

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

January

St. Paul's Anglican Church to shut down after 150 years of serving the community

One of Shelburne's founding churches is ending a more than 150-year-old chapter in history as they prepare to officially close their doors this month.

St. Paul's Anglican Church, located at 312 Owen Sound St. in Shelburne, will be closing its doors following a final service for the congregation on Sunday, Jan. 21.

"It's always sad seeing church close, but churches have closed for hundreds and thousands of years, and it's important that people focus on celebrating what this church has been to this community," said Marg Finlayson, People's Warden at the church. "I think of how many prayers of celebration and anguish that went up and also all the celebrations like weddings and baptisms; historically, churches have been community centres, and all of those moments have been part of the community."

The decision to close the church came in October of 2023 with a vote from church members after months of discussions.

"We did not do this lightly," said Finlayson. "We each went away and thought seriously about the gospel message and how we can continue to live that outside the walls [of the church]."

The history of St. Paul's Anglican Church begins well before the church's construction, with the first Anglican worship services in the area held once a month in a small log hall in Melancthon as early as 1855. Construction of the first St. Paul's Anglican Church began in the summer of 1874 and was finished by Christmas of the same year. The first service was held on Jan. 17, 1875, led by Rev. J.J. Morton, with planks used to seat the congregation and a borrowed organ.

In January of 1929, a fire broke out in the church's furnace room, and the church sustained damage from smoke and water, but re-insurance allowed for repairs and replacement.

During Canada's Centennial year (1967), the Shelburne parish and Dundalk church were amalgamated.

The Shelburne congregation celebrated St. Paul's Anglican Church's 150th anniversary in 2023.

Two public meetings scheduled for proposed boundary review of Primrose

The Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) will host two additional public delegation meetings regarding a proposed boundary review for Primrose Elementary.

In October of 2023, the Upper Grand District School Board announced in a press release that they would conduct a boundary review to address the accommodation pressures at Primrose Elementary School in Mulmur.

The rural school, serviced by a private well and septic system, has an operating capacity of 377 pupil spaces. Primrose Elementary has experienced an increase in enrollment in recent years, and the current number of students in the school sits at approximately 580.

The proposed school to accommodate the boundary review is Centennial Hylands Elementary School, which has an enrollment of 413 students and the capacity to accommodate a total of 541 students.

Since the boundary review announcement, families of students at Primrose Elementary have raised concerns about their children having to relocate schools.

?They don't want to see another boundary review that separates their kids from their friends only seven years after the last one, where they were forced to move from Centennial Hylands to Primrose,? said Coun. James McLean, Deputy Mayor of Melancthon.

Any approvals to the boundary adjustment by the Upper Grand District School will be expected to be implemented for the 2024-2025 school year.

Inquest into 2016 death of Grand Valley Institution for Women inmate underway

A coroner's inquest examining the 2016 death of Terry Baker, an inmate at the Grand Valley Institution for Women in Kitchener, is underway.

Baker, who was 30 years old at the time of her death, was serving a life sentence after pleading guilty to her part in the 2002 murder of 16-year-old Orangeville teen Robbie McLennan.

Baker was convicted of first-degree murder in 2006 and handed a life sentence without the eligibility of parole for 10 years. Her then 20-year-old boyfriend, William Bronson Penasse, also pleaded guilty to first-degree murder in 2005 and was sentenced to life in prison without the eligibility for parole until 2030. Another 16-year-old ? never identified under the Youth Criminal Justice Act ? was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to 18 months.

A coroner's inquest to examine the event surrounding her death was announced in 2017 by then-regional supervising coroner, Dr. David Eden.

The inquest is expected to span three weeks, during which the jury will hear from approximately 18 witnesses. Inquests are mandatory by law whenever a prisoner dies from non-natural causes while in custody.

The jurors will not be making a finding of guilt or innocence during the inquest; instead, they will be looking at the facts surrounding Baker's death and will come up with recommendations to help prevent similar deaths from happening in the future.

February:

New nonprofit aims to connect Indigenous and non-Indigenous people

Two Dufferin County residents have teamed up to introduce a new not-for-profit organization aimed at joining the local Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities together.

Sharon Rigby and Julie Elsdon-Height have launched The Brave Canoe, a community-based not-for-profit organization that looks to bring the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities of Dufferin County together to learn, grow and heal.

?Our mission is to bridge communities, enrich lives, and promote wellbeing within Dufferin County by revitalizing and understanding Indigenous history, culture and traditions,? said co-founder Rigby

Rigby is an Indigenous community leader, who works as an educator with the Peel District School Board's Maawnjiding Wiingushkeng Indigenous Centre in Caledon. Elsdon-Height, who is non-Indigenous, is an experienced figure in community development and a soon-to-be graduate of Laurentian University's Indigenous Social Work program.

The foundation of The Brave Canoe is grounded in the Two-Eyed Seeing approach, a term coined by Mi'kmaq Elders which utilizes both Western and Indigenous knowledge.

Throughout 2024, The Brave Canoe will be offering a range of educational, cultural and wellbeing services to Dufferin County residents, including Indigenous history education, workshops, ceremonies, community educational sessions, community events, and therapeutic healing services. Educational programs will consist of drumming, beading, and sewing classes for youth circles as well as workshops for seniors.

To learn more about the Brave Canoe visit their website at www.thebravecanoe.ca.

CDDHS Royals senior team wins District 4 championship

The Centre Dufferin District High School Royals boy's basketball team has captured the District 4 championship with a win over the Norwell District Secondary School Varsity Reds at home on Wednesday, Feb. 14.

The Royals came to the final game as a first-place team, undefeated for the season.

The Royal claimed the championship with a 71-39 final score.

The Royals will now move on to compete at the regional level at CWOSSA where they will be up against other championship teams. Centre Dufferin is hosting CWOSSA this year, with games being held at CDDHS as well as at Westside Secondary School in Orangeville on February 23-24.

Headwaters receives \$1 million anonymous donation

A patient at Headwaters Hospital has donated \$1 million to the hospital's charity organization, Headwaters Health Care Foundation, in appreciation of the care they received.

In a Feb. 5 press release, the local hospital reported that the patient, who has chosen to remain anonymous, pledged one million to the hospital after receiving "excellent care," specifically in the emergency department.

The million-dollar gift was directed to Smart Headwaters, an \$18 million campaign aimed at acquiring an MRI machine and other vital medical technology to enhance the diagnostic services at the local hospital.

The donor highlighted the need for MRI services within the Dufferin County community as one of the purposes behind their donation.

Executive director of Family Transition Place announces resignation

After serving as the executive director of Family Transition Place for over 15 years, a longtime advocate for victims of domestic violence, Norah Kennedy, is retiring.

FTP's Board of Directors announced in a press release on Feb. 20 that Kennedy is resigning from her role, but will continue to lead FTP until the end of 2024.

In Norah's resignation letter, she spoke of her time at FTP as one of her "greatest sources of pride and accomplishment," and that she had found her calling, "working with a team of people who will always be family to me."

Acknowledging that FTP is led by a team of "exceptional and capable, strong, talented women," she wrote it is now someone else's time to have the honour and privilege of guiding the agency into the future. Norah asserts she will "always be an ambassador for the agency," and FTP said in a press release that it is immensely grateful for that.

FTP noted that while her retirement from this role may be sad news for the Board, staff, clients, and the organization's community partners, it's because of Norah's intrinsic understanding of the needs of the agency, that she has spent the past several years thoroughly, and thoughtfully, preparing FTP for this impending transition

March:

CDDHS girl's hockey team wins District 4 championship

The Centre Dufferin District High School Royals girl's hockey team is District 4 champions after a 4-2 win in the final game against the Wellington Heights Secondary School Wolverines at the Centre Dufferin Recreation Complex on Wednesday, Feb. 28.

The Royals had a stellar year finishing the regular season in first place with a 9-3 record.

Families' relocation worries alleviated as UGDSB caps enrollment at Primrose Elementary School

Students and families enrolled at Primrose Elementary School no longer need to worry about relocating to a different school for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) trustees voted last month to approve an enrollment cap for Primrose Elementary School starting the 2024-2025 school year to help alleviate enrolment pressure.

By establishing an enrolment cap, current Primrose ES students will not be impacted by a boundary change. This option puts a control on the enrolment numbers at Primrose ES. It also allows staff to monitor the on-going growth at Centennial Hylands ES, wrote the school board in the final report of the boundary review.

In October of 2023, the Upper Grand District School Board announced in a press release that they would conduct a boundary review to address the accommodation pressures at Primrose Elementary School in Mulmur.

The rural school, serviced by a private well and septic system, has an operating capacity of 377 pupil spaces. Primrose Elementary has experienced an increase in enrollment in recent years, and the current number of students in the school sits at approximately 580. As of the 2023-24 school year, Primrose has 23 classes and 17 classrooms in the school building as well as six portables on site.

After conducting three meetings to discuss the enrolment pressures as well as receiving feedback from those impacted by the boundary review, the UGDSB considered and voted to cap the number of students at Primrose starting with kindergarten enrollment.

Chief of Dufferin County Paramedic Services set to retire

Tom Reid, Chief of Dufferin County Paramedic Services (DCPS), has officially announced his retirement.

The County of Dufferin and Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC) issued a joint press release on Monday (March 18) announcing that Reid would be retiring as Chief of Dufferin County Paramedic Services (DCPS) after more than two decades in the role.

It has been my honour to serve with such an amazing team for my entire career. I would like to thank the paramedic team, Headwaters, Dufferin County and our community partners for their unwavering support, said Reid. As difficult it is to leave, I do it with the knowledge that our community is left in good and caring hands.

Reid has worked in paramedic services for 41 years and has sat as the Chief of Dufferin DCPS for more than 25.

Achievements from his years of service include spearheading the transformation of community paramedicine in the province, initiating Public Access De-fibrillators in Dufferin County, Advanced Life Support training, overseeing the award-winning

Telecheck volunteer program, and serving on the Ministry of Health Ambulance Services review team for over three decades.

Reid has also received accolades such as the Governor General's Exemplary Service Medal for Emergency Medical Services and the Dr. David Scott Award from Headwaters Health Care Centre. In 2023, Reid was awarded the prestigious provincial Richard J. Armstrong Leadership Award.

April:

Local man recognized for rescuing elderly neighbour from fire

A Grand Valley resident is being recognized for his heroic actions that helped save the life of a neighbour last March.

Alan Mackie was presented with the prestigious Carnegie Hero Medal on Sunday (April 14) during a special ceremony at the Grand Valley Fire Department for rescuing his elderly neighbour from a house fire.

"This award is an amazing honour, I'm still taken aback by the whole thing," Mackie told the Free Press. "I'm really not comfortable with the attention, and I didn't understand it being such a big deal; it's in front of you and you deal with it."

The Carnegie Medal is an award given throughout the United States and Canada to individuals who risk death or serious physical injury to an extraordinary degree while saving or attempting to save the lives of others.

Shortly before midnight on March 2, 2023, Mackie was up watching television in his living room when he noticed a flickering light on his neighbour's driveway. Opening the door of his Gier Street home, Mackie discovered flames coming out of the same neighbour's roof.

After honking the horn of his car and banging on the side of the house, which resulted in no response, Mackie decided to kick in the front door. Inside the home, Mackie discovered his neighbour in a bedroom and recounted, "I grabbed his walker, spun him around, sat him on his walker, and dragged him out backwards."

Outside the home, the two were met with an ambulance from Dufferin Paramedic Service, which transported the elderly neighbour to a local hospital. Firefighters from Grand Valley and Orangeville responded to the blaze, which was deemed non-suspicious by the Ontario Fire Marshall.

In June of last year, Mackie was also presented with a Citation of Heroism Award from the Town of Grand Valley for his actions.

Shelburne Soccer Club requests field upgrades

The Shelburne Soccer Club has approached Town Council advocating for upgrades to the fields.

The proposal highlighted various projects spanning years, which aim to improve the conditions of the fields at Greenwood Park and support the growing demand for soccer facilities in the community.

The project proposal to Council included a four-phase plan to improve the fields at Greenwood Park.

The first step in the project proposal from the Shelburne Soccer Club is an expansion of the soccer fields, which would meet the increasing demands for soccer facilities.

The second project proposed by the Shelburne Soccer Club is to resurface Thunder Field with AstroTurf to mitigate issues such as uneven slopes, poor grass conditions, and surface irregularities caused by rain settling.

The third improvement to the soccer fields is the installation of lighting on Brigands Fields as a way of extending playing hours and accessibility to more ages.

The final project proposal to Council is a long-term vision for recreation in the community and introduced the prospect of constructing a sports dome in the area. The sports dome would provide a multipurpose indoor facility that would be able to accommodate various sports including soccer, baseball, cricket, and field hockey.

