

2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

Attention Readers!

For our first edition of the Shelburne Free Press in 2022, we will be taking you through all of the highs and lows over 2021. The 2021 Year in Review will share some of the most significant stories impacting our readers over the past 12 months.

Now, without any further ado, here's a look at the year that was!

January

? COVID-19 vaccine gets rolled out to local LTC staff: Greater protection against COVID-19 is coming to Shelburne's Long Term Care Home, as several of the staff received their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine, which protects against the novel coronavirus, last week. Sarah Ricci, who works at the long term care home was the very first person within the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health region to receive the vaccine when it was rolled out at Guelph Public Health last Wednesday, Jan. 6.

In light of the tragic outbreak at Shelburne Long Term Care that claimed 15 lives in May of 2020, Ricci told the Citizen she's grateful and relieved to receive the vaccine and be better protected against the virus. "We were hit pretty hard," said Ricci when speaking of the outbreak.

"We're here to protect the residents and the staff as well, and we're here for the health and well being of everyone," she added, when speaking about why she chose to be included in the early round of vaccinations.

Staff from Shelburne Long Term Care have been commuting down to Guelph over the last week to receive the shot. So far, over 15 staff members are now inoculated.

While it isn't mandatory for nursing home staff to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, they're being highly encouraged. In clinical trials, the Pfizer vaccine, which Ricci received, has been proven to be 95 per cent effective in preventing COVID-19, beginning one week after the second dose.

? Second provincial emergency declared today for COVID-19: Effective Jan. 14 the Province of Ontario is issuing a stay-at-home order, requiring everyone to remain in their household, except for essential purposes. Trips to the grocery store, pharmacy, healthcare services, exercise, and essential work have all been deemed valid by the government.

In addition to this, a second provincial emergency order under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act has been declared in Ontario as a response to the Province's doubling of COVID-19 cases over the past two weeks.

? WDGPH vaccine distribution to see delays from paused production lines: Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health's (WDGPH) roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine will be seeing impacts with pause in production lines at Pfizer's facility. WDGPH announced on Monday (Jan. 18) that they would be making changes to their vaccine program in response to the recent announcement from Pfizer that some production lines at their facility in Belgium are working to increase their overall capacity.

Public Health, in a press release, said that the pausing in production will be felt in Ontario and affect deliveries to Guelph for a short period.

? Police Board appoints first BIPOC vice chair: Shelburne resident Althea Alli has been appointed as the new vice chair of the Shelburne Police Service Board ? becoming the first women of colour in the community to hold the position.

Speaking with the Free Press about her reaction to the new role, Alli admitted she was still absorbing it but that she was "completely

honoured to be in the position.?

?I'm humbled and honoured to be in the position, and of course have a voice for the more marginalized and the racialized community,? said Alli. ?It is a great honour that I'm able to stand and speak on behalf of them, I do hope to learn more and to understand from my community their concerns.?

Alli was appointed to the Police Service Board last Tuesday (Jan. 19), after previously serving as a provincial appointee on the board. She has been on the local Police Service Board since 2019.

February

? **Black History Month kicks off in Shelburne:** Municipal councillors and community leaders in Dufferin County marked the beginning of Black History Month with the raising of the Pan-African flag.

Shelburne Deputy Mayor Steve Anderson and Dufferin County Canadian Black Association (DCCBA) founder and president Alethia O'Hara Stephenson gathered at Shelburne's Town Hall on Monday (Feb. 1) to mark the raising of the flag.

?It never gets old,? said Deputy Mayor Anderson to the Free Press about the flag raising. ?This continues to demonstrate that Shelburne is a very inclusive, diverse, and welcoming community and it's important that we celebrate and acknowledge the achievements of not only Black Canadians, but Black history as Canadian history.?

? **March Break postponed for students and teachers across the province:** Students and teachers in the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB), along with others across the province expecting a break next month will be waiting a little longer as government postpones March Break to April. Education Minister Stephen Lecce made the announcement last Thursday (Feb. 11) that the weeklong break for students and teachers, which was originally scheduled for March 15 to 19, would begin on April 12.

?Postponing March Break, not cancelling it is an important way that schools can help to limit community transmission,? said Lecce. ?I recognize that this is one more change in the year that has been challenging for so many students and our education staff who continue to work so hard, it is one made on the best advice of Public Health officials to keep them safe and to keep our schools open in this province.?

UGDSB teachers and student returned to the classroom on Feb. 8, after switching to remote-only learning following the winter holiday break, when the province saw a surge in COVID-19 cases.

? **Shelburne moves out of lockdown and into red zone of COVID-19 framework:** The Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph region on Tuesday (Feb. 16) officially moved to the red control category of the COVID-19 response framework, as Ontario transitions out of province-wide lockdown.

? **Shelburne officially transitions to OPP:** It was a day marked with mixed emotions, as the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officially took over responsibilities of policing in Shelburne last Thursday (Feb. 18).

?On one hand we're saying good bye to an institution that's proudly and bravely served our community for 142 years and that's always going to be a difficult moment to get through,? said Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills. ?But, looking to the future I think we as a community can be pretty optimistic about what to expect.?

Last July, Shelburne Town Council voted unanimously in favour of bringing OPP into the community, disbanding the Shelburne Police Service (SPS) who have policed the town for 141 years. At the time of the decision, Mayor Mills said it was no longer financially sustainable to maintain the municipal force.

All officers from the Shelburne Police Service who applied for a position with the OPP were hired on. The now former SPS officers will be attending the OPP academy in Orillia over the next two weeks.

Insp. Ward said a schedule has been established with officers from the Dufferin Detachment and the surrounding area to continue policing while the local officers are off being trained.

Dufferin County will now entirely be policed under the OPP. Ongoing investigations will become part of the OPP case files.

March

? Local marketing initiative #SupportTheBurne receives national recognition with award: COVID-19 has hurt local small businesses most severely, but the Town of Shelburne did not let the pandemic drag them down; rather, they rallied together create a community marketing strategy to encourage support for local businesses.

The Economic Developers Association of Canada awarded Shelburne with a Marketing Canada Award for their marketing initiative #SupportTheBurne, which recognizes communities who are marketing their town to improve the overall economic well-being of Canadians.

Shelburne worked in conjunction with Tristan Barrocks of The Digital Storytellers creative agency to run unique short commercials which addressed the common concern, "how can we reach current and new clients?" The campaign consisted of a string of social media ads ranging from postings on the town website, local billboards, and airtime on the local Country105 FM. This message was displayed on all digital platforms to communicate a clear and cohesive message "#SupportTheBurne.

? Shelburne Polar Plunge raises over \$11,000 for Special Olympics: The Shelburne Police Service (SPS) Polar Plunge generated over \$11,000 this year for Special Olympics Ontario, with the majority of the funds going to the Dufferin Chapter.

The event is held across Ontario and in total generated over \$350,000 for Special Olympics, which helps individuals with development disabilities or exceptionalities achieve their athletic goals and compete against fellow athletes.

This year's event was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so it was harder to generate revenue than in the past, but overall, Shelburne Police Const. Jeff McLean who organized the event says he's happy with its success.

? Heritage Music Festival postponed until at least 2022: The Rotary Club of Shelburne for the second year in a row, has postponed its largest fundraiser, the Heritage Music Festival (HMF) and 70th Canadian Open Old Time Fiddle Championship.

The local Rotary Club made the decision at the end of February to postpone the annual festival until the first week of August 2022. In a notice to the public, Rotary Club of Shelburne said the decision was not made lightly but with the ongoing uncertainty with the COVID-19 pandemic, that it was the "correct decision" to make.

? Dufferin marks one year anniversary of COVID-19 pandemic: It was a week of grim milestones. Dufferin County, alongside the world, marked one year since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic.

The community, on Tuesday (March 16) also marked the one year anniversary of the regions first positive case of the novel virus.

"It's been a difficult year for our community, for every community essentially," said Dufferin County Warden Darren White. "A year ago, when we started this, I don't think any of us would have realized what was about to come."

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (WDG) Public Health confirmed the first case of COVID-19 on March 16, 2020. A male in his 40s, returning from Atlanta, Georgia had been tested at Headwaters Health Care in Orangeville.

In early April, an outbreak was declared at Headwaters Hospital as 13 hospital staff tested positive, 38 were asked to self-isolate and an additional 10 were admitted for COVID-19.

By the end of April an outbreak of the virus was declared in two Shelburne long-term care home.

? County Council adopts climate plan: Dufferin County Council has adopted a climate action plan to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in the community by 2050. The Climate Action Plan has six focus areas (on the move, in our buildings, for our land, planning our county, in our bins, and empowering our communities), with 34 actions to help mitigate or reduce local greenhouse gas emissions, and adapt to climate change.

? The Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health region moves to Orange: The Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) region has officially made a move down on the COVID-19 response framework from red (control) to the orange (restrict) category. The Ontario government announced the move for the region last Friday (March 19) with the changes to the restriction going in effect Monday (March 22) at 12:01 a.m.

April

? Shelburne dentist found guilty in sexual assault case: A Shelburne dentist accused of sexually assaulting a minor at his dental office has been found guilty. Muthanna Gewarges, a dentist who practiced at Small Town Family Dental on Main Street in Shelburne, was convicted on charges of sexual assault and touching for sexual purposes following a trial in Orangeville earlier this month.

? WDG schools revert back to remote learning under Section 22: Students in the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) will be making the shift to remote learning once again, as Public Health issues a Section 22 Order.

Both the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (WDG) Public Health and UGDSB issued press releases late Monday (April 5) evening notifying that the change would go into effect starting April 7.

?I wish this step was not required,? said Dr. Nicola Mercer, medical officer of health and CEO of WDG Public Health. ?I know the tremendous burden this places on families in our region?.

? Local feed mill demolition picked up by History Channel: For more than a century the feed mill stood as a part of Shelburne's history, and its demolition will soon be taking the Town to the small screen.

History Channel's *Salvage Kings*, stars the crew from *Priestly Demolition* documenting their demolitions and modern-day treasure hunting, and is set to feature the demolition of the old Sawyer's Feed Mill in an upcoming episode of its second season.

With its large silos and conveyor belts, the Sawyer's Feed Mill stood out amongst the growing residential landscape. It also stood as a historic icon of the farming community in Shelburne and the surrounding area.

According to documents from the Museum of Dufferin, the mill was first established in 1900 by Henry White, Edward Berwick and Robert Rickey. Originally called H. White and Company, the mill worked with flour, feed, seed, and grain and later became a limited company in 1911.

While Henry White died in 1935, the company continued on until 1957, when it was taken over by William Henry ?Harry? Sawyer ?

marking of official opening of Sawyer's Feed Mill. Sawyer's Feed Mill would go on to become a three-generation family owned business, spanning over 50 years.

In 2016 the mill was sold and renamed Sharpe's Farm Supplies. The Museum of Dufferin currently has a wagon from the mill which was used between the 1940s-1970s in their collection, and the sign for the Sawyer's Feed Mill was also salvaged prior to demolition. Sawyer's Feed Mill was officially demolished on March 16, 2020.

? First mosque opens in Shelburne: When Shelburne resident Imam Yehya Soliman founded Muslims of Dufferin, he was looking to create a place for local Muslims to gather and pray ? now he is doing the same opening Shelburne's first mosque.

Located just outside the Town's border along Hwy. 89, Muslims of Shelburne Centre opened their doors to the community at the beginning of April under the leadership of Imam Soliman.

The Muslims of Shelburne Centre holds five prayers per day, and is open 24/7 for daily prayers. More information about the mosque can be found on the Muslims of Shelburne Centre website. ?We are very proud, and happy to be the first mosque to open in Shelburne,? said Imam Soliman.

? Shelburne's first retail cannabis shop opens Friday: The first retail cannabis store in the Town of Shelburne is set to open its doors this Friday (April 30).

Jamie Bates and John Pavaovic, are co-owners of Cannabis Stop Inc., located at 171 Main Street in Shelburne's downtown core. The duo have been working for over a year to bring the first retail cannabis shop to the community.

Being the first cannabis retail store in Shelburne, the duo say they are looking to create an experience that steps away from the negative stigma typically associated with cannabis, providing more than product but also knowledge as well.

Cannabis Stop Inc. will officially open on Friday (April 30). For more information visit www.cannabisstopinc.com.

May:

? Shelburne introducing weekend transit pilot project: The Town of Shelburne is launching a transit pilot project, which will see service expanded to include weekend runs of buses. The launch date of the transit project is tentatively scheduled to begin on June 19. The weekend transit pilot project was originally planned to begin in early to mid-May, but has been delayed a number of times due to COVID-19 provincial orders.

? Four fire departments called to large structure fire: Four local fire departments responded to a large fire at an abandoned house at the intersection of Hwy. 89 and Hwy. 10 on Wednesday (May 12) afternoon.

Fire departments from Shelburne, Orangeville, Rosemount, and Melancthon/Mulmur responded to the call shortly before 1 p.m., where flames and smoke could be seen coming out of the upper levels of the structure.

?From the time we responded it was fully involved,? said Shelburne Fire Chief Ralph Snyder. ?We did a defensive attack, we've not been inside, it's not safe for our firefighters to enter.?

The burnt brick walls and chimney were all that remained of the abandoned house as crews waited for an excavator to arrive; demolishing the remaining structure. Fire officials have not yet deemed whether the fire was suspicious.

? Shelburne Farmers' Market planning return for mid-June: A small team of local volunteers have banded together in the hopes of

bringing back the Shelburne Farmers' Market, more than a year after being cancelled.

Alexandra Georgie, is one of the four volunteers working on revitalizing the local farmer's market and says they wanted to bring the market back as a way to create a sense of connectedness to the community.

‘We're surrounded by farms and agriculture, it's such a huge part of Shelburne's culture that we need to embrace. Shelburne has always been a great community for having events and COVID-19 hasn't given the Town the opportunity to showcase and create that sense of belonging to a community,’ said Georgie. ‘There's opportunity to bring that back into our Town and to showcase the local farms and local small business.’

The Shelburne Farmers' Market group officially announced their plans to revitalize the annual local market on May 10, with the hopes of launching by mid-June. The plan is to hold the Shelburne Farmers' Market every three weeks on a Thursday, rather than on a weekly basis and it will be located on First Ave. W, in Shelburne.

‘Ontario government unveils new reopening plan: Out with the old, and in with the new. The Ontario government announced last Thursday (May 20) the details of a new three step plan, dubbed the Roadmap to Reopen, which will gradually reopen the province based on vaccination rates.

‘The speed at which we get through this reopening will come down to one thing, how quickly we get people vaccinated,’ said Premier Doug Ford, during a press conference at Queen's Park.

Step one will begin after 60 per cent of Ontario adults have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Step Two of the new reopening plan will see expansion on outdoor activities, and the resuming of outdoor sports and leagues. Outdoor gatherings of up to 25 people, indoor gatherings up to five people and non-essential retail at 25 per cent capacity will be allowed. Public libraries and personal care service will also open with capacity limits and face coverings. Weddings, funerals, religious services, rites and ceremonies will be permitted to have 15 per cent capacity indoors and outdoors permitted with capacity limited.

To enter Step Two, 70 per cent of adult will need to have one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and 20 per cent of adults vaccinated with their second doses. The final step in the reopening plan will begin when 70 to 80 per cent of adults in Ontario have received one dose of a vaccine and 25 per cent have received both doses.

Step Three of the plan will permit indoor services with larger numbers of people with restrictions in place including gyms, cinemas, performing arts facilities, indoor dining, casinos and museums. Weddings, funerals, religious services, rites and ceremonies will be permitted to have larger indoor services and outdoor services with capacity limited.

The province will remain in each step of the reopening plan for at least 21 days to evaluate any impacts on the relaxed restrictions.

June:

‘Pride month being celebrated in Dufferin County: The month of June, in many ways, is of great significance when looking at the battles LGBTQ people fought to be treated equally and accepted in society.

June is Pride month, which started out as a protest, but now, in Dufferin County and other communities across Canada, it is seen as a celebration of LGBTQ people and diversity.

Celebrate Your Awesome, a local Pride and diversity group, has been hosting celebrations locally since 2018, with a shift to virtual events last year and this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020 a live virtual show was hosted by a drag performer with a DJ spinning tracks for entertainment. Members of the community also submitted videos for the show, which were featured.

This year, Celebrate Your Awesome is taking a similar route to keep everybody safe from the COVID-19 pandemic. The virtual show is set to release in early August

? Flags lowered at Shelburne Town Hall to honour indigenous children: The Town of Shelburne has lowered the Canadian flag at Town Hall to half mast, in recognition of the 215 Indigenous children found buried beneath a former residential school in B.C.

Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills addressed the lowering of the flags during the regular town council meeting on Monday (May 31).

?To honour the lives and spirits of those 215 children, and others who we may not know about, we have lowered our flags at Town Hall to half-mast. On behalf of Council and the residents of the Town of Shelburne, I want to extend our deepest collective condolences to all of those who are directly or indirectly affect by this,? said Mills. ?I also want to make it clear to members of our indigenous community both locally and nationally, that the Town of Shelburne grieves with you and we stand with you.?

Last Thursday (May 27), preliminary findings from a ground survey at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School uncovered the remains of 215 children. Some of the remains belonged to children as young as three.

The Kamloops Indian Residential School operated from 1890 to 1969, and was run as a day school for nine more years before being closed in 1978.

Built on the territory of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation, Kamloops Indian Residential School was at one point the largest residential school in Canada with up to 500 students registered and attending.

? Eight-year-old boy from Mulmur sets goal of hiking entire Bruce Trail: Henry Little doesn't come from a family of avid hikers, but the local eight-year-old is setting out on a goal to hike the entirety of the Bruce Trail. Henry, who goes by Henry the Hiker on social media, began going on walks or as he calls them ?forest adventures? with his mom, Carola Little, last September.

With the Bruce Trail crossing behind their family home in Mulmur, the walks started out as a way of getting out of the house while homeschooling during the pandemic.

Now, Henry is looking to complete the entire Bruce Trail, which spans 900 kilometers end-to-end from the Niagara River to the tip of Tobermory.

Since starting their hiking journey last year, Henry and Carola have already completed 143 kilometers in the Dufferin Hi-land, Beaver Valley, and Caledon Hills sections of the Bruce Trail.

Going out for hikes around three times a week, Carol said they hope to reach 250 by mid-July and 500 kilometers by the end of the year.

? Local mosque holds vigil following London attack: We Stand With Our London Family. More than a dozen community members gathered outside the Muslims of Shelburne Centre last Thursday (June 10), in a vigil and prayer for the members of a Muslim family targeted in an attack in London, Ont. Salman Afzaal, 46, his wife Madiha Salman, 44, their daughter Yumna Afzaal, 15, and Salman's mother, Talat Afzaal, 74, were killed on June 6 after a truck rammed into the family as they were taking an evening walk.

The family's nine-year-old son, Fayez, is the only survivor and remains in hospital. Nathaniel Veltman, 20, has been charged with four counts of first-degree murder, one count of attempted murder, and terrorism charges.

? Province declares WDG as area of concern for Delta variant: The region of Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (WDG), has been

declared a hotspot in the province for the Delta (B.1.617) variant by the Province of Ontario.

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (WDG) Public Health announced in a press release on June 10 that the province would be expanding the local vaccine supply to communities with higher rate of Delta variant transmission.

July:

? Drive-in concert in Mulmur sees huge support: Hundreds of fans were in attendance for the inaugural Music in the Hills Concert at the Mansfield Ski Club in Mulmur on Friday (June 25).

The drive-in concert, which sold out in five days, was started by the Suicide Awareness Council of Wellington-Dufferin in partnership with Go With Crowe Real Estate.

The event helped raise more than \$11,000 for suicide prevention and awareness initiatives within the community.

This year's lineup included Juno-award winning musician Jim Cuddy and his band The Jim Cuddy Trio as well as musician Woody Woodburn and local singer-songwriter Sohayla Smith.

? Shelburne to reduce default speed limit to 40 km/hr: Traffic in Shelburne will soon be moving a little bit slower.

Town council, during their meeting on June 28, directed staff to take the immediate steps in reducing the Town's default speed limit from 50 km/hr to 40 km/hr.

The decision to lower the speed limit comes after a motion, brought forward by Coun. Wegener, to implement speed humps along Greenwood Street as a way to mitigate speeding on the residential road, was defeated 6-1.

? WDG approaching 80 per cent of adults with first dose of vaccine: Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (WDG) Public Health has nearly reached 80 per cent of the adult population with a first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine ? now officials say they're focused on those who are still on the fence. In Dufferin County, 73.3 per cent of the eligible population is partially vaccinated.

? Weekend service now offered for Dundalk, Shelburne, Orangeville route: Grey Transit Route (GTR) users will now be able to travel between Dundalk and Orangeville every day of the week with the launch of weekend service.

Grey County began offering weekend bus runs on the Hwy. 10 route, which goes between Dundalk, Shelburne and Orangeville, this past weekend (July 10).

The expansion to include weekend bus service is part of a pilot project launched by the Town of Shelburne and will run until December. The pilot project is funded through a realigning of \$25,000 included in the 2021 budget for two bus shelters.

The weekend service pilot project will run from July 10 until Dec. 12.

? Former dentist sentenced for sex crimes: A former Shelburne dentist found guilty in sexually assaulting a minor at his dental office, has been sentenced to 90 days jail time.

Muthanna Gewarges, a dentist who practiced at the former Small Town Family Dental on Main Street in Shelburne, was sentenced last Friday (July 16) after being found guilty of one count of sexual exploitation by sexual touching and one count of sexual assault.

Gerwarges will serve his 90 day sentence intermittently on weekends and will face two years of probation. He is also required to

submit a DNA sample and must comply with the sexual offender registration program for 10 years.

August:

? Volunteer firefighter recognized with federal award: A Shelburne resident recently received a special award from the region's member of parliament for his selfless acts of kindness and generosity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Randy Narine, who operates Choices Youth Shelter in Orangeville and is a volunteer firefighter for the Shelburne Fire Department, received the COVID-19 Local Community Hero Award from Dufferin?Caledon MP Kyle Seeback. A large part of why he received the award is for the programs he runs for at-risk or less fortunate youth and a program he started during the pandemic, which was self-funded, that provides financial assistance to families impacted by job losses due to COVID-19.

? Province of Ontario releases back-to school plan: Ontario students returning to in-person learning this school year will see themselves in an environment close to that of pre-pandemic, as the Ontario government unveils the back-to-school plan.

Secondary and elementary school students will return to the classroom five days a week, with 300 minutes of instruction come the fall. But, the document also warns the school boards to be prepared with plans to move quickly to remote learning.

Students enrolled in elementary schools (Kindergarten through to Grade 8) will be cohorted for the full day and will remain with one teacher, where possible. Exceptions to these cohorts include specialized education staff and teachers such as French teachers and support staff, who are permitted to go into classrooms and multiple schools.

With the back-to school plan, a number of programs and activities that have been halted during the pandemic will be allowed to resume.

? Olympic gold medalist receives honours at Council: The Town of Shelburne has found itself the new home of an Olympic gold medalist, and council members gave them a warm welcome to the community.

During their meeting on Monday (Aug. 23) Shelburne Town Council presented Kadeisha Buchanan, who helped the Canadian women's soccer team win gold on Aug. 6 at the Tokyo Olympics, with a key to the town and Shelburne's Community Excellence Award.

Mayor Wade Mills proclaimed Aug. 24, Kadeisha Buchanan Day in the Town of Shelburne, while the Dufferin County Canadian Black Association also awarded her their Black Excellence Award.

The accolades were in recognition of her outstanding athletic achievements.

September:

? Community celebrates retirement of local entrepreneur: Well-known local entrepreneur Bob McBride, owner of Shelburne Memorials, has officially retired after almost 30 years of work in the community.

Co-workers, community members, friends, and family gathered at the local business, located at 709 Industrial Rd, last Friday (Aug. 27) to honour McBride's retirement after 54 years as an entrepreneur in the community.

McBride, who is a third generation Shelburne resident, worked for Canada Packers from 1964 until 1966 before starting his career as

a self-employed entrepreneur with his company McBride Produce (1966-1979).

McBride went on to open Dufferin Potato Storage and Hi-Land Potatoes in 1979, which he would own for the next 10 years until selling the company to Downey Farms. It was in 1991 when he officially took purchase of Shelburne Memorials, the town's second oldest running business dating back to 1888.

With no previous training or knowledge into the making of cemetery monuments, McBride learned the trade on the job.

? Ontario rolls out vaccine passport for certain 'non-essential' businesses: The Ontario government will soon require people to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination status to access certain businesses and settings.

The province announced last Wednesday (Sept. 1) that as of Sept. 22 Ontarians will need to show proof of full vaccination (two doses plus 14 days), and photo identification to access a number of non-essential businesses and restaurants.

? Council votes in favour of COVID-19 vaccination policy: The Town of Shelburne is in the process of developing a mandatory vaccination policy for all municipal staff members and elected officials, after a 6-1 majority vote from council.

During Shelburne Town council's meeting on Monday (Sept. 13), Deputy Mayor Steve Anderson brought forward a motion to have staff come back with a draft report on a vaccination policy by November that is in line with the County of Dufferin's policy.

?As leaders I think it's important that we do just that. Demonstrate leadership in a time where leadership is required,? said Anderson. ?This might not be popular in the eyes of some, but at the end of the day it's not a popularity contest as far as I'm concerned ? it's about saving lives.?

The draft report being brought back to council will include two policies; one focused on municipal staff and another for elected officials, as they are not considered municipal employees.

? Council to borrow \$5 million for new water tower: Shelburne Town Council has approved a plan to borrow \$5 million to complete construction of a new water storage tower.

During their meeting on Monday (Sept. 27), Shelburne Town Council received a report from municipal engineer Stephen Burnett and town treasurer Carey Holmes on the new water tower project.

Council unanimously voted in favour of applying for a loan from Infrastructure Ontario over a 20-year term.

The total cost of the project is slated for \$7,184,254.98, which includes the water tower base construction at \$5,983,050, a 10 per cent construction contingency of \$598,305, an eight per cent engineering cost of \$478,644, plus a 1.76 per cent non-refundable HST cost of \$124,555.98.

In June, a request for proposal was issued by the Town, receiving only one bid at \$6.7 million. The \$6.7 million bid, which was later negotiated down to just shy of \$6 million, is significantly higher than the original budget of \$3.5 million.

? Provincial government begins to loosen capacity restrictions in select settings: The Ontario government has loosened capacity limits on select indoor and outdoor settings where proof of vaccination is required.

As of Sept. 25, arenas, cinemas, banquet halls, and other meeting and event spaces were allowed to increase their capacity limits. Dr. Kieran Moore, chief medical officer of health, said in a press release last Friday that the changes to the capacity limits is due to key public health and health care indicators stabilizing.

For outdoor setting where people are standing, the capacity limits have increased to up to 75 per cent or 15,000 (whichever is less).

Outdoors events where people are seated have increased to up to 75 per cent capacity or 30,000, whichever is less. Indoor venues such as cinemas, theatres, sporting events, concerts, and conference centres have capacity limits of up to 50 per cent or 10,000 people, whichever is less.

October:

? Community gathers for Orange Shirt Day Walk: Shelburne residents' clad in orange t-shirts gathered on Saturday (Oct. 2) to take part in a local Orange Shirt Day Walk in honour of residential school survivors, and missing Indigenous children.

The remembrance walk started at Greenwood Park and lead towards Jack Downing Park, where the Every Child Matters flag was raised in recognition of the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Dewe'igenkwewuk, a drumming circle of Indigenous women ages 5 to 60, began the walk with traditional drumming and sharing community songs.

?Each of us, regardless of position or standing, regardless of background or heritage or blood ? each of us has a vital role, an inescapable role in our national efforts toward reconciliation.?

?Canadians of all backgrounds and origins need to stand shoulder to shoulder committed to walking the path of reconciliation together. This is the journey, to which we must all commit; a journey that may be long, one that may not always be straight or easy. One that will almost certainly include, still yet unforeseen challenges and pitfalls, but a journey nonetheless, which must be undertake and a journey which can only be finished together.?

? Town celebrates opening of Community Garden: While seeds took root and fresh produce grew all summer, the Town of Shelburne was officially able to celebrate the opening of the Shelburne Community Garden last week.

Town leaders, staff, and donors gathered at Fiddle Park in Shelburne last Thursday (Sept. 30) to mark the opening of the local community garden with a ceremonial ribbon cutting.

?For staff this is definitely a remarkable achievement. We started with the design idea and to see all the garden full of life is amazing,? said Carol Maitland, Shelburne's economic development and marketing coordinator. ?We've had a lot of positive feedback from the community with not only the fact that the garden has been incredibly successful, with every garden bed being used, but also it being a place for people to just relax and visit.?

The Shelburne Community Garden has been in the works for around two years, with construction breaking ground in September of 2020 and completing in April.

First, developed as a way to address food insecurity in the community following the release of a study commissioned by Dufferin County and Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, the garden has also become a safe and healthy space for community members to socialize.

? Deputy Mayor pens autobiography: Shelburne Deputy Mayor Steve Anderson has added the title of author to his list of accomplishments after penning a self-published autobiography, Driven to Succeed. More than a year in a half in the works, Anderson celebrated the official launch of his debut book on Tuesday (Oct. 12), and said he hopes it will serve as a source of inspiration for readers facing difficult obstacles and setbacks.

? OPP charge Shelburne man with first-degree murder: Provincial police have charged a 32-yearold Shelburne man with murder in connection to a death in Northern Bruce Peninsula. Police say Wazhir Gafoor was arrested and charged with first degree murder on

Oct. 11.

Officers from the Grey Bruce OPP responded to a death near Scugog Lane of the Northern Bruce Peninsula at about 3 p.m. on Oct. 10, where the body of a deceased female was located in a wooded area.

Police say the identity of the deceased is under investigation.

? OPP identify body connected to Shelburne man's murder charge: Provincial police have identified the body of a deceased woman found in Northern Bruce Peninsula over the Thanksgiving long weekend.

Grey Bruce OPP, in a press release on Oct. 14 confirmed the individual to be 36-year old Christina Yadram of Toronto. On Oct. 11, officers arrested and charged 32-year-old Wazhir Gafoor of Shelburne with first degree murder in connection with her death.

Gafoor was remanded in custody and is scheduled to make an appearance before the Ontario Court of Justice in Owen Sound this Friday (Oct. 22).

Officers from the Grey Bruce OPP detachment responded to a death at around 3 p.m. on Oct. 10 near Scugog Lane, where the body of a woman was located in a wooded area.

? MoD unveils mural calling for action on climate change: Amy Shackleton, a gravity artist, has spent the last decade creating works of art that bring nature back into cities.

While on a search for sustainable buildings she found herself standing in landscapes ravaged by climate change. Melting glaciers, burning forests, and rising water.

Now, she's bringing the impacts of climate change from across Canada closer to home, with her new installation exhibition called ?Playing with Fire & Ice? at the Museum of Dufferin.

? Haunt in the Park returning to Shelburne this weekend: For almost three decades, the Little family has brought Halloween spirit to the Shelburne community with their haunted house, and now they're back stronger than ever.

After cancelling the annual Haunt in the Park last year due to COVID-19 restrictions, the attraction has returned to Fiddle Park for three nights of scares and screams.

?We're really happy to be back. What may have started out as a small family haunt has grown to something the community looks forward to year-round and has become a part of the tapestry of Shelburne. We are incredibly proud and honoured to be the ones that have brought it to this point,? said Carola Little.

Making the events return to the community after a year of cancellations, Little said Haunt in the Park feels bigger than ever before, with new layouts, ideas, characters, and all around community support.

November:

? Local teacher writes children's book about her physical disability: As a teacher with a physical disability, Dorrett Homer has become accustomed to answering an array of questions from her students.

Now, she's published her first children's book to help inspire and teach children about living life with a physical disability. Titled, ?Hi Ms. Homer' the children's book, which was published in May of this year, is based on snippets of Homer's experiences within

the classroom with students. Homer was born with a congenital birth defect resulting in her left arm being significantly shorter than her right arm, and also only has three fingers.

'Even though my arm is like this, I don't let it stop me. I live a regular normal life with three children and my husband of 28 years,' said Homer.

'Hi Ms. Homer' takes the reader through the various questions students asked her over the years, including why she was born this way, can she write, can she hold a cup, and can she put her arm above her head.

'I just answered those questions for the students to let them know how much someone that is born with a disability still is able to function in society just like anyone else,' said Homer. 'I also tried to inspire them to know even if they have a disability that they are more than capable of setting goals and reaching dreams, and not to let it discourage them; having a physical disability doesn't hamper you from living a life.'

In an effort to bring further representation into children's literature, Homer published her second book in July titled 'Compliments to My Mommy'.

Focused on a little girl who wants to give her mom a gift for Mother's Day, by writing messages on pieces of paper in a jar and having her pull them out, Homer said it has a 'Caribbean twist'.

'Unemployment in Dufferin and rural areas on the rise: A new report released by the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin last week is indicating rising numbers of unemployment in rural areas.

According to the organization's labour market specialists, the rural unemployment rate has risen to over six per cent with unemployment numbers from October showing approximately 2,000 more people being unemployed in the rural regions of Dufferin County, Wellington County, and Simcoe.

The report also said there is a rising number of people leaving the labour market as an extra 2,300 people are no longer seeking work.

'Shelburne BIA Santa Claus Parade making return: Santa Claus is coming to Shelburne. The Shelburne Business Improvement Area (BIA) has announced they will be hosting their annual Santa Claus Parade on Saturday Dec. 4 starting at 6 p.m.

'Everyone was looking forward to a parade happening, and a lot were wondering if it was going to,' said Melissa Hooper, treasurer for the BIA. 'It's nice to see community events come back, not just for the businesses or the downtown, but also for the residents who haven't been able to do too much over the last year.'

The annual parade is returning after a year hiatus, due to health safety concerns and regulations related to the pandemic. Planning for the holiday parade, which typically takes place a month in advance, began earlier this month.

'County Warden stepping down: Melancthon Mayor Darren White, who has served as Dufferin County's Warden for three consecutive terms, is stepping back from the role, not seeking re-election next month.

White officially announced his decision to step away from the lead position with Dufferin County Council, during a council meeting last Thursday (Nov. 11).

'I've been the Warden for four out of the last five years, which is a long time. Unfortunately, during my term, we've had to deal with a pandemic, and some other really big challenging issues,' White told the Free Press.

White was elected as the 144th Warden of Dufferin County in December of last year, and previously held the council position in

2017, 2019, and 2020.

He said he originally planned to step back after his 2020 term, but stayed on due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

? Michelle Hanson pleads guilty: Michelle Hanson, a mother who faced charges in relation to the 2018 death of her three-year-old son Kaden Young, has pleaded guilty to criminal negligence causing death.

Hanson appeared in Orangeville court virtually on Tuesday (Nov. 23), alongside her lawyer, Hal Mattson to enter her plea. Hanson was charged in relation to her son's death after her vehicle was pulled into the Grand River on the early morning hours of Feb. 21, 2018, during a period of heavy flooding which saw river water rise up onto the road.

Both Hanson and Kaden escaped the vehicle, but Kaden was pulled out of his mother's arms. His body was later recovered in Belwood Lake on April 21, two months to the day of the incident.

Following the reading of agreed statement of facts, Justice Gisele Miller accepted the guilty plea. Hanson was charged in October of 2018, and was ordered to stand trial on counts of impaired driving causing death and criminal negligence causing death following a preliminary inquiry in 2019.

Her trial, which was scheduled to begin in a Guelph courtroom in March of 2021, was delayed due to a hold on jury trials during the pandemic, and the request from her former lawyer, Marco Forte, to be removed as her counsel. Hanson's sentencing is scheduled for Jan. 18, 2022.

December:

? Town reveals plaque honouring No. 2 Construction Battalion: The Town of Shelburne has unveiled a memorial plaque in honour of Canada's only black military unit.

Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills and Deputy Mayor Steve Anderson unveiled the plaque dedicated to the No. 2 Construction Battalion in the Reflection Garden at the Shelburne Community Garden, last Friday (Nov. 26).

?It's a very significant day. We've said all along that Black history is Canadian history and these men that belong to the No. 2 Construction Battalion, like every other soldier sacrificed for us to have the freedoms that we have today, so what a great privilege to be able to honour these men and honour their history,? said Deputy Mayor Anderson, who spearheaded the project with the support of Town Council.

The No. 2 Battalion, also known as the Black Battalion, was a non-combatant battalion formed in 1916 when many of the members at the outset of the First World War were turned away from joining the Canadian Expeditionary Force because to the color of their skin.

More than 600 joined the battalion and were deployed overseas and to France, where they helped to construct and maintain roads, bridges, and railways to ensure needed lumber was transported to the Front.

? Headwaters confirms unauthorized access in suspicious email activity: Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC) has confirmed the cause of suspicious email activity that led to the shutdown of their internal systems, and the closure of the COVID-19 assessment centre.

On Friday (Nov. 26) the local hospital released an updated notice on their website noting their system had been subjected to ?unauthorized access? resulting in a number of spam emails.

The hospital's information technology system noticed suspicious email activity the day previous (Nov. 25), with a number of spam emails sent from the CEO Kim Delahunt's email account to hundreds of contacts, primarily staff members of the hospital. As a result of the security breach, the hospital shut down their internal system as well as access to the internet and key external partners.

? Dufferin Community Foundation reaches \$1 million milestone: Dufferin Community Foundation has reached the \$1 million milestone following generous donations from two Dufferin County families.

The local charitable organization made the announcement on Nov. 26 that their invest funds had exceeded \$1.25 million, meaning up to \$30,000 will be available for local charities in 2022 and rising to approximately \$50,000 a year beginning in 2023.

The donations from the two families were made through the Dufferin Community Foundation's Donor-Advised Fund Program. In each case, families set up a named fund to support the cause and charities they care about the most.

? The 'steaks' are high for Dufferin County to grow agricultural stability: Dufferin County is looking to beef up the local meat supply in 2022 through its first ever meat processing plant, and is seeking the support of local farmers.

The plan to establish a meat processing plant within the county is part of an effort to bring Dufferin's farm-to-table system closer to home and create a more sustainable agricultural sector.

To make the plant, Dufferin County needs at least 50 local farmers to commit to utilizing and investing in the new producer-owned facility before March 2022.

Downey said while they don't have any formal commitments, there are 10 farmers who have already shown interest in moving forward as investors.

? Province announces changes to proof-of-vaccination program: The provincial government has announced changes to the proof of vaccination requirements with COVID-19 Omicron variant cases expected to rise in the coming weeks. In a press release last Friday (Dec. 10), the government said they would be delaying the lifting of proof of vaccination requirement beyond Jan. 17.

? Council working to lower tax rate increase: Shelburne Council has continued discussions on the town's operating budget for 2022. On Monday (Dec. 20), Shelburne Town Council held a special meeting to continue budget talks in an effort to lower the suggested tax rate.

A draft budget presented to council earlier in December consisted of a tax levy increase not exceeding 13 per cent resulting in an 8 per cent tax rate increase, including an approximate 1.12 per cent (\$100,000) tax levy increase for arts and culture, a 5.09 levy increase related to staffing and utilizing \$200,000 from the Town's tax stabilization reserve.

A motion was passed by council for staff to return with a final draft with the changes including the additional \$177,288 draw on the tax stabilization reserve, resulting in a tax rate increase of 5 per cent.

? WDG Public Health issues work from-home order as of Dec. 20: Medical Officer of Health and CEO for Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (WDG) Public Health, Dr. Nicola Mercer, has issued an order instructing businesses to allow employees to work from home where reasonable.

The notice was announced by WDG Public Health last Thursday (Dec. 16) and went into effect as of Monday (Dec. 20). Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health reported the first local case of the Omicron variant on Dec. 10 and has since seen multiple confirmed cases of the variant resulting in schools closing and moving to online learning, and isolation of youth hockey teams.

While the remote order went into effect on Dec. 20, Mercer noted that she can't provide an end date for the instructions.

?My current expectation, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, is that they will be in place over the holiday season,? said Mercer. ?It is not possible at this time to account for the potential impact of the Omicron variant of concern, about which much is currently being learned. I may amend these instructions (if and as required) and will rescind them as soon I determine they are no longer necessary.?

? New COVID restrictions in effect: The Ontario government has introduced new restrictions on capacity limits and gathering sizes in the wake of rising cases of COVID-19. Premier Doug Ford announced the new measures during a press conference last Friday (Dec. 17), which became effective as of Dec. 19.

The new measures reduces social gathering limits for indoors from 25 people to 10 and outdoor gatherings reduced from 100 people to 25. Restaurants and bars now have a seating limit of 10 people at a table and are required to close by 11 p.m., with the exception of takeout and delivery which are permitted to run past 11.

The sale of alcohol has also been restricted after 10 p.m. Food and drink services are prohibited at sporting events, concert venues, theatres, cinemas, casinos, bingo halls, and other gaming venues.

Dancing is not allowed except for workers or performers. The restrictions do not apply to areas of business or place being used for a wedding, a funeral or a religious service, rite, or ceremony.