

2017 Year in Review: May



May 4

? Representatives of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) informed members of the public last Thursday (April 27) that they would have to use a yet-to-be-released internet application if they wanted to accurately project what their future annual policing bill would be should the Town of Orangeville decide to adopt a provincial policing service.

Over 100 local residents were on hand at Orangeville District Secondary School as the debate surrounding the future of the Orangeville Police Service (OPS) roared on. Ever since the Town sought a costing proposal from the OPP in early 2014, there has been continued speculation that a shift to the provincial model could represent significant savings for taxpayers.

Town Treasurer Marc Villeneuve effectively poured gasoline on those suggestions when he presented his analysis on the OPP's costing proposal to council early last month. In those calculations, Mr. Villeneuve estimated the municipality could potentially save \$4.5 million a year if they were to disband the OPS and sign an agreement with the OPP.

Those numbers though have yet to be supported by anybody affiliated with the OPP, with several representatives from the force again refusing to give a solid costing proposal beyond an initial three-year transitional period, which the OPP provided in February.

? While there was much furore at Queens Park last week when the Ontario government released its first balanced budget in almost a decade, Sylvia Jones has accused the Liberals of ?cooking the books? and attempting to save face a year ahead of the eagerly anticipated 2018 provincial election.

Several other Progressive Conservative MPPs joined with the member for Dufferin-Caledon in branding the \$141-billion 2017 provincial budget a campaign document for Premier Kathleen Wynne as she and the rest of the Liberal government scramble to improve their plummeting popularity ratings.

Increased investment in health care and education to the combined tune of \$13.4 billion over the next three years, the introduction of a potentially revolutionary basic income project and the subsidization of prescription drugs for young Canadians wasn't enough to save the Liberals from a scathing attack at the hands of PC Leader Patrick Brown, who has called the budget a ?charade? and a ?sham?. Those sentiments were shared by Ms. Jones, saying she is growing increasingly concerned with the province's burgeoning debt.

? A new, experienced face is taking the reins at the Citizen and other area community newspapers, London Publishing having appointed Doug Rowe as its new General Manager for the Headwaters region.

Also responsible for the Citizen's sister papers in Caledon and Shelburne, Mr. Rowe is experiencing something of a homecoming in what is a return to Orangeville ? almost 16 years on from a stint with another area publication.

? Doug brings with him a wealth of management-level experience in the newspaper industry, having last managed several publications spread throughout southwestern Ontario.

? If you're wondering why you've been seeing film crews, sets, and cameras around Town, it's because portions of the Canadian television thriller series ?Slasher? is being filmed for its second season.

Throughout this week (May1-5), film crews of Toronto-based Shaftesbury Films, the producers of Murdoch Mysteries, have been filming various locations in and around town for the season's eight episodes. Several scenes will be shot on both sides of Broadway and just off Mill Street. Scenes will also be shot at the Alder Street Recreation Centre and at several local homes.

In this season, a group of young adults return to a summer camp they attended five years earlier to cover up an accidental crime they committed. When they arrive, the group finds 'new age' modernists living at the camp and the body from their accidental crime missing. Their arrival takes a turn for the worst, as one from their group is killed.

May 11

? Following a distinguished 40 years of service to community policing in southern Ontario, a long-time Orangeville cop signed off for good last Friday, doing so in what he described as 'the most special way possible.'

Brian Parkes has been a member of the Orangeville Police Service (OPS) for just over 15 years, serving in a variety of roles during his time with the local force. Starting out as a frontline patrol constable, a position he knew all too well following 25 years of prior service with the Niagara Regional Police Service, Mr. Parkes also spent time as acting Sergeant before landing the role of Detective Constable. For the past several years, he has been Orangeville's go-to-guy when it comes to dealing with in-depth, serious investigations.

Gathering with media on his final day to discuss his career, Brian was joined by his walking, talking legacy ? son Kristopher (KC). Himself an eight-year veteran of the Niagara force, KC made the journey up to Orangeville to join his dad on patrol for what would be an 'incredibly memorable' final shift.

? Close to 1,000 area residents were treated to a unique night of captivating, bone-crunching entertainment on May 5 as the Knights of Valour brought their 'From Bronze to Steel' medieval nobles feast and joust event to Orangeville.

The internationally-acclaimed troupe rolled back the years and took those in attendance on a historical adventure like no other, with performances and competitions from the Hellenistic era, Roman Empire and Middle Ages taking centre stage.

The brainchild of the man many regard as the founding father of modern day jousting - Shane Adams - the Knights of Valour provide a perfect mix of laugh-out-loud entertainment and edge-of-your-seat competitive action perfect for all ages.

While the lighthearted medieval and renaissance era themed entertainment may have lured people into thinking the night's festivities were all about fun and games, the latter portion of the evening will have quickly changed people's minds.

While they are keen to entertain, the Knights of Valour are, first and foremost, the world's most competitive full contact jousting outfit.

May 18

? Almost 400 local residents were swept off their feet recently when the Headwaters Health Care Foundation (HHCF) outdid itself once again in staging its milestone 20th anniversary hospital gala.

Transforming Hockley Valley Resort into a secret, 1920s gangster-themed hideaway on May 6, event organizers went the extra mile this year for its landmark 'Shake, Rattle and Roar' fundraising celebration and it paid off in a big way ? raising a jaw-dropping \$308,318 for the Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC).

The money raