

The Madawaska Valley Current

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2019

INSIDE...

Syrian refugee family arrives p.2

\$100k overspend on legal fees analyzed p.11

Interclub figure skaters p.12

Valley Manor redevelopment urgently needed

DANIELLE PAUL
MADAWASKA VALLEY

The St. Francis Valley Healthcare Foundation was the first delegation of 2019 to a Regular Council meeting on January 22. They requested Council's commitment to support the Valley Manor redevelopment project. This involves building a new Manor on the site of the former Sherwood School building, which will be demolished. Foundation Executive Director, Toni Lavigne-Conway, together with Foundation Board members John Hildebrandt and Brent Dalglish, and Valley Manor Board President Kathryn Marion, said the project would ensure that Valley residents continue to have access to a nearby long term care facility.

The demographic of Manor residents has changed markedly since it opened in 1978. Then it was a 90-bed facility where only one resident needed mobility assistance. Now just three residents in the 96-bed facility are capable of walking unaided so it no longer fully meets residents' needs. The delegation demonstrated how the new design would meet residents' needs.

Valley Manor must also conform to the new provincial standards before the existing licences expire in 2025. Failure to do so creates the risk that the Ministry would award those licences elsewhere in the catchment area. Redevelopment plans for Valley Manor started in 2009 under the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's (MOHLTC) Renewal Strategy Program. When the 2015 Enhanced Renewal Strategy was announced by the Ministry, Valley Manor was ready to move forward on both design and financing. Primary sources of funding include existing equity, one-time MOHLTC planning grant, potential County subsidies, community fundraising and per diem funding from MOHLTC (\$760,000 annually, totalling \$18.9 million over the next 25 years).



Artist rendering of the new Valley Manor. IMAGE: HOBIN ARCHITECTS

Further delays will only add to the total, as construction costs are expected to increase every year and the Manor presently spends funds on upkeep of the aging building—funds that could be used for redevelopment.

Valley Manor is the largest employer in the Township with 140 staff members. In addition to Manor staff, secondary jobs are created locally to support spending by staff and visitors. The Manor has a significant impact on the local economy injecting over \$6 million yearly through its expenses, broken down as follows: 80 percent on \$435,000 wages per month, 13 percent on supplies and 7 percent on facility costs.

The delegation told Council that large organizations like Valley Manor are an economic engine helping our communities to prosper and grow.

Siting the new long term care home next to St. Francis Memorial Hospital contributes to the local vision for a community healthcare hub. Designs for the new Valley Manor include a fireside lounge, a dining room that allows for a single sitting at each meal, an enclosed courtyard and increased privacy for residents. Even in basic

rooms, every resident will have their own window. The delegation showed Council a brief video highlighting what Valley Manor residents thought about the redevelopment.

The \$27 million redevelopment project includes a budget for community funding. Lavigne-Conway said the Foundation was advised to seek a community campaign goal of \$350,000 to \$500,000. She asked that Council continue to be ambassadors for healthcare in the Valley. Dalglish said that the Foundation requested MV support of \$10,000 annually for the next three years to help with the Manor redevelopment project. He said that based on 2,169 households in MV, a levy of just one cent per day per household would add up to \$30,000 in three years.

Mayor Love said the previous Council had already shown commitment to the project by securing the former Sherwood School site for the project and noted that Valley Manor is a not-for-profit organization, relying heavily on volunteers. Council passed a resolution to bring the request for funding forward for consideration at budget time.

Valley welcomes Syrian refugee family

THE CURRENT
BARRY'S BAY

Some members of Madawaska Valley Friends of New Canadians (MVFONC) travelled to Ottawa airport on Valentine's Day to meet the Alshhadat family arriving from Jordan. MVFONC told *The Current* that after waiting for more than two years in a camp for Syrian refugees, the Alshhadats and their sponsors received only two weeks' notice of their travel arrangements. Ayman Alshhadat, his wife Marah and their children (Imad 5 years, Sedrat 3 years, Mays 1 year) travelled overland to Cairo, then flew to Toronto where Immigration welcomed them to Canada, and finally they arrived in Ottawa.

In conjunction with the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa (Sponsorship Agreement Holder), MVFONC selected this family on advice that having Ayman's relatives in Ottawa would help their settlement succeed.

The Alshhadat family of five have moved into their temporary Valley home, thanks to Kent Waddington who stepped up to offer an empty property. The family will live there until they move into the house they have leased in



After three years, Alshhadat family reunion at Ottawa airport. Back row: Ayman (second from left) with his mother Zarah, wife Marah, sisters (one holds the youngest Mays). Front: Ayman's father (seated) with Imad and one of Ayman's brothers. PHOTO: DARLENE CUNLIFFE

Barry's Bay. MVFONC asks everyone to give them a warm Valley welcome.

Members of the MVFONC Executive Committee are: Rev. Darlene Cunliffe, Vicki Glofcheskie, Mary-Rose Dawes,

Sarah Coombs and Bob Ogilvie. If you would like to offer friendship or assistance, please get in touch with any committee member or email mvfriendsofnewcanadians@gmail.com

Sale of ski hill completed

THE CURRENT
MADAWASKA VALLEY

After speaking to representatives of both parties, *The Current* confirmed that the ski hill sale closed earlier in February. The new owner's representative in Toronto provided the following information: "Unfortunately it will not be a commercial ski operation. I am sorry to let you know that. But the

owner is very respectful about the local sentiment and will keep it almost as is, so that locals and visitors can stay there and still enjoy the property and the view. I will keep you updated within [a] few months."

First used as a downhill ski venue about fifty years ago, the property has seen numerous owners, periods of disuse and was for sale since 2014.



PHOTO: GOOGLE STREETVIEW

www.madvalleycurrent.com

The Madawaska Valley
Current
THIS CAN BE
YOUR AD
Call 613.639.1524
or email madvalleycurrent@gmail.com
Let The Current help grow your business.

Algonquin East.com
YOUR SOURCE FOR LOCAL INFORMATION
in the Madawaska Valley and area
To list your event, business or organization
email info@algonquineast.com.
Most listings are free.

Communities losing their souls says Eganville Leader owner

ROGER PAUL
PEMBROKE

The front page of the Jan. 3 issue of the *Eganville Leader* contained an editorial by its owner, Gerald Tracey, entitled "Newspapers facing an uncertain future in the face of changes." The uncertainty referred to reflects pressure created by increasing competition for advertising dollars. This theme was also a focus during a panel discussion held at Champlain Trail Museum and Pioneer Village on January 22. The subject was "Newspapers: Our community link" and the panelists, in addition to Tracey, were Marie Zettler, once editor of the former *Cobden Sun*, and Sean Chase, formerly reporter at the former *Pembroke Daily Observer*.

After being introduced by emcee Fred Blackstein, Tracey commenced by telling the audience about the history of the *Leader* which began in 1902 and which has been owned by his family for the past 88 years. He described it as being unique in Canada because it has a weekly print run of 6,500 copies but is based in a town with a population of only 1,300. He read from the *Leader's* first editorial published in 1902 describing what the newspaper wished to accomplish, which included the aim of being "bold enough to be honest and honest enough to be bold."

He went on to discuss the economics of newspaper publishing in today's social media environment. "Facebook and Google are taking away our advertising dollars."

He said corporations are buying up community newspapers and turning them into flyer wraps, citing the Renfrew Mercury as the most recent newspaper to lose its local content. Tracey said they therefore are no longer community newspapers because corporations "took the soul out of the community."

Blackstein then introduced Sean Chase who reminisced about his journalistic career spanning 23 years working for the *Petawawa Messenger*, *Pembroke Daily News* and *Pembroke Observer*. He also discussed the impact



Sean Chase, Marie Zettler, Gerald Tracey holding examples of their published work.

of social media. He gave as an example of the sort of irresponsible reporting that can happen by referring to a reporter attending the scene of an accident and immediately posting a photograph on social media. He said this created the risk that family members of victims might suffer unnecessary anxiety before officials could confirm the facts.

Chase identified three critical roles played by community newspapers:

- They reflect community life, our civic life. Through words and photos they capture milestones, celebrations, events, graduations, and chronicling the passing of prominent citizens. They also give small events their fifteen minutes of fame.
- They play an important role in affecting public policy such as education systems, infrastructure and community safety. They also hold governments accountable to the people and in a lot of ways they'll drive how tax dollars are spent.
- They provide a definitive record of community history as any local historian or genealogist can attest from spending many hours researching old newspapers on microfilm.

Lastly, Zettler shared many examples of her work experiences. One story she said that helped to inform public policy concerned the underwater cave system at Big Bend on the Ottawa River. Although divers knew about them, it was a well-kept local secret that the cave network stretched under the Westmeath Peninsula at both LaPasse and Westmeath. When the area was named as a possible location for a new landfill site, she brought the story to light and shortly afterwards the area was removed from the potential sites.

www.madvalleycurrent.com



**Where food
is fresh
and love
is loud.**

39280 Combermere Road
Combermere, Ontario
613.756.9169

V & J Shulist
INCOME TAX SERVICE

First in income tax preparation
First in electronic filing (Efile)
Welcoming new and returning clients

Penny Shulist • 613-756-2419
153 Wilowski Drive
BARRY'S BAY



www.pinewoodinn.ca
1-855-756-1333 • pinewoodinn@gmail.com



Bayberry Design
Print and Design Studio

Promotional Materials
Wedding Invitations
Product Labels
Custom Cards & Books
Large Format Printing

We're happy to help!

613.756.2580
info@bayberrydesign.ca

PORCH VIEWS

All the winos drank cheap sherry: Alcohol and the Valley

MARK WOERMKE
BARRY'S BAY

It's been too cold to sit on the porch. Even if I did, I doubt I'd be able to see over the snowbanks. Social media, however, provides another means to observe and comment on local issues.

One item that recently caught my attention was a *My Barry's Bay Now* Facebook post on January 18: *Renfrew County Drinks More Than Recommended, Compared to the Rest of the Province*.

I shared it adding the cynical message, "Are we surprised by this?" but that headline, and the responses I received from my share, disturbed me. I needed to do some reflection and research, and that work had to be personal, historical and statistical.

PERSONAL: VODKA IN THE SCHOOLYARD

In grade seven I tried the vodka a classmate stashed between the roots of a red pine tree in the schoolyard. I spent my sixteenth birthday with friends drinking in a licenced establishment. (For the record, it was not the Balmoral Hotel as the proprietor there was my uncle and he knew my age.) Shortly after that, I had a very close call with my dad's new Malibu racing the backroads with two friends to get to a pub for last call after drinking at a bush party. I also spent a night in the woodshed with the dog when I was too drunk to find my keys and let myself in the house. Once, these were amusing, coming-of-age stories, but I have changed my tune. I endangered my health, my life and the lives of others.

Coping with drunkenness was part of my life growing up in Barry's Bay. As a child, I was warned to avoid the winos who drank around the old CNR water tower or on the hill, but also to avoid certain relatives when they were "hitting the sauce." I remember being challenged to a fist-fight by a drunken uncle at a family wedding when I was twelve; he was fifty. I knew of kids whose drunken fathers beat them and



their mothers after a week working in the bush. One dad, in a drunken state, grabbed his rifle, lined-up the family in the living room and threatened to shoot them all. These things were certainly not condoned, but they were tolerated insofar as adults knew about them and said nothing.

HISTORICAL: HARDSHIPS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

It has been suggested that we Valley folk are more accepting of heavy alcohol use because of the hardships and disappointments suffered by our forebears. I believe there is a genetic component to addiction, but I know that the attitudes and habits we develop regarding alcohol acceptance and consumption are patterned and learned in our families and communities.

Historically, one need only consult Larry Cotton's *Whiskey and Wickedness* series which catalogues drunk and disorderly conduct, and the activities of moonshiners and bootleggers. We may find these stories amusing but it is not hard to imagine the negative impact excessive alcohol consumption has had on Valley families and communities over the years.

Recently, I read Joshua Blank's paper *Stills in the Hills: Moonshine Memories from Around Canada's First Polish-Kashub Community* which will be published in the Spring 2019 edition of *Polish American Studies*. While Blank's research focusses on a particular group, it includes significant insight into alcohol acceptance in culture that developed in lumber shanties, on

stone-strewn Canadian Shield farms, and in Opeongo Line stopping places. That Valley culture transcended ethnic boundaries. As a matter of fact, three of my Irish tavern-keeping ancestors are mentioned by name in his paper for breaking liquor laws.

Blank resists the tendency to sanitize history and acknowledges that while alcohol was used in the Valley to "heighten life or suppress its sorrows and physical pains" it had a dark side. Referring to the violence associated with alcohol abuse, he writes: "... [M]any suffered on the remote farms in the wilderness and people were not to talk about such matters."

STATISTICAL: STUDIES FROM THE COUNTY AND BEYOND

Since the original post reacted to statistics released by the Renfrew County and District Health Unit, I read *Health Inequities in Renfrew County and District* (2018). There were many interesting aspects, but regarding alcohol it was found that the percentage of County people exceeding Low Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines was 47.9 compared to 38 provincially. As well, 4.2 percent of Renfrew County mothers reported drinking during pregnancy compared to a 2.5 percent Ontario average.

A Canadian Cancer Society report, *The Truth About Alcohol* (2016), identified alcohol as one of the top three causes of cancer deaths in Canada. It also noted that only 28 percent of Ontarians were aware of the link between alcohol consumption and cancer. The

2018 Renfrew County study revealed that Renfrew County's cancer mortality rate per 1000 was 2.1 percent but only 1.7 for the province.

A Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse technical report from 2015 explored urban and rural student substance abuse. That report suggested that rural high school students were more likely to report excessive consumption of alcohol (defined as five or more drinks on one occasion) and driving after drinking or driving with someone who had been drinking. These conclusions were corroborated by the 2011 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey which revealed that 60.2 percent of rural students compared to 41.2 percent of urban students reported alcohol use within the previous year; 51 percent of rural students indicated consuming five or more drinks on one occasion compared to 25.2 percent of urban students; and 4.3 percent of rural students reported drinking and driving or being a passenger in a car with a driver who had been drinking compared to 2.2 percent for urban students.

Elizabeth Payne's article, *What Larnark County is Learning from Iceland's Approach to Reducing Teen Drinking* (*The Ottawa Citizen*, November 26, 2018), explained that health officials in an Eastern Ontario jurisdiction comparable to Renfrew County have adopted a program from Iceland to address teen drinking. Alfgeir Kristjansen explained how Icelanders tackled an "entrenched, widespread and worrisome" teen drinking culture and reduced the number of teens reporting alcohol abuse by 15 percent in 20 years. They did this by introducing prevention programs and encouraging communities to offer arts and sports programs. In a similar vein, the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse has suggested that rural youth substance abuse could be diminished by greater access to prevention resources and treatment services and encouraging communities to improve part-time job opportunities and recreation programs.

THE TOUGHEST GODDAMNED PEOPLE

In my first year of university, I was assigned to a mentorship group led by a sociology prof. Our first and only meeting occurred at a wine and cheese party. When I introduced myself, he smiled

patronizingly and announced that Barry's Bay had the highest alcohol consumption rate in the province. Noticing that he was sipping sherry, I pointed to his glass and said, "That may be so, but all the winos there drink cheap sherry." I wasn't going to let a stranger trash my hometown or its people even if I knew deep down, and from personal experience, that he was probably right.

Would I do the same today? Maybe. I am still proud of my community and its history, but in thirty-five years, I have learned important lessons. Real history, whether it be personal, family or community, is made up of complex

human beings with strengths and virtues, weaknesses and flaws. We have to identify and address problems, past or present, to overcome them. I am certainly not promoting temperance leagues or dry communities, but I am thinking about health, personal habits and community culture at a time when governments are making alcohol and other substances more accessible.

Joshua Blank concluding his paper quotes J.D. Vance: "We... are the toughest goddamned people on this earth... [but] are we tough enough to look ourselves in the mirror and admit that our conduct harms our children?"

The Madawaska Valley Current

Advertising helps us provide *The Current* to readers at no cost. To advertise please call 613.639.1524.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome letters to the editor. Send letters to lettersmadvalleycurrent@gmail.com or *The Madawaska Valley Current*, PO Box 1097, Barry's Bay, ON, K0J 1B0. Please include your first and last name, address and phone number for verification (these will not appear in print; your name and municipality will). Please provide the title and date if you refer to an article in *The Current*.

If you are responding to an online article in *The Current*, please note that you can comment in the "Reply" box following the article. We monitor all comments to ensure these guidelines are followed. Due to volume, we cannot print every letter or respond to individual letters. Please keep your letter short, preferably 200 words or fewer. Be civil, even if you are writing to disagree with someone. We look forward to hearing your voice.

The Madawaska Valley Current provides balanced and stimulating local coverage of community growth, current affairs and cultural matters in the area. *The Current* is your year-round online community news source, with limited print distribution available monthly in Barry's Bay at Bayberry Design, Madawaska Coffee, Madawaska Valley Public Library, Opeongo Seniors Centre; in Combermere at Heartwood Restaurant, The Old School Café, Laundry & Greenhouses; in Wilno at Wilno Craft Gallery, Wilno Tavern. You can visit www.madvalleycurrent.com and download this month's issue to print copies for your friends and family.

The Current is published by MadValley Media, Barry's Bay, Ontario, K0J 1B0. Opinions and information published in *The Current*, in whatever form, do not necessarily reflect the opinion of *The Current*. All the writing, artwork, and photographs published in *The Current* are the copyright of the author or artist or *The Current* in the case where no author is specified.

The Madawaska Valley Current

PO Box 1097, Barry's Bay ON, K0J 1B0

T: 613.639.1524

E: madvalleycurrent@gmail.com

W: www.madvalleycurrent.com



www.facebook.com/madvalleycurrent



www.instagram.com/madvalleycurrent



twitter.com/mvalleycurrent

PERMITTED USE

You may display, download or print the information on the site for your own internal and non-commercial purposes provided that you observe all copyright and other propriety notices contained on such information. You may not, however, use, display, distribute, modify or transmit any information including any text, images, audio or video for commercial or public purposes without the express prior written permission of its owner. You must not transfer the information to any other person unless you give them notice of, and they agree to accept, these same obligations.

Printed by Bayberry Design, Barry's Bay, Ontario

Old trees in the Madawaska Valley

DON WEBB
MADAWASKA VALLEY

The Ancient Forest Exploration and Research group's discovery of the existence of a stand of old-growth forest situated within a logging zone near Cayuga Lake in western Algonquin Park received publicity earlier in January. This Hemlock stand holds several veteran trees which are over 400 years old, trees which took root in the early 1600s. The news sparked some interest and comment that perhaps Park Staff should reconsider the site's current zoning, and seek to protect the stand for future generations.

But what exactly defines an old-growth tree, and how much old-growth—if any—has survived 200 years of timber harvesting here in the Townships of Sherwood, Burns, and Jones? Foresters and forest researchers often refer to old-growth trees as veterans, trees which have survived logging passes down through the decades. Here in Renfrew County and the Algonquin Park region, trees are considered candidates for old-growth designation at an age of about 140 to 200 years, depending on species. Locally, examples of veteran trees can reach great age. In fact, in 2013 near Island Lake in Burns Township, MNRF staff identified a majestic stand of ancient Yellow Birch which was considered to be more than 500 years old. To put that in perspective, trees of this age began growing prior to Jacques Cartier's first voyage into the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the "New World" in 1534. That was a long time ago. John Hughson and Courtney Bond relate in their excellent history of the Gilmour and Hughson Timber Co., *Hurling Down the Pine*, that the Valley's first timbermen encountered giant White Pines up to 250 feet high and greater than 6 feet in diameter.

Until 1820s, all Madawaska Valley forests in unceded Algonquin Territory were under the sole stewardship of the ancestors of the present day Algonquin Families who live in the region. Preceding the colonial era, forested areas were managed using traditional Algonquin silvicultural practices such



A stand of old-growth maple. PHOTO: DON WEBB

as fire for managing of garden areas and forest stands to improve cultivation, trapping and hunting prospects. A controlled low-temperature fire set in the early spring and late fall was a powerful tool for clearance of undergrowth, brush, and dead wood from the land. These periodic fires left dateable evidence of that tradition within annual growth rings of the trees as they continued growing and adding wood down through the centuries. In

1995 at Basin Lake in Algonquin Park, researchers from the Ontario Forest Research Institute retrieved a fire scar chronology from a Red Pine stand dating back to 1665. It is rare veteran trees like these which now provide researchers with highly detailed land use, climate, and fire history records for the Township.

Maple Sugar Bushes, called Iskigamizigan by Algonquin People—are excellent examples of such modi-

fied, culturally-founded forest niches which in rare cases have survived into present times. Sugar Maples can live to great age, up to 500 years old locally, and as a living testament—some still bear the scars from many generations of Indigenous Maple Sugar production and land use. Often these veteran trees will display broken tops, large spreading canopies, and occasionally hollow cavities and trunks that provide shelter for many wildlife species. Many times these trees tower over the surrounding younger forest. Veteran trees are the genetic engines of the forest critical to the production of hardy offspring specifically suited to withstand local conditions and forest changes.

Following the last of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 the British Empire was in critical need of timber for her expanding Naval and Merchant fleets and the pine forests of Ottawa Valley,

filled with large, clear, tight-grain old-growth pines, met that need. By 1837 Canadian geographer and explorer David Thompson, surveying under contract to the government, complained bitterly of the waste of felled timber left lying in the forest and the number of massive log jams that choked the Madawaska River above Bark Lake. Thompson also recounted that the crashing of burning trees in fires sweeping through forest waste kept his crew awake through the night.

At the turn of the twentieth century the supply of virgin old-growth Pine had been pretty well exhausted and was limited to isolated remnant stands in technically inaccessible areas. As of 2019 Renfrew County's oldest and densest populations of old-growth forest remnants occur in Burns Township, part of the Township of Madawaska Valley. Veteran tree spe-

cies which had little economic value in the past such as Eastern Hemlock, White Cedar, Yellow Birch, and Bur Oak have survived to the present. Stevenson Lake White Oaks, Ignace's Sugarbush, and Cedar Groves in Burns TWP range between 400 and 500 years old. The Island Lake Yellow Birches may even hold individual trees up to 600 years old. While these sites occur on public land, they are not protected. Let's hope our forest planners are able to recognize this valuable resource as part of our forest diversity and history in the future planning.

About the author: Don Webb is a Field Archaeologist with Kinnikinnick Heritage Consultants and an Indigenous Environmental Science and Studies student at Trent University. Don is a life-long environmentalist and an avid tree-hugger.

VALLEY HERITAGE

Barry's Bay ODHA Juvenile hockey champs 1956



ODHA JUVENILE CHAMPS—1956—Barry's Bay Juveniles are ODHA districts A and B Juvenile hockey champs. Back row, left to right, they are: W. M. Hoffman, manager; Sylvester Bleskie, Emmett Yantha, Mark Yantha, Jerome Cybulskie,

Jack Murdock, Ronald Lindahl, Paul Recoskie Hilary Conway, John Vitkuske; front, Floyd Sknee; Dennis Luckas-nitch, Barry Buder, Doug Holenberg, Peter McDodgal, Kenneth Recbskie, Philip Conway.

—(Photo by Montaigne)

BOB CORRIGAN BARRY'S BAY

This photo of the Barry's Bay ODHA Juvenile Champs comes from a newspaper article in 1956 when the team won in both districts A and B. The clipping is not in the best condition but it might prove to be of interest to people. It seems pretty sure that at least two of the names in the description are misspelled, so if any readers can provide correct information

or stories about some of the players, please get in touch. Manager Bill Hoffman was the owner and operator of the Dairy Bar on Dunn Street. Coach Jack Vitkuske was a local legendary hockey player of his era. (Photo submitted)

NOTE: If you are interested in having a picture and story featured in *The Madawaska Valley Current*, please submit the information to Bob Corrigan c/o The Current at PO Box 1097, Barry's Bay K0J 1B0 (marked Heritage Photos). Originals will be returned.

Young speakers at Barry's Bay Legion

DANIELLE PAUL
BARRY'S BAY

Ten young people from the Valley, supported by family members and friends, participated in Stage One of the annual Royal Canadian Legion public speaking competition at Barry's Bay on February 9.

One speaker is home schooled and the other nine attend local schools: George Vanier, St. John Bosco, Killaloe PS and Palmer Rapids PS were represented. Legion President Heather Poliquin said the annual contest is open to all students from Grade 1 to Grade 12.

James Shaw spoke about "Why everyone should go camping" to win the Primary level (Grades 1 to 3). James is home schooled.

Ava Cybulskie, a student at St. John Bosco, won the Junior level prize (Grades 4 to 6) speaking on the topic of "Pollution."

Louetta Reimer who attends George Vanier achieved first place at the Intermediate level (Grades 7 to 9) with a speech



From left. Front row: Penny Porter, James Shaw, Noah Craine, Lilly Calverley. Back row: Grace Fabian, Ava Cybulskie, Louetta Reimer, Rivko Reimer, Legion President Heather Poliquin, Joseph Oliver, Stephanie Mintha. PHOTO: SUBMITTED

about "Plastic and the environment."

Poliquin thanked this year's judges, Barry Conway, Karen Filipkowski and Kathy Marion, and acknowledged the assistance of the many volunteers who registered the speakers, timed their speeches, tabulated the scores and served refreshments.

She said of the more than 25 students that were expected, only 11 registered

on the morning of the competition. There were no speakers at the Senior level. Poliquin said, "It would be wonderful if more students participated. It is a great way to build self-esteem and confidence."

The first place winners in each category now advance to the Zone Level Competition which will be held in Eganville on March 2, 2019.

Art workshops focus on mental health

Planting Seeds, a new art project funded by the Ontario Arts Council, will encourage conversations about mental health in the community. The Ottawa Valley Creative Arts Open Studio (OV-CAOS), Rainbow Valley Community Health Centre (Rainbow Valley CHC) and the Community Resource Centre (Killaloe) (CRC) will host three community art workshops in Killaloe that will result in a public exhibition and parade. The project uses the theme of gardening to grow and deepen the conversation around mental health in the community through art-making and focused conversation. The workshops are free and open to all. They will take place March 2, March 30 and April 27, from 1 to 4 p.m. at 12 North St. Community Centre in Killaloe.

At these workshops, OV-CAOS artist-facilitators will guide participants in making miniature worlds that reflect the experiences, concerns and hopes for mental health of the participants. The miniature worlds will become part of five public art installations housed in venues around the village of Killaloe. They will be unveiled during May. The artist facilitators for Planting Seeds include Tanya Lyons, glass artist based in Killaloe, and Linda Archibald, Mental Health Project Liaison, from Rainbow Valley CHC.



Jumblies Theatre, the community arts group that unrolled the Four Lands project at venues throughout the Valley in 2016 will provide informal mentoring

at the workshops.

Organizers say the Planting Seeds project grew out of questions about how the community can better care for those with mental health challenges, caregivers and one another. They hope to reduce stigma by bringing people together to further the conversation about mental health. Art-making is well known for its healing and community-building benefits. As a community arts organization, OV-CAOS understands the power of people making art together by nurturing personal and collective imaginations.

The project title Planting Seeds has a literal meaning based on discussions with Rainbow Valley CHC about the possibility of creating a mental health garden on their grounds at 49 Mill Street in Killaloe—a future green space dedicated to peace, healing and contemplation. The project will inform the next steps for a mental health garden, and will document the concerns, questions and recommended actions needed to support the mental health of everyone in the community.

Valley business profile: TRO Social Media Agency

DANIELLE PAUL
BARRY'S BAY

Valley business owner Travis Richards grew up in Barry's Bay and graduated from Madawaska Valley District High School (MVDHS). His business, Travis Richards Office (TRO), is a social media agency that provides marketing support to small business owners. He said established businesses sometimes get "stuck" and fail to consider new ways to reach their customers. He has also drawn from his own experience to become a passionate advocate for people with disabilities. Richards' message for would-be business owners is simple: There is help available for people who are prepared to work hard to make their dreams come true.

While still at MVDHS, through his activities Richards met Community Development Consultant and Social Worker Elser Lee (Faith) Archer. On Archer's recommendation, Richards was admitted to the Skills Link program right after high school. She suggested he consider providing Facebook marketing for business-owners. Richards said Access Work Services (AWS) implements some of the Links programs here in the Valley and found Natalie Robinson to work with him on that specialism. Archer said, "Travis has drive and determination. He will work very hard to develop his skills."

Richards credits his business teacher at the Training & Learning Centre of Renfrew County for his biggest achievement in education: Introduction to Small Business Basic Skills Certificate earned in June 2016. He said his greatest business achievement has been building up TRO's roster of clients. He is proud to help promote each one, especially the entrepreneurs with disabilities, and gets job satisfaction from developing good relationships with his clients. These days Richards works with a dozen business owners not just in the Valley but also in North Hastings, across Renfrew County and in Ottawa.

Editor's note: We are pleased to have a business partnership with TRO Social Media Agency. Richards manages The Current's Instagram channel.



Travis Richards in his home office.

Artists announced for Pop Up Art in Renfrew County

ANYA GANSTERER
KILLALOE

Valley residents missing visual arts exhibitions since the closure of the gallery at The Railway Station can now look forward to a travelling art exhibition between April and September 2019. Pop Up Art Renfrew County exhibition is a multi-artist and multimedia exhibit exploring how the extraordinary can be found in our everyday lives here.

The exhibition will pop up in unexpected places such as municipal or community facilities, private businesses and other public places. In conjunction with the exhibition, the public will be invited to participate in community art workshops as the exhibit tours through the county.

The artists are: Kathryn Bossy (Haley Station), Mike Desrochers (Quadeville), Eva Gallagher (Deep River), Bridget Howarth (Brudenell), Eva Kaczkowski (Kaszuby), Paula Lapierre



(Pembroke), Tanya Lyons (Killaloe), Cameron Montgomery (Pembroke), Derrick Nearing (Pembroke), Patricia Thurston (Killaloe), Sylvia Tennisco (Pikwakanagan).

When asked if Pop Up Art would be coming to the Township of Madawaska Valley, Project Coordinator and Curator, Anya Gansterer, said, "We are in conversation with the Township of Madawaska Valley about bringing Pop Up Art to the municipality during the summer of 2019. We have discussed possible venues in the community, including The Railway Station."

If you are interested in hosting Pop Up Art Renfrew County at your venue or would like to know more about the project, please visit www.ov-caos.org or email anya@ov-caos.org.

ANAYLYSIS

Replacement of Integrity Commissioner contributes to \$100,000 overspend

JAMES DI FIORE
MADAWASKA VALLEY

Editor's note: This analysis is based on the contents of Township records, and a review of evidence and documents contained in the Superior Court claim Rosien brought against the Township of Madawaska Valley for breach of contract. Much of it has been previously reported exclusively by The Current.

Before the new Council took office there remained unanswered questions regarding legal costs, including amounts paid for Integrity Commissioner investigations. These included: did the abrupt removal of Jack Rosien, the first Integrity Commissioner, add unnecessarily to these costs? Using the report presented by CAO/Clerk Sue Klatt to Council on December 17, *The Current* now attempts to throw some light on this issue as taxpayers have had no explanation from the Township itself for the more than \$100,000 excess over budget for legal expenses during 2017–18.

