

# A guided tour of oil history

HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTOS

About 200 Girl Guides and their leaders from across southwestern Ontario discovered the history of Petrolia's oil industry. There were girls from Petrolia, Sarnia, Ilderton, Kerwood, Strathroy, Wallaceburg and Chatham. Petrolia Guide leader Carrie Pluck was behind the trip. She had been to one of Petrolia Discovery's open houses over the summer and thought it would make a very interesting outing for the girls. "Everywhere I go I'm always looking for places I think the girls would enjoy," says Pluck. "I've only lived in this area for two years...so I'm just learning the oil history and I was absolutely fascinated by it and our guiding community goes from Sarnia all the way to St. Thomas... and they don't know the oil history here." While many people associate Girl Guides with camping, Pluck says discovering the community fits perfectly into the new curriculum the clubs are now using. Petrolia Discovery Board member Liz Welsh says there have not been this many children wandering the grounds of Petrolia Discovery for years. "Oh my gosh my heart, to see all these kids out here enjoying it. We've had nothing but good feedback." She hopes to see more groups in the future.



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# The Independent

Serving Petrolia and Central Lambton

Vol. 7, Issue 11

Newsstand Price \$1.50 per week

Thursday, November 14, 2019

## SNOWY REMEMBRANCE



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Students from Queen Elizabeth II, Ecole Hillcrest and St. Philip's stand silently as the last post is played by Dan Gimple as Remembrance Day is marked in Petrolia's Victoria Park Monday. For more coverage of the regions ceremonies, see pages 5, 9, 10 and 11.

## Lakeshore residents say conservation authority slowing erosion control projects

Heather Wright  
The Independent

Living on the shores of Lake Huron seems idyllic, but Kristen Rodrigues has heard a lot of horror stories from lakeshore homeowners about shoreline erosion.

Rodrigues is the spokesperson for a new group called the Shoreline Erosion Collective Coalition, a group of homeowners from Sarnia to Grand Bend who are watching high water and waves eat away at the shoreline, worrying about their property.

Rodrigues says the SECC has been formed out of frustration as individual landowners approach the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority with plans to shore up their piece of the waterfront to

protect their investment, only to spend tens of thousands of dollars and end up mired in red tape.

Rodrigues, who was part of the community action group to stop the Cedar Point Wind project, was approached by a number of friends who were completely frustrated in their efforts to spend their own money to protect the shoreline. "Everybody is terrified to say their names or share their story because they don't want that to be held against them with the conservation authority," she says. "But devastation is happening; we see it on the public shoreline and it is happening on private property, too."

And it is having an effect not only on the landowners property but their state of mental health. "There are people who are worried

they're not going to have a property in the morning."

Rodrigues adds the lakeshore residents have "horror stories" of trying to deal with the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority to find a fix.

One man, she says wanted to fix his property at Bonnie Doon. "He went through over two-and-a-half years of trying to get a permit. He thought he'd go through the process, he thought they'd tell him what he needed to do...after two years and \$80,000 and at the end of it, they still told him no."

Some residents have used engineers recommended by the conservation authority who have come up with plans which would cost \$350,000 to complete "making it totally cost prohibitive."

And she says, the authority emphasizes the use of armour stone (the large rock walls seen along Kenwick Park in Bright's Grove) as the best protection - a method Rodrigues says doesn't work for everyone.

One landowner wanted to replace a steel wall on his shoreline which had worked for 40 years but was in need of repair. He was turned down.

The man worked with an engineer to come up with another plan, but in the meantime, the gales off the lake in mid October did more damage to his property which led to his foundation cracking.

Rodrigues says landowners are frustrated.

"You ask them what you need, you give it to them and then they

ask for something else," she says.

While the handful of members of the new coalition are worried about coming forward Glen Kalyta is not. The Hillcrest Heights resident has been dealing with the conservation authority ever since a neighbour reported he was building a deck on his waterfront without a permit.

Kalyta says an officer came to see the deck and noticed the gabion baskets which have been protecting the shoreline for over 40 years. The conservation authority official expressed concern about them, saying the local authority stopped authorizing the use of the wire cages filled with rocks because they can be a tripping hazard.

SEE SHORELINE PG 2

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## RUSHING THE NET



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Jack Bernardo from Sarnia heads for the net during a tennis tournament at the Mary Beach Tennis Courts in Petrolia Tuesday. Matt Mueller organized the small tournament with young people he was teaching over the summer.

## Finishing Lori's ride

Heather Wright  
The Independent

Natalie Neville can't believe friends and neighbours and total strangers from across Canada are going to take up a cycling fundraiser where her wife left off.

The Wyoming woman says it is comforting as she and her son, Oliver, try to deal with Lori's death.

The 34 year-old Wyoming woman who was part of a nation-wide effort to raise money for childhood cancer research was killed while she was cycling in St. Clair Township.

Around 10 am Saturday, police, paramedics and the St. Clair Fire Department were called to Petrolia Line for a fatal

accident involving a bicycle and vehicle. Lori Neville was taken to hospital where she was pronounced dead.

Natalie says Lori began cycling again during the pandemic after an eight year break. She would find challenges on line to keep her motivated in her goal to be as fit as possible. The couple had hoped to have another child.

The Great Cycle Challenge Canada to raise money for research into childhood cancers fit the bill. She began cycling in Lambton County in early August and had already clocked 299 km when she was on her ride Saturday. She had just 201 more to complete the challenge and had already raised over \$4,000.

SEE CYCLIST PG 3

## A subject a day to keep COVID-19 away

Heather Wright  
The Independent

High school students in both the public and Catholic system will take just one class a day as local boards of education tried to find the right way to bring kids back to school in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The boards are also staggering the start of the school year to help ease students into what is a very unusual school year.

While the St. Clair District Catholic School Board promises to release the start times this week, the Lambton-Kent District School Board already has a plan in place.

Half of each public elementary school will head back to class on Sept. 8, the other half the next day. Everyone will be in the school on Thurs. Sept. 10. Junior kindergarten students

won't start school until Mon. Sept. 14.

Parents will be contacted by the school with details.

Grade 9 students start Sept. 8 and the Grade 10 to 12 students will be back Wed. Sept. 9.

Meantime, high school student's schedules are changing. Both public and Catholic students will still be taking two subjects in a 44 day quadmester but only take one subject a day for an entire week. The next week, they'll take an entire week with the second period subject.

Catholic board officials in their plan approved by the province, say it limits the number of student interactions.

"The timetable was designed to limit direct and indirect student contacts to approximately 100 students per week."

SEE SCHOOL PG 2

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# The Independent

Serving Petrolia and Central Lambton

Vol. 7, Issue 28

Newsstand Price \$1.50 per week

Thursday, March 12, 2020

## BLITZ-ED



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

The OPP dog Blitz helped track down a London man who is charged with stealing a pickup truck in Dawn-Euphemia. The chase drew lots of attention in Petrolia's downtown Monday morning. For more on the story see page 3.

## Water line break at CEEH underlines needs for infrastructure cash

Heather Wright  
The Independent

Bluewater Health officials say they were prepared to move patients at the continuing care unit at Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital after a water line broke.

The Sunday incident is a sign of some of the major issues with the old infrastructure at the Petrolia hospital according to Julia Oosterman, communications director with Bluewater Health.

Petrolia/North Enniskillen firefighters were called to the hospital, twice, after an alarm sounded.

Oosterman says a joint in a water pipe broke.

"In the breaking of the joint, water went everywhere and triggered a sprinklers," she says. That automatically triggered a call to 9-11.

Oosterman says the firefighters and Bluewater Health staff brought everything under control in less than an hour. But they were also prepared for the worst.

With aging, fragile patients in the continuing care wing, hospital officials were concerned.

"There were people on the standby ready to take patients out

of the area if we couldn't get the heating back on," she says.

"We were lucky it wasn't a frigid, frigid night and it didn't take long to get fixed.

"It will happen again," Oosterman says.

"This is a much older building and were not...exaggerating when we talk about the infrastructure needs of this facility."

Two years ago, hospital officials shocked Petrolia councillors when they said the needs were dire and a power failure could shut down the hospital for weeks.

CON'T ON PG 6



BARRY WRIGHT PHOTO

Petrolia/North Enniskillen firefighters were called to CEEH twice Sunday after a water line which is part of the heating system broke.



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