May:

Sam Young leaves behind legacy teaching junior golfers

There are many golfers who remember Sam Young as the inspired teacher who taught them the nuances of the sport on the practice range and fairways at the Shelburne Golf and Country Club.

Sam passed away on April 27, after a lifetime involved in the sport and leaving a legacy of having taught thousands of young golfers how to play the game. For young golfers, learning the game under the tutelage of a professional means they will develop life-long skills that make a big difference on the course and in their daily lives.

Sam began working in the golf world in the mid-1960s as a caddy. He joined the Canadian Tour in 1966 as a golfer.

His career as a pro golfer was short-lived, however, when arthritis in his hands forced him to retire from the tour.

In 1975, Sam purchased, what was then, a 9-hole golf course near Shelburne, which he expanded to 18 holes, and became what is now ? the Shelburne Golf & Country Club.

Sam continued his work with junior golfers and created a successful program at the golf course.

Over the years he taught thousands of young players. Every year he would take a team of advanced junior golfers to North Carolina for spring training.

Sam was inducted into the Shelburne and District Sports Hall of Fame in 2012, and the Ontario Golf Hall of Fame in 2011. In 2018, he was inducted into the PGA of Canada Hall of Fame. Through his junior program, he was twice named PGA of Ontario Junior Teacher of the Year.

Orangeville Wolves special needs hockey team competes in Boston tournament

While it can be difficult to find a sports program that accommodates individuals with special needs, the Orangeville Wolves ensures they have that opportunity.

Since 1999, the Orangeville Wolves has provided hockey programming to people with disabilities, helping them to build confidence, develop skills out on the ice, and feel a sense of belonging.

The Orangeville Wolves are a part of Special Hockey International (SHI), a league with teams across North America. The SHI Annual Tournament was held from April 25 to 27 in Boston, Massachusetts, and the Orangeville squad travelled there by bus to take part.

The SHI Tournament in Boston had teams from all over Canada, the United States, and even England.

The Orangeville Wolves fundraised to cover the cost of a hotel room and travel with the team bus for all its players. The annual tournament provides the team with opportunities they might not otherwise have.

Main character from local author's children's book made into doll

A young local author is hoping to bring comfort to other kids by bringing to life a main character from her book. Amaya James, an 11-year-old Shelburne resident and author of the children's book *Afro, No!*, has announced the launch of Lil' Emmie ? a doll based on one of the main characters from her book.

?I wanted to make this doll because I thought it'd be a great wash day companion because my book is about getting your hair done on wash day,? explained James. ?I thought we should make a doll so there's always someone who knows how you feel on wash day.?

Afro, No! features main characters Emmie and Afro who explore the sometimes complicated relationship that young Black girls can have with their hair. It also touches on the beauty, uniqueness and joy that comes with the pain and challenge of getting their hair done.

James initially began writing her children's book in August of 2022 and illustrated the entire book as a self-taught artist. Starting with a sketch of the book's cover she eventually digitized the artwork and slowly began to write and draw what would eventually become the 32-page story.

Centre Dufferin girl's rugby team wins CWOSSA championship

The Centre Dufferin District High School Royals girl's rugby team are Central Western Ontario Secondary Schools Association champions after a 29-0 win over Holy Trinity from Simcoe in the final game on Friday, May 24, on the rugby pitch at CDDHS.

The win marks the third consecutive year that CDDHS has won CWOSSA.

The Royals had an outstanding year going undefeated in the regular season.

The Royals will now face their biggest challenge when they compete at the provincial level at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) championship and face the best high school teams from around Ontario.

June:

Streams Community Hub launches Sing Club's debut album

Shelburne residents now have the opportunity to listen to original music created by local youth.

Streams Community Hub celebrated the launch of their Sing Club program's debut album *Sing Club: Vol. 1* during a special event held at Grace Tipling Hall in Shelburne on May 25. The album features seven original tracks written and performed by the 15 members of the Sing Club program, who range in age from 6 to 13.

It's a great accomplishment and it's super exciting to be able to work with these students to conceptualize an idea and then go through the process of executing it,? said Noni Thomas, lead of Stream's Music Program.

The Sing Club program at Streams Community Hub was started in 2022 by Thomas, a local music educator, and looks to teach youth about music fundamentals and healthy vocal techniques while singing alongside their peers.

In September of 2023, Stream Community Hub expanded the Sing Club program to be a full-year session.