ROSIE'S OFFER TO COMPLETE INVESTIGATIONS REJECTED

When Rosien was dismissed in April 2017, he had been investigating three Code of Conduct complaints made against two councillors. He had already been paid over \$9,000 for his work. Some weeks before his dismissal, he gave notice that he had arrived at a conclusion of one of the complaints. This is where the picture becomes murky. A few days later, he was instructed by the Township's lawyer to suspend investigations into that councillor for medical reasons. This suspension, which Rosien said did not prevent the councillor from carrying out any other duties, continued for over two months. Then, out of the blue according to his evidence given in the Court case, he received an email from the Mayor (there was no CAO during this period) terminating his appointment.

On April 18, 2017, he appeared at a Council meeting to present his final report. He ended it with a recommen-



dation that he be allowed to finish the three investigations he had started as this would result in a saving of money and time. All members of Council were present, including the two councillors under investigation—neither of whom declared a conflict of interest. His recommendation was rejected by Council without explanation. The reason for replacing him given in the Court proceeding was that the Township wanted someone who could provide a “greater range of services.” However, services provided by an Integrity Commissioner are defined by the Municipal Act and Rosien had been providing these to the Township for a year. In any event, if that was the true reason, how does this explain Council's decision to ignore the work he had done up to that point thereby wasting \$9,000?

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

As Klatt's report demonstrates, Rosien's prediction about saving costs was justified. Why? Council hired his successor, Guy Giorno, and agreed to pay him \$300 an hour. On the other hand, Rosien was under contract at \$75 an hour. Giorno went on to take more than a year to complete each of the same three investigations, for which he has been paid over \$40,000. If Rosien had needed to spend the same number of hours to finish the job, taxpayers would have ended up paying him one-quarter of what Giorno received. Add to this the \$9,000

already paid to Rosien and we arrive at a total of approximately \$40,000 of unnecessary expenditure.

Moreover Rosien sued the Township for breach of contract. As previously reported by *The Current*, this ended in a secret settlement reached just prior to a court hearing last April. When contacted, Rosien said it was subject to confidentiality terms and he was not allowed to speak to anyone about it. Klatt's report on the overspend for legal costs shows a line item of \$19,867.71 described as “Employment matters and general matters.” *The Current* asked Klatt if this refers to some or all of any compensation and legal costs that may have been paid to Rosien but she has declined to respond.

In his legal claim Rosien accused the Township of improperly interfering with investigations by an Integrity Commissioner contrary to the provisions of the Municipal Act. This was supported by the written opinion of a leading expert in municipal law. Because of the out-of-court settlement, there has not been a public airing of whether Rosien's serious accusation was justified. *The Current* has written to the Township requesting an explanation, as a matter of public interest, of why it prevented Rosien from completing his investigations. Had it not done so, the facts indicate that the budget overspend for legal costs would have been cut in half at least. No response has been received.

MV Council Clips

THE CURRENT MADAWASKA VALLEY

RETAIL CANNABIS OPT-IN

On January 22, MV Council "opted-in" to allow private retail cannabis stores in the municipality. Recent limitations on new licences mean the earliest MV might see a licence granted would be December 2019. Councillor Peplinski was alone in voting No.

MV MAYOR LOVE ON ROMA BOARD

MV Township Mayor Kim Love is now the Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) Board of Directors Zone 6 representative. ROMA is the rural arm of the Association of the Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and aims to ensure that matters which affect rural communities are brought to the attention of the provincial and federal governments.

BUDGET GUIDANCE GIVEN TO MV STAFF

MV Council in Committee (Finance & Administration) met all day Feb. 7 to consider priorities and goals, and guide staff on draft budget preparation. Items discussed included:

PROJECTED TAX INCREASE

Given a 2 percent increase in the municipal tax base and Canada's GDP growth of 2 percent, all members of Council agreed staff could prepare a draft budget anticipating a potential tax increase of 2 to 2.5 percent.

DEVELOPMENT CHARGES

The previous Council had abolished these with effect from Jan. 1 2018. MV CAO Sue Klatt and staff suggested Council consider reinstituting them to reflect the stresses from development on all municipal services not just water and wastewater. No member of Council spoke in favour of development charges, so Mayor Love said, "Let's tuck that one away for now. It wasn't going to go anywhere."

ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

Staff suggested repairs to Paugh Lake Road (\$300,000), Wilowski Drive (\$50,000) and Lakeshore Drive (\$160,000). Other roads not on the 5-year plan also needed work.

FACILITIES

Most recreation facilities require some work, the bigger amounts being the Paul J. Yakabuski Centre kitchen and arena floor, and the Water Tower roof.

RAILWAY STATION

Staff requested guidance on operating hours and staffing, but this was deferred pending a report from Councillor Shulist by March 5.

TAX ARREARS

Council noted the Treasurer's Department must pursue collection of tax arrears. (Klatt previously reported to Council that the total tax arrears were \$623,235.60 prior to tax billing Aug. 29, 2018.) Council will consider whether to reduce the grace period from three years to two years.

MUNICIPAL OFFICE NEEDS

MV needs various items each costing up to \$100,000 to improve the township offices and prepare a Financial Plan.

Wilno Tavern
RESTAURANT
Family Dining
Historic Polish Pub
• OPEN TUESDAY to SUNDAY •
wilnotavern.com
613-756-2029

TRO
TRAVIS RICHARDS OFFICE
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT
Website Design
Google My Business Listings Help
Social Media Training
Call Travis Richards 613-281-9419
[Facebook.com/TravisRichOffice](https://www.facebook.com/TravisRichOffice)

BARRY'S BAY Legion

PANCAKE BREAKFAST: 3rd Sun. monthly (exc. Apr. 14), 8 am–1 pm.

CRIBBAGE: Alternate Sundays from March 10. Registration 12:30 pm, games at 1 pm. \$5.

BINGO: Starts Feb. 28., alternate Thursdays, doors open 6:30 pm, play 7 pm. \$500 in 52 numbers. Progressive jackpot. Consolation prize for full card if jackpot not won.

LIONS CLUB ST. PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATION

Saturday March 16, afternoon.

LEGION CLUB ROOM

Open Monday to Saturday, 2 to 6 pm, and Friday to 8 pm. Hours may be extended during scheduled events. Open Sundays for major sporting/world events. Open to all. Membership in the Legion not required.



MARCH BREAK PROGRAMS

Opeongo Readers' Theatre Performances

Romping a Rainbow, March 11, 2 pm at Combermere Rec Centre.
March 12, 2 pm at Library.

Leprechauns and Banshees: Irish Fairytales and Folklore, March 14, 10:30 am

Register: mvpl.programs@gmail.com, 613-756-2000



Follow us on Facebook

Children's Crafts and Games Hour

March 15, 10 to 11 am or 2 to 3 pm.

Podcasting for Aspiring Podcasters

March 13. One hour introduction. Youth to 18 yrs at 10 am. Adults, 19 yrs+ at 7 pm.

Interclub hosted by Barry's Bay and Area Figure Skating Club

DANIELLE PAUL
BARRY'S BAY

Over two-hundred skaters, coaches, families and supporters filled the Paul J. Yakabuski Community Centre on February 2 when the Barry's Bay and Area Figure Skating Club hosted an Interclub as part of 2019 Dream to Skate. The Interclub was sanctioned by Skate Ontario and six provincial officials were on hand to judge the young skaters as they competed in Star 1-4 group and solo classes. Tressa Crevier, Chair—2019 Dream to Skate Competition Committee, said participating clubs came to the Madawaska Valley from Arnprior, Bancroft, Barry's Bay and Area, Bobcaygeon, Deep River, Eganville, Fenelon Falls, Mattawa, Minden, Pembroke, Petawawa and Renfrew.

Interclub organizers, helped by an army of volunteers, processed skaters and spectators efficiently. The canteen was busy all day long and every two hours another of the seven medal presentations was held in the upstairs lounge. Rosa Corsi-Etmanskie coordinated registration and vendors for a sale of sports and craft items by Interclub and local vendors in the lounge.

Volunteer Joanne Olsen had received donations of fabulous prizes from more than 40 local sponsors and businesses so there were numerous prize draws both in the entrance lobby and the lounge. Olsen said, "The community (many of whom had no kids in skating) really stepped up to the plate and local businesses were extremely generous with their support." Crevier also emphasized the Club's deep appreciation of the tremendous support from businesses and individuals in the local community and from the municipality. The day finished with the excited and tired participants tucking into a hearty Spaghetti Fund-raiser for families and skaters.

Crevier said that as Chair of the Interclub, she was extremely proud of each skater. She said, "They all performed very well. Barry's Bay and Area Skating Club rocked this Interclub. Great job, everyone!"

The competition included 24 events with a few Special Olympics events. **Ribbons won by Barry's Bay and Area Figure Skating Club:**



Barry's Bay and Area Figure Skating Club: From left: Kayla Gilchrist (coach), Emilia Sadecki, John Paul Shaw. At rear on podium: Sarah Whyte, Madison Simpson, Alexis Pecarskie, Emily Villeneuve, Sophie Villeneuve, Lisa Piecarski, Carolyn Cannon (coach). Seated in front from left: Julia Sadecki, Adelle McLeod, Noah MacMunn, Kaylee Courneyea, Charlie Stoppa. Absent: Shayla Yakabuskie, Aimee Cybulskie. PHOTO: SUBMITTED



Top L to R: Charlie Stoppa Aimee, Cybulskie. PHOTOS: SHARON GARDINER
Bottom L to R: John Paul Shaw, Noah McMunn. PHOTOS: THE CURRENT

Aimee Cybulskie: 2 Golds, 1 Silver, 1 Bronze

Charlie Stoppa: 1 Gold, 1 Silver, 2 Bronze, and The Rita Barrette Memorial Trophy

Emilia Sadecki: 1 Gold, 3 Silver

Julia Sadecki: 2 Silvers, 1 Bronze

Adelle McLeod: 1 Gold, 1 Silver, 3 Bronze, 1 Merit

Noah MacMunn: 2 Silvers and 3 Bronze

Shayla Yakabuskie: 3 Bronze, 1 Merit

Kaylee Courneyea: 5 Bronze

John Paul Shaw: 1 Silver, 1 Bronze

Lisa Piecarski: 3 Bronze

Sophie Villeneuve: 2 Bronze

Sarah Whyte: 1 Bronze, 1 Merit

Alexis Pecarskie: 1 Bronze

Madison Simpson: 1 Bronze

Emily Villeneuve: 1 Bronze