 705-286-3823

**NOTICES**

**HAS ALCOHOL TAKEN CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE?** Alcoholics Anonymous meets Sunday 10:30 a.m. at St Anthony’s, 27 Victoria St. Haliburton, ON

**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS** meets Wednesday nights 7:00 p.m. at Highland Hills United Church, 21 Newcastle St., Minden – rear door. Thinking about alcohol. Thinking about stopping. We’ve been there. We can help!

**AL ANON- WE CARE**, are you troubled by someone’s drinking? Meetings: Thursdays 7 p.m., St. Anthony’s 27 Victoria Street, Haliburton, and Mondays 7 p.m. at Highland Hills United Church, 21 Newcastle, Rear Entrance, Minden. 1-888-4AL-ANON (1-888-425-2666) al-anon.org. All are welcome.



**It's that time of year again**

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**TheHighlander**



I Now Pronounce You ...

by Barbara Olson  
© ClassiCanadian Crosswords

The title is a good hint to understanding why some letters are circled.

- Across**
- 1 The majority of non-Québécois, informally
  - 7 Muppet with a unibrow
  - 11 Rocker Randy's Winnipeg band
  - 14 Senior \_\_\_\_ (lapse)
  - 15 Cherubic archer
  - 16 Hamburger's article
  - 17 River of Omaha, Nebraska
  - 18 So-called "black gold"
  - 20 "Jurassic Park" writer
  - 22 Calm with a treat
  - 23 Ignore a piece of Polonius's advice
  - 24 Walk in the park, maybe
  - 27 Trendy toast topper, for short
  - 28 \_\_\_\_-easter
  - 29 \_\_\_\_ segno (musical repeat sign)
  - 30 Child in the kitchen, for one
  - 34 Tennis great who wrote "Open"
  - 37 High pH substance
  - 38 Nautical term for a folding seat
  - 42 Something under the table
  - 43 Brief "will do"
  - 44 Photo shop instr.
  - 45 Marching band flutes
  - 47 Set a value on: Abbr.
  - 49 Decides to skip, as an offer
  - 51 Parent volunteer on a field trip, say
  - 56 Came ever closer
  - 57 Drops a letter
  - 58 \_\_\_\_ Dolly, Jennifer Lawrence's "Winter's Bone" role
  - 59 James portrayed by Beyoncé
  - 60 Films lacking a costume designer?
  - 61 "Ya got that right"
  - 62 Tums or Roloids alternative
  - 63 Swimwear with a boomerang logo

1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10		11	12	13
14							15					16		
17							18					19		
20							21							
24	25	26					27					28		
29							30							
34														
38														
47	48						49							
51														
56														
58														
61														

- Down**
- 1 Alarm clock switch
  - 2 \_\_\_\_ me tangere (that which must not be touched, as art)
  - 3 Former vehicle financing org.
  - 4 Liable to leave you breathless?
  - 5 Saved for future listening
  - 6 Prepare tea leaves
  - 7 Where creatures of the night hang out?
  - 8 Literary Ralph Waldo \_\_\_\_
  - 9 Role for Renee in "Chicago"
  - 10 Gillette razor word
  - 11 Husband or wife, jokingly
  - 12 Affix, as a ribbon
  - 13 \_\_\_\_ off (flashing)
  - 19 Trashy art
  - 21 King of tragedy, father of Goneril
  - 24 Take \_\_\_\_ off (call in sick)
  - 25 Trump slogan acronym
  - 26 Favourite child's opposite
  - 28 Org. led by Gary Bettman
  - 30 Fan-\_\_\_\_ (amateur writing)
  - 31 Benz brainchild of 1886
  - 32 Confederate general Robert
  - 33 "Newton" cookie fillers
  - 35 It's with you all day and leaves you at night
  - 36 Hog house
  - 39 Trendy dudes of the '60s
  - 40 Deadly powder formed from spores
  - 41 Rick's love in "Casablanca"
  - 45 Prepare for a drive
  - 46 "Let \_\_\_\_" (song by 11-Across)
  - 47 Equally drought-ravaged
  - 48 Rockslide rubble
  - 49 Soul singer Adams
  - 50 Plays before the main act
  - 52 Universal donor, briefly
  - 53 Drooling dog of comics
  - 54 Must-have
  - 55 Where one might 45-Down

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- Partial Dentures
- Same Day Repairs & Relines
- House Calls

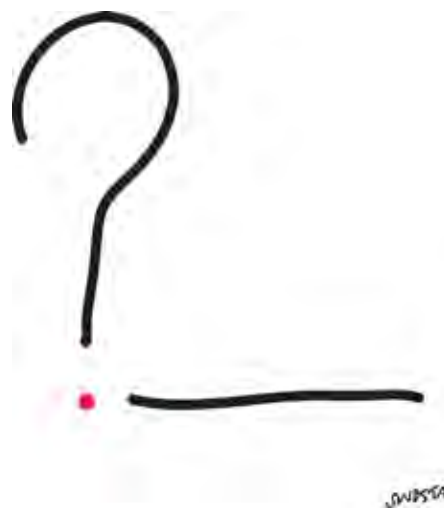
143 Bobcaygeon Rd., Minden, ON  
stevekerr.denturist@gmail.com  
stevekerrdentureclinic.com

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you stop being curious  
is the day you know nothing.

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

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• A great family compound

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**LITTLE KENNISIS LAKE • \$1,599,900**

- Custom built 1700 sq ft 4 bedroom, 2 bath home
- Natural stone landscaping, stone patio, firepit
- Extensive lakeside trek deck with glass railing
- 1.5 car detached garage, new propane furnace
- Unspoiled side walkout basement



**BURNT RIVER • \$899,900**

- 4+1 bedroom, 3 bath, 2500 sq ft home on 18 acres
- Expansive river view from glass panel viewing deck
- Full basement with high ceilings, rec room area
- Detached insulated 24' x 28" garage with 2 garage doors
- 1900 sq ft heated insulated shop, phase 3, separate hydro meter



**BURNT RIVER • \$849,900**

- Over 200 acres and 10,000 ft frontage on Burnt River
- 3 separately deeded parcels
- Seasonal road access, well treed and lots of wildlife
- All season access to "rail trail" for skidoo/atv enjoyment
- Miles of canoe and kayaking opportunities



**GULL LAKE • \$755,000**

- 3 bedroom open concept cottage with bunkie
- 202 ft frontage on clean "weed free" deep water
- Sunset views, year round access, ample parking
- Grandfathered building location close to waters edge
- Close to Minden and all amenities, comes turn key ready



**KENNAWAY ROAD • \$260,000**

- Build your dream home on this 43 acres lot
- Paved year round municipal access
- Close to prime lakes and recreational trails
- Minutes to Haliburton village and all amenities
- Abundance of mature maples for syrup production



**DRAG RIVER • \$215,000**

- 1.62 acre building lot on year round private road
- 16' X 12' shed, firepit, outhouse, 100 amp hydro
- Situated on nice swimming hole, walk to public access
- Located at end of quiet road, close to amenities
- Level area to build your dream home or cottage



**ESSON LAKE • \$175,000**

- 0.35 acre building lot with 110 feet waterfront
- Driveway in leading to partially cleared site
- Trailer available to stay in while you build
- Miles of boating opportunity
- Close to all amenities



**OFFICE SPACE • \$750 / MONTH + HST**

- Main street village barn location, high traffic area
- Second floor double office loft unit, 400 sq ft
- All inclusive except internet & phone
- Common area washroom, sitting room and kitchen
- Available immediately, price + HST

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**TEAM**



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Chris James\*\*

Marcia Bell\*

Anthony vanLieshout\*\*\*

Erin Nicholls\*

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