The youth in the program began writing the songs for the album at the beginning of the year and then spent roughly five sessions in

March recording Sing Club: Vol. 1.

The Sing Club: Vol. 1 album features the voices of Emma A., Ethan A., Olivia B., Kamoy D., Ruth F., Zoey H., Jenna H., Akeylah J., Alexandra J., Amaya J., Mariah K., Shyla-Kae M., Nia N., Emma S., Gabriella S.

Shelburne's first virtual reality arcade to open later this month

Legaci VR Verse, Shelburne's first-ever virtual reality arcade, is gearing up to open its doors to customers later this month. The virtual reality arcade is located at 155 Main Street in Shelburne.

The virtual reality arcade is owned and operated by five members of the Pennant family ? Everton Sr., Everton Jr. (Carlos), Eveanna, Jordan and Ann Marie. The Pennant family, who have been residents in Shelburne for nearly a decade, first began exploring the idea of opening a virtual reality arcade for the local community in 2022.

The family was inspired to open the virtual reality arcade based on their own enthusiasm for video games, board games and card games.

The arcade has six individual stations for players to play on their own on the virtual reality headsets as well as a free-roam room, where larger groups can play multiplayer games together.

The virtual arcade currently has six headsets to participate in the games, but expects to upgrade to 10 in the near future. Some of the games available to play include rhythm, cooking, Google Earth, fighting and shooting games, and a flight simulator.

In addition to the virtual reality arcade, Legaci VR Verse is also looking to open a space for board games and card games.

County of Dufferin considers awareness initiative for horse and buggies

The Township of Melancthon is looking to address road safety concerns for horse and buggy drivers by introducing new policies for road rehabilitation and awareness initiatives at the county level.

Melancthon is one of the only municipalities in Dufferin County with a large Mennonite community, but McLean noted they frequently travel to other locations including Shelburne and Mulmur.

Members of the Mennonite community met with Melancthon Council at a recent council meeting to discuss road safety.

?They told us that they are concerned for their safety,? said McLean.

So far, this year there have been two major collisions involving horse and buggies that have occurred in Melancthon. The first incident was in January, resulting in the death of a 21-year-old buggy driver, and most recently there was an accident in April involving two adults and six children, who sustained non-life-threatening injuries.

New chief named for Dufferin County Paramedic Service

A new Chief has been appointed to the Dufferin County Paramedic Service (DCPS).

Dufferin County and Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC) announced in a June 5 press release that veteran paramedic, Gary Staples, had been named as the newest Chief of the Dufferin County Paramedic Service.

Staples has been a member of the Dufferin County Paramedic Service for over 23 years. He graduated from the Fanshawe College Paramedic Program in 1999 as a primary care paramedic.

Over his paramedic career, Staples has served in various communities including Palmerston, Mount Forest, Wellington, Dufferin County and Toronto, where he completed his training as an advanced care paramedic.

In 2012, Staples was selected for a superintendent position and for the past seven years has served as Deputy Chief of performance, quality and development.

Staples said his focus in the upcoming months will be building a leadership team to help support DCPS frontline staff, continuing to develop the community paramedic program, and creating a strategic plan to guide what service will look like for the next 5 to 10 years.

Senior Cubs pay tribute to former player and coach

The Mansfield Senior Cubs paid tribute to a former North Dufferin Baseball League player and coach before their game on Wednesday, June 5, against the Lisle Astros.

William Roger Maes, known as Roger, passed away on May 27.

In 1991, Roger joined the league executive as vice president. He served as president in 1992 and past president the following year.

The Cubs held a moment of silence in Roger's honour prior to the June 5, game.

Local library launches kiosk at Shelburne Foodland

Members of the Shelburne Public Library now have access to borrowing books without visiting the library with the launch of the first-ever community library kiosk.

The Shelburne Public Library celebrated the unveiling of its community library kiosk on Monday (June 24) at Shelburne Foodland.

The Shelburne Public Library was able to purchase the library kiosk through a generous donation provided on behalf of long-standing community members and library patrons Ken and Mildred Gamble.

The library kiosk features its own collection of books that were curated to span a variety of genres from children's books, to young adult and popular adult fiction and non-fiction.

Members of the Shelburne Public Library can check out books by scanning their library card or entering the number, which causes the kiosk door to open and gives them access to the collection of available books.

The borrowed books can then be returned to the kiosk or the Shelburne Public Library.