

## Category 221 Community Service

To whom it may concern,

Ahead of the 2019 Federal election, The Haldimand Press discovered that previous hosts of all candidates' debates locally had no plans to hold such events again. Recognizing the need for residents to hear from their candidates on important issues, The Press stepped up to host a debate ourselves. In just two weeks' time we partnered with our local Legion for an event space, sent out the details to candidates, and launched a marketing campaign to inform residents of the date. We had seven candidates and over 100 residents join us, with dozens of questions submitted.

It was a great event, but we knew we could do better.

Fast forward to May 18, 2022 when we hosted an all candidates debate for the provincial race. Now in a larger venue, our in-person attendance grew to around 150 people. More importantly, however, The Press streamed the debate live on Facebook and over Zoom. A couple hundred people tuned in to watch the debate live, and hundreds more watched the recordings in the coming days.

The lead up to this event required significant planning. For one, we had to ensure residents knew about the upcoming debate. This meant creating and distributing newspaper and social media advertisements and articles in the weeks prior. Other distribution methods included email blasts through our local business associations.

We partnered with a local Lions club this time for the venue, knowing their space was not only larger but includes significant improvements to internet access for streaming. Our partnership with a local filmmaker provided us with cameras and a cameraman. Through him, we met with and hired additional professionals to ensure the audio and video streamed seamlessly to those watching at home. While our partner provided some of the technology needed for filming, we still needed a collection of mics for the candidates, a mixing board, and so on. As we live and work in a rural area, this required a drive out to a nearby city to rent the needed supplies, with another drive back to return everything.

We also hired former CHCH news anchor Connie Smith to moderate the event, while our original event was moderated by a co-publisher, and Smith brought in a high level of professionalism and talent.

A Zoom subscription was purchased in advance, and we had to learn to operate a meeting that allowed viewers to participate in the comments without being able to interrupt the video. This included moderating the chat the night of to ensure a reasonable decorum was maintained, a difficult task when people feel so safe behind their screens. The night of also required the set up and take down of several tables for candidates to use before and during the debate, along with seating for everyone in attendance. We provided water, pens, and copies of the newspaper as well.

Questions were received both prior to the event through email and on question slips provided to in-person attendees. With dozens of questions submitted, this required sorting through them all to pull out the questions that were most popular and pertinent to residents, recognizing our limited time.

Following the debate our reporter wrote an overview of the highlights, released both in paper and online, and directed people once again to watch the video in its entirety online.

The feedback from this event was significant and wholly positive. Residents both in person and online, along with the candidates attending, thanked us for hosting the event, noting how well it was run in comparison to other local debates.

While these candidate debates require significant work on our behalf in the weeks leading up to them, we are proud of the service we are providing our community. Not only is it important to vote, but it is important to vote as an informed citizen. By offering this debate not just in person but online through multiple platforms, we ensured that anyone interested in being informed had the opportunity.

This is why the debate was just one piece of our candidate coverage leading up to the election. Additionally, we offered a free profile of every candidate on the ballot; despite being a subscription paper, we left these articles open to the public on our website to ensure a greater reach.

Reaching this goal proved particularly difficult during this year's provincial election as well, since the PC Party put a stranglehold on its candidate in our region – our mayor at the time. He suddenly went silent and refused to attend our debate in the guise of spending that time with constituents, exactly what our debate would have given him. While The Press specifically does not publicly support any political party over another, this transgression could not go unnoted and was marked by a letter to our readers.

Along with offering candidates a platform to share their messaging through advertising, The Press' extensive coverage of our candidate platforms and providing the debate ensured our readers and general community had the best possible chance to be fully informed voters.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kaitlyn Clark

Co-Publisher

# Upcoming golf fundraiser for Parkview Meadows

By Meg Deak  
The Haldimand Press

TOWNSEND—Parkview Meadows Christian Retirement Village is putting the fun in fundraiser with their ninth annual golf tournament at the Green's of Renton on Friday, August 19, 2022.

Parkview Meadows, a non-profit senior's residence, uses fundraisers to support the needs of their residents. The golf tournament is their biggest fundraising event and is set to be a fun-filled day of golfing, prizes, and a dinner.

"In recent years we have been able to, with our fundraising efforts, provide our residents with a greenhouse for horticultural therapy; a 20-seater wheelchair accessible bus for trips and outings; furniture for our Southview new addition; and our Games Room, to name a few," explained Michael Ciardullo, Manager at Parkview Meadows.

This year, Parkview Meadows is looking to raise enough funds to purchase two new duet bicycles. These are a wheelchair and bicycle combined into one, making it possible for residents who would otherwise lack the mobility to cycle themselves to roam outside with the help of family, friends, or staff.

"Due to our recent years with lockdowns and outbreaks, it will be nice to provide all our residents the ability to cycle around the building and enjoy the beautiful scenery and landscape that God has given us around our home," remarked Ciardullo. "We currently have



TOWNSEND—Pauline K., a resident of Parkview Meadows, on their current duet bicycle. —Submitted photo.

one duet bicycle and have had many residents that have enjoyed their adventures around the area with our recreation staff. These will also be available to families wishing to take their loved ones for a bike ride during a visit at any time."

To participate in the tournament, the cost is \$200 per golfer. Businesses can also select a level of sponsorship if interested: "We have sponsorships available with advertising signs placed around the course as well as the addition of your company logo in our quarterly newsletter for one edition of the Parkview Post," Ciardullo explained.

A chicken dinner, with potatoes and vegetables, will be served after the day of golfing and Ciardullo added,

"Anybody who doesn't want to go golfing can also just come for the dinner." The tickets for the dinner are sold separately at \$50 a ticket.

"Other ways to assist would be monetary donations, gift cards, certificates, or gifts that can be used for our raffle tables," noted Ciardullo for those who may want to help but cannot attend the tournament. He continued, "Any donations will get a donation receipt."

Parkview Meadows is also selling raffle tickets as part of the fundraiser. The prize is a trip worth \$2,500 of your choice. Tickets are \$10 each or 3 for \$25.

Another upcoming fundraising event for Parkview Meadows includes their strawberry-themed goodies sale at the end of June.



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# HALDIMAND NORFOLK PROVINCIAL ELECTION ALL CANDIDATES MEETING

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2022 - CALEDONIA LIONS COMMUNITY CENTRE**  
**7 to 9 p.m. (doors open at 6:30 p.m.)**

In person and broadcast live online.

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Haldimand Federation of Agriculture all candidates meeting on May 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the Kohler Agriculture Centre  
Simcoe Chamber of Commerce all candidates meeting on May 19 at 6 p.m. at the Simcoe Legion



**VOTE ON JUNE 2, 2022**

# Sheldon Simpson admires traditional conservative values of the Ontario Party

By Mike Renzella  
The Haldimand Press

DUNNVILLE—Professional firefighter and Dunnville resident Sheldon Simpson is troubled by what he sees as divisive politics threatening many facets of our daily lives. He decided to take a stand, and his search for the right platform led him to the Ontario Party, and its leader, Derek Sloan.

"We felt drawn to the community here in Dunnville," said Simpson, who moved to town with his family a year and a half ago. "In very short order we found a community where we were and it just wasn't there."

Simpson, who has progressed to the rank of Active Captain and Command Officer at a Milton-based fire station, said he has a wide assortment of skills to assist in the role of MPP, including emergency management, damage control, and chain of command through his firefighting career and fiscal management experience gained from his years running a landscaping business and helping

his wife run her business as well.

"I also know what a 120-hour work week looks like," said Simpson. "I didn't come from a wealthy family. I came from a broken family, actually.... We struggled and fought our way through and found our way to get back up. That builds the kind of tenacity that certainly is applicable here."

Simpson said that he has noticed a number of lacking societal resources: "Being a professional firefighter I saw a lot of the deficiencies of the health care system."

On education, he added, "We didn't really like some of the stuff that was being done. As very engaged parents, we felt that a lot of our parental controls and protections were being infringed upon."

He said COVID shed a light on other concerning issues: "I found more and more I would ask a question and be told to shut up, or 'mind your business, do as your told'.... Friends, families, and coworkers were starting to be divided.... I thought something has to change."

Simpson said the current inflation and

affordable housing crisis have him seriously concerned for his children's future: "This isn't what we fought and died for, this isn't what Canada is supposed to be, and this isn't how we're supposed to be as a people."

He continued, "Right now we've got an almost regime-style government without a democracy, where one leader tells everyone what to say, what to read, and how to vote. Not necessarily the proportional representation of the constituency itself."

He said that the Ontario Party offers the more traditional conservative values he believes in: "They 100% respect everybody's rights to individuality or freedom.... We have to have the autonomy as an MPP to represent the voice of the constituency," said Simpson, noting the Ontario Party pledge to refrain from implementing a party whip system.

He is also a fan of the party's MPP recall legislation, which would "allow the constituency to hold the MPP accountable. If they're not doing their job, or fulfilling their promises, the constituency is able to do something



Sheldon Simpson

about that.... If we're going to start to build some of this erosion back, we have to have faith and belief in each other, and we have to find a way to sit and listen, even if we disagree. I think that's what the Ontario Party really represents."

Simpson summed up why people should consider supporting him, saying, "I bring a lot to the table as an MPP, not the least of all is the fact that I understand what a hard day's work looks like, and I can sympathize with a lot of the struggles that we're all facing today."

## HALDIMAND COUNTY COUNCIL NEWS

By Mike Renzella  
The Haldimand Press

HALDIMAND—The following items were discussed at Council in Committee on Tuesday, May 10, 2022. Any decisions made then had to be ratified at Council on Monday, May 16. For the full reports, visit [haldimandcounty.ca](http://haldimandcounty.ca).

### Grandview Lodge annual report reviewed; resident family satisfaction up

Grandview Lodge presented its annual report to Council last week. The report included a look at how the facility ran in 2021, and an overview of their 2019-2022 strategic plan.

On the strategic plan, the report highlighted how the ongoing pandemic resulted in a "drastic shift" to create a primary focus on infection control.

The resident turnover rate at the home for 2021 was 29%, or 38 residents. The aver-

age length of stay for residents at the home is 4.2 years, and the average resident age is 82.5.

In terms of resident satisfaction, there were increased numbers across the board compared to 2020, with 98% of resident families saying they would recommend Grandview.

### County to provide an additional \$53,000 toward purchase of firetruck in Caledonia

Council approved an additional budget of \$53,000 toward the purchase of a new fire pumper truck to be placed at Station 1 in Caledonia. The increase is due to increases in the price of the vehicle since the original quote was provided to Council in 2021. A County report lists material supply issues, overseas parts availability, and other economic factors as causes.

The 2022 budget already had \$750,000 allotted toward the purchase, which the County opted in on in a bid to provide local

firefighters with updated technology, such as an onboard generator and a 'clean cab', a relatively new option that will assist firefighters in decreasing their exposure to carcinogenic gases and materials.

### County reveals first quarter insurance activity for 2022

County staff released a report detailing the insurance claims made against the County from January 1 to March 31, 2022. Haldimand had claims filed against them in three categories, with one claim related to Environmental Operations, six related to Roads Operations, and four in the category 'Not County Jurisdiction/Other', which means the claims were made in error.

Typically, claims reported in the first quarter represent 21.6% of the yearly total. With an average annual of 74 claims against the County over the past three years, the data indicates a slight downward trend in claims received.

### Staff recommend against new bylaw

Following a public request in February for the County to investigate implementing regulations for the operation of security cameras and surveillance equipment, County staff have advised against the creation of a bylaw at this time.

While the Municipal Act of 2006 does include provisions allowing for regulation of excessive fortification or surveillance activities, the regulations are more geared toward gangs and not intended for individual security cameras or 'minor' private property issues.

Hamilton has had a bylaw in effect since 2010, which restricts the placement of video surveillance equipment so that it may only monitor the homeowner's land and not beyond.

Staff cited the difficulty in enforcing such a bylaw, along with other means available to combat the issue, including Provincial privacy legislation and civil means, as the main reasons to not create a new bylaw.



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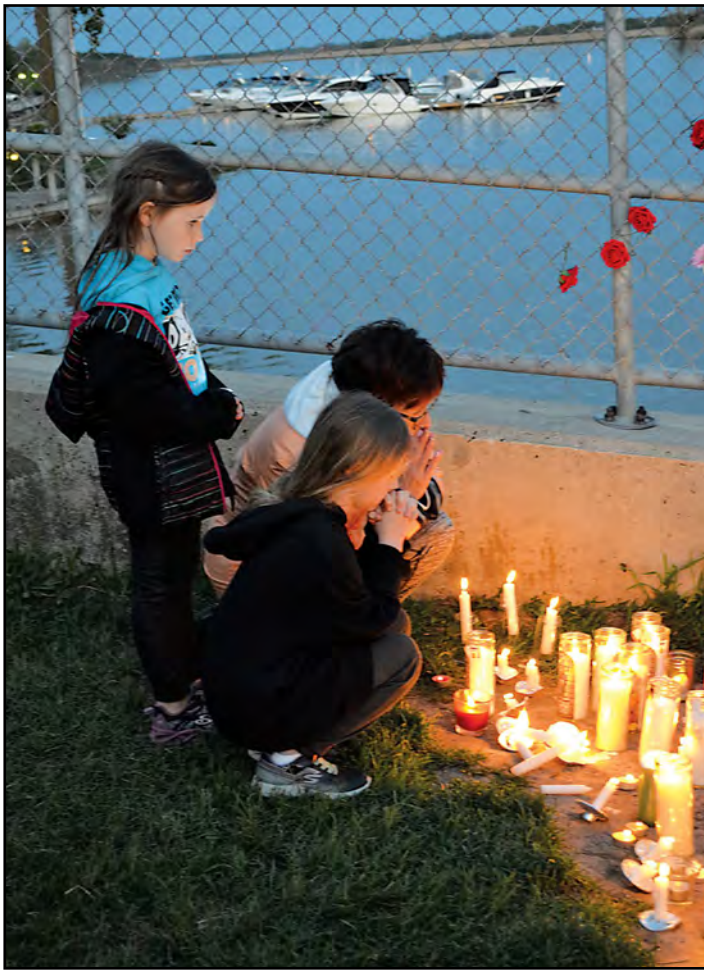
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## Vigil held for unknown girl found in Dunnville waters



DUNNVILLE—Susie Mageran of Dunnville placed candles and said a prayer with her friend's children, Shayla (9) and Lanna Chryslers (6).

—Haldimand Press photo by Valerie Posthumus.

By Valerie Posthumus  
The Haldimand Press

DUNNVILLE — On Monday, May 23, 2022, many silent tears were shed at a candlelight vigil at the Dunnville bridge in honour of the unknown baby girl that was found by fishermen in the marshes on Tuesday, May 17.

For the purposes of this vigil, the baby was named Anahita after a river and water goddess who is graceful, pure, and without fault.

Eleasha Topolniski, along with Jessica Bathurst, coordinated the event. Topolniski said they coordinated this "because no one else was doing anything and this girl deserved more; she deserved something. She was just a child. If no one in her family is mourning her, then we as a community are going to."

The child has remained unidentified since being discovered around 1:22 p.m. on May 17.

Continued on Page 6

## MPP candidates address local issues at debates

By Mike Renzella  
The Haldimand Press

HALDIMAND—Three debates were hosted last week for Haldimand-Norfolk MPP candidates to share their platforms with residents. This included the Haldimand Federation of Agriculture debate in Cayuga on May 17, followed by The Haldimand Press debate in Caledonia on May 18, and a Simcoe Chamber of Commerce debate May 19.

All three debates were attended by six candidates. Freedom Party candidate Thecla Ross reported that she was ill and therefore could not attend, while independent candidate George McMorrow did not respond to requests to attend. Haldimand County Mayor and local PC candidate Ken Hewitt politely declined all three debates, citing that he was busy meeting with constituents. His absence drew questions from the public, with 'Where's Hewitt?' signs being displayed at the debates from the public.

At The Haldimand Press debate, the candidates were faced with a series of questions compiled through reader suggestions ahead of time and those submitted night of by attendees. Each candidate started with an introduction.

"I've spent the past 23 years working for the people of Haldimand-Norfolk in my role as executive assistant to MPP Toby Barrett. I was told by a member of the Premier's team just a few weeks ago that they could run a monkey in this riding and win, as long as it

I was told ... that they could run a monkey in this riding and win, as long as it had a PC logo on its back.

Bobbi Ann Brady, Independent Candidate

had a PC logo on its back. People across Haldimand-Norfolk are offended by this. As the local PC president for the past 20 years, I am offended as well," said Independent candidate Bobbi Ann Brady.

"I am an electrical engineer. I've been working in this profession for more than 25 years.... I have experience in design and project management, and I have successfully completed many projects in my life. I have been working with the Liberal Party of Canada for the last 10 years. I've worked in many provincial and federal elections," said Liberal candidate and Mississauga resident, Aziz Chouhdery. "This is a beautiful riding."

Green Party candidate Erik Coverdale said, "I'm an engineer by training. I have 14 years experience building solar energy projects. I've had a fruitful career doing this, but it's a really politically charged industry. It shouldn't be that way, but because politics is always interfering with renewable energy, I felt the need to get involved in politics."

Continued on Page 5

## Canfield nurse helping out in Lviv, Ukraine

By Mike Renzella  
The Haldimand Press

CANFIELD — When Canfield resident and Registered Nurse Kimberly Wiebe first signed up for Disaster Assistance Response Training (DART) through the organization Samaritan's Purse (SP) last summer, the war in Ukraine was not on anyone's radar. Now, one year later, the young nurse finds herself readying for her second deployment to Lviv, Ukraine, where she will once again work with Ukrainians fleeing devastation.

"Going to people in need to provide aid and share the gospel is something I have always dreamed of doing. As a little girl, I would read stories of women like Mary Slessor and Amy Carmichael, and dreamt of doing something like that someday," said Wiebe, who went on to work as a Registered Practical Nurse before returning to school and graduating as a full RN.

"After I graduated last



CANFIELD — Registered Nurse Kim Wiebe is preparing for her second deployment to Ukraine through the faith-based organization Samaritan's Purse.

—Photo courtesy of Samaritan's Purse.

spring, the third wave of COVID hit and it led my hospital to ask for nurses to volunteer to work in ICU. It gave me confidence as a nurse and I learned a lot, something that God clearly worked out with perfect timing in my life."

Continued on Page 16

## Caledonia sees big fireworks show



CALEDONIA—David, David JR, Janey, Dani, and Michael Marshall were some of the many people that made their way down to the Caledonia Dam for fireworks on Sunday, May 22, 2022. After live music on the stage, attendees saw a huge fireworks show above the Grand River. See photos on Page 18. —Haldimand Press photo by Rachel Vaarkamp.

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# Six of nine provincial candidates address issues ranging from Nanticoke development to health care

Continued from Page 1

New Blue Party candidate Nate Hawkins said in his introduction, "Career politicians and political operatives care more about their careers than they do about the people they represent. That has to change. It's time for everyday folks like you and I to step up and take back this riding."

"There will be a lot of promises made here ... (and) the reality is most of the people at this table cannot deliver those promises. Many people feel disenfranchised with the current political system; they don't feel represented. This is why we have a slate of candidates from brand new political parties and independents," said NDP candidate Sarah Lowe. "This province is in big trouble and we need to invest heavily in sectors that have been left to starve for so long."

Lastly, Ontario Party candidate Sheldon Simpson said, "We've seen what can happen when a rural riding like this turns into a commuter village or town that ends up becoming a city.... We've seen an awful erosion in the health care system.... I'm concerned about the education system.... I think it's time to look at where our problems originated from. Legacy politicians and legacy parties have had their chance."

Up first, candidates were asked their position on the proposed Nanticoke development that would see up to 40,000 people and 11,000 new jobs created on industrial lands.

"My problem with the development in Nanticoke is not what they want to build, but how they are going about getting approval for it," said Hawkins. "It's a lengthy, complicated process to get developmental approvals, unless you know the right people. Do you have the right connections with the PC or Liberal parties? If you do, it's a piece of cake; you get to skip local democracy."

Hawkins added, "A certain candidate who isn't here tonight has lots of development friends," a clear jab at Hewitt that drew laughter and applause from the gathered crowd.

Lowe was also concerned about what she called unchecked development taking place without consultation: "This particular

development will, invariably, be done through a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO), and that is because Empire Development Communities have been significant donors to the PC party, almost guaranteeing an MZO.... What about the people of Haldimand-Norfolk? They're going to build on a piece of land with nothing around it, no schools, no hospitals, no social services. Who gets to foot the bill for all of those amenities once we have an explosion of big homes that nobody can afford?"

"I've spoken out on this proposal and so has Toby Barrett," said Brady. "An industrial park is the last place 40,000 people should live.... Folks from the city will gobble up these cheaper homes, commute to work, pick up groceries in the city, with no benefit to Haldimand County. In fact, it will be a drain on the community."

Coverdale supported the idea of the development if residents support it, but noted, "It all sounds really good, it just needs to be done right.... They should all be net zero green homes, there should be electric vehicle chargers there ... (and) there should be a long-term sustainable job for every home."

On Haldimand's aging population, plans for care, and a projected doctor shortage due to physicians retiring, Brady said, "We need to offer doctors incentives to stay in our small communities. They don't often like to stay in our small communities, because they don't feel supported in the health care system.... We know seniors prefer to stay at home as long as they can, and we must take steps to promote healthy living to ensure that can happen."

Chouhery said the Liberal Party has a plan to hire 100,000 new doctors and medical professionals. He also pledged to beef up support for local retirement homes: "We will make sure that our nursing home workers and our seniors get the better treatment they deserve."

"I will be advocating for local health services," said Hawkins. "Just because we are rural does not mean we shouldn't have access to basic health services like mental health or having a baby. I would like to see seniors provided with health care dollars before they have to go to retirement homes.



CALEDONIA—The Haldimand Press' debate was held at the Caledonia Lions Community Centre on May 18, 2022. —Haldimand Press photo.



KOHLER—The Haldimand Federation of Agriculture's debate was held at the Kohler Agricultural Hall on May 17, 2022. —Photo courtesy of Charlotte Huitema.

They deserve to stay at their homes as long as possible."

On Indigenous issues such as the ongoing land claim disputes in Caledonia, "I've heard that prior to what happened in Douglas Creek, the relationships between Caledonia, Hagersville, and Six Nations were incredible," said Lowe. "All of that exploded after Douglas Creek.... We need it to be put to bed for the citizens of Caledonia, of Hagersville, and absolutely for the citizens of Six Nations. We cannot move forward until this is settled."

"The Indigenous people have had a really tough time. We've had lip service paid to them for a number of years. It shouldn't be that hard to find a way forward," said Simpson. "Truth and reconciliation only happens

when both sides come together and we decide we're going to move forward... We have to understand the concerns on both sides."

"Nobody is above the law. The credibility of government is lost and doomed to failure when the law and democratic processes are allowed to be sabotaged," said Brady, asking how a state of emergency could be called so shortly in Ottawa following the convoy protest, but events in Caledonia have been allowed to transpire for many years.

The candidates debated on a number of other issues, including the 'Freedom' movement, housing crisis, education, and more.

Visit The Haldimand Press on Facebook to find a link to the full debate, or find it on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/qd4wISgSWU>.

Send Letters to the Editors to [publishers@haldimandpress.com](mailto:publishers@haldimandpress.com)

## OPINION

## Letters to the Editors

### Refusal to be seen

Here are quotes from Haldimand's Mayor Ken Hewitt, responding to my request for a meeting regarding open, transparent, and accountable government concerning Haldimand County: "...as Mayor I have no desire to meet with you and address the concerns that you have."

"To be very clear. I will NOT meet with you regarding your concerns..."

Is this how a 'leader' is to represent the public and address serious concerns as the mayor?

Ignored/excluded Cayuga resident, Jesse Little

### State of democracy in Haldimand-Norfolk

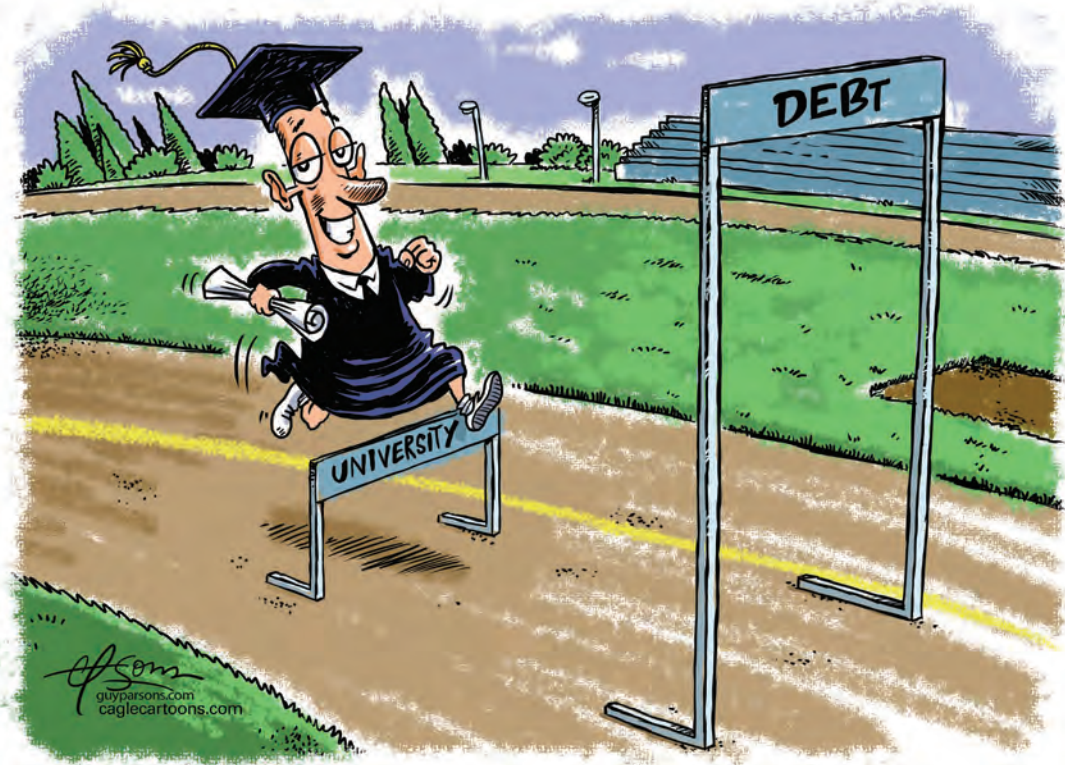
It is hard to understand why the Premier of Ontario would decide to appoint a candidate to take the place of our MPP, Toby Barrett, who is retiring after 27 years of service in this riding. Where is our democracy? Why was the selection of a new candidate for the PC party not done by the people of Haldimand and Norfolk?

There has been a disconnect between the mayor Ken Hewitt and the constituents of Haldimand. Several large and very costly projects have taken place in this area, which were not supported by the majority of people in this community. These projects went ahead despite overwhelming opposition. Our mayor has stepped down in order to run for

the MPP position. How can we trust that in this office, he will now consult and listen to people's opinions and concerns?

I attended an all-candidate debate at the Kohler Agricultural Hall and was interested to hear from some articulate and well-spoken candidates. However, there was no sign of Mr. Hewitt. I have heard from friends who were at the debate held at the Caledonia Lion's Hall, but unfortunately Mr. Hewitt was not present there either. This does not bode well for communication and connection with the community, going forward.

Charles Gillyatt, Cayuga



## This week's little gem

What kind of tree fits in your hand?

A palm tree!



## Creative CORNER

Do you have something creative to submit? Send it to [publishers@haldimandpress.com](mailto:publishers@haldimandpress.com). Submissions can be a poem, a photo of physical artwork, a short story, photography, etc. Send your name and town of residence with submission. Publication is not guaranteed.

### Lament for Mother Earth by Anton S., Jarvis

Dry lakes, low water  
Nothing but pollution

Fish dying, no solution.  
Ozone layer is being depleted.  
All our children will be cheated.  
The air they breathe is so mistreated.

What are we to do? Who will mend things?  
Who caused this problem? Who can we blame?

Just look around you to see the shame.

The world is travelling much too fast.  
Status symbols, they just won't last.

Money is no object to gain more control,  
Yet they don't know what's in store.

The world will self-destruct in time,  
Back to dust and lime.

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# OPINION



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

**DEMOCRACY REQUIRES OPEN & TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION**  
BY CO-PUBLISHER KAITLYN CLARK

On June 2, Ontario will see democracy in action as individual regions vote in their Members of Provincial Parliament and, once tallied, we see who will lead our province for the next four years. At times like these, we also need to question how well that democracy is working.

I believe voting is important. It's the first step a citizen can take to help shape their home and future. While there are arguably some shortcomings in the style of our elections and a debate could be had as to changes that could best serve the people, the current system is at least workable.

If people participate, that is.

Every election there is a discussion on voter turnout and, much like with organ donation, I believe that mandating participation unless someone specifically opts out would go a long way to encouraging better numbers.

But even before the vote, the first step to any election is the campaign period. This time allows for candidates to reach out to potential constituents and share their platforms. As much as increasing the quantity of voters is important, I believe it's equally important to better the quality of those votes. When voters are well informed, it betters our communities. It means they get vocal about what really matters to them, and that means politicians are forced to listen and are pressured to make things better.

This is one of the reasons I'm most proud to be a part of this newspaper. We have the privilege to share information about our local candidates and what they stand for. We have the privilege to be trusted by our readers to help inform them of their options. It's a privilege we don't take lightly.

For these reasons, I have growing concerns as we head into this year's provincial election. These concerns began with the last federal election, as current MP Leslyn Lewis went uncontested in the initial bid to be the Conservative candidate. While I won't get into the drama that ensued around other interested people failing to get on the ballot, it has always been clear that Lewis had the support of the Federal Conservative party and was being placed in Haldimand with that support. That isn't to say she can't serve the people of Haldimand Norfolk well; I'll leave it to each of you reading this to decide your feelings on Lewis' work now that she has the seat.

Now forward to the Provincial election, and we see a similar scene unfold. This time however, there isn't even a hint of an election among the parties. Following current MPP Toby Barrett's retirement, our current mayor, Ken Hewitt, was appointed by Premier Doug Ford himself to take the candidacy. Additionally, the local Liberal agency had local candidates they supported, but the Provincial party chose who they wanted for the party. Again, this isn't to say these appointed candidates can't serve our community well if elected, but rather that it is concerning this step of our democracy has been passed over. While I welcome newcomers to Haldimand, I am concerned that such important positions could potentially be filled by people who have no interest in the riding outside of the job title.

This concern for the state of our democracy has only been heightened by the communication style, or rather lack thereof, extending from the PC party since the announcement of Hewitt's running. As readers will have noticed, The Press has been running a series of profiles of each of the candidates as they've announced running and as we've been able to connect with the candidate for an interview. Readers will notice, however, that some candidates have not been profiled by next week's paper (our final edition before election day). It appears likely that Hewitt will be among this group, as we were told by a PC party rep following our initial request for an interview that Hewitt would be unable to accommodate answering the questions. We were also informed he would be unable to attend our candidate debate this week, and we heard from the Simcoe Chamber of Commerce's debate organizers that they received the same message.

This led me to take a dive into Hewitt's online campaign presence to see his digital reach. I found a Facebook page with 11 followers (as of publication) and a website. The website does include an overview of Hewitt's history, but the only platform points come from a shortened release originally published on the PC party's site, along with a couple PC party releases criticizing Liberal leader Steven Del Duca and an announcement on a new hospital for Windsor-Essex.

Perhaps Hewitt has done all of his campaigning door to door, but if this is the case I have yet to see him or any promotional material at my home. And even if I had, my concern remains for how many people will be missing his messaging and stance when avenues like local newspapers are ignored, despite being a primary news source for many voters.

Hewitt may not be the only candidate to end up on the ballot without having reached out to the newspaper. Their lack of communication concerns me as well, but Hewitt is of particular concern for two reasons. The first is that he is the candidate for the party that has had our region's support for nearly three decades, so I would expect a greater enthusiasm to engage with voters on wider scale. The second reason is that we as a newspaper have previously never had a problem regularly communicating with Hewitt as the mayor, but now this communication has come to an abrupt halt for MPP candidate matters. I have heard this strategy is being implemented elsewhere in the province, with other PC candidates avoiding candidate debates and similar public speaking engagements. I worry about what this says when political parties actively avoid having their candidates speak publicly during a campaign.

We rely on transparent communication from our sources when writing articles and informing the public on current happenings to ensure a complete and accurate story. Barrett went above and beyond in this partnership, providing weekly opinion columns and regular press releases for provincial matters that specifically affect Haldimand and Norfolk, along with responding to requests for further information. We greatly appreciated those efforts and come June 2 – regardless of who the vote supports – we hope to see a similarly strong partnership with our new MPP moving forward.

Letters to the Editors and Creative Corners can be emailed to publishers@haldimandpress.com. Letters should be within 300 words. Publication is not guaranteed and The Press reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, clarity, and accuracy.

## Letters to the Editors

### Kids should never be near lawn mowers!

To the Editors,

Accidents can happen in the blink of an eye. When I was four years old, I was playing outside when I slipped on the grass and fell underneath a riding lawn mower. I lost my left leg below the knee.

I grew up in The War Amps Child Amputee (CHAMP) Program, and today, I help pass on the Association's PLAYSAFE message. With lawn cutting season here, I want

every kid across the country to know they should never be around lawn mowers.

I accept who I am today, but I wouldn't want anyone else to go through what I did. I hope that by sharing my story, it will prevent even just one child from being injured.

If you would like to learn more about how to play safely and hear stories from other young amputees like me who have lost limbs in accidents, visit [waramps.ca/playsafe](http://waramps.ca/playsafe).  
Zoe Gottwald, 16

### Future of Nanticoke lands

To the Editors,

After reading recent press coverage on the importance of the Nanticoke development to this election, I agree with MPP Toby Barrett's assessment that allowing Empire Communities to build 15,000 homes for 40,000 residents out by Stelco and Esso refinery is not a good idea.

Don't get me wrong. We desperately need new homes built. There are so many people who need a place to live. Haldimand is a great place to be. There is a growing list of people needing an affordable place to go and call home. But to build these homes right beside Stelco and the Esso refinery is wrong for a number of reasons.

First, the people who need affordable homes will not be able to afford anything that Empire Communities builds. They will not be able to pay for the mortgages. They will not be able to afford the gas to get around out there, to go shopping, to the doctors, to work – all the basic movements required to just have a normal lifestyle.

Second, putting these homes out into the Nanticoke business area is also going to create all kinds of problems for these great companies. They do all they can to keep the air pollution down. However, anybody who has gone out there to swim at the beach by Oneida Baptist Camp, or just fish in the many streams out in this area, knows if the winds blow the wrong way that a very unpleasant aroma will come from these companies.

Third, is it not time for Haldimand County to start thinking about climate change

and what we can do to help to slow down the pollution created by the cars we drive? Remember 15,000 homes will mean at least 15,000 further cars. More likely that will be 30,000 vehicles. We have no mass transit anywhere in Haldimand, so the residents will need a way of getting around. There is no shopping, entertainment, or schools in Nanticoke. There are almost no amenities out in the area. Most are about an hour drive away in one direction. That would be a lot of gas used and pollution created and for what? Because there was just cheap land for Empire Communities to build their homes and maximize their profits.

Fourth, how about the congestion on these two-lane roads that 30,000 vehicles would create? The farmers have enough problems dealing with traffic now. Can Haldimand afford to build all the infrastructure needed to help move these vehicles in and around Haldimand?

Fifth, I believe that Stelco did not buy up the land around them in hopes of the companies that would move out there and would help to service their needs or use their product and create other products.

All in all I believe building 15,000 homes out in the Nanticoke area around Stelco and Esso is a great idea for Empire Communities, not a good idea for Haldimand County or the people who already live here. Building in Nanticoke makes less sense than when the Provincial Government created Townsend.

Patrick Cook,  
Hagersville

## Creative CORNER

Do you have something creative to submit? Send it to publishers@haldimandpress.com. Submissions can be a poem, a photo of physical artwork, a short story, photography, etc. Send your name and town of residence with submission. Publication is not guaranteed.

### The Search by Constance e Bryce, Riverside Writer

Shining through a dark cold night  
Struggling through the frost  
I can't sleep  
Or even rest  
Knowing you are out there  
Somewhere  
And I'm searching  
Frantically  
Trying to catch the morning sun  
And not burn up  
I'm trying to shade my tired eyes

Enough to see  
And follow you  
But you're gone somewhere  
I can't go...

Observation is hampered by emotion  
Emotion threatens my heart  
My heart is way too anxious  
Anxiety prevents me  
From connecting in the dark  
And I'm still searching.

## This week's little gem

Did you hear about the mathematician who's afraid of negative numbers?

He'll stop at nothing to avoid them.

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Connie White  
C. Ped (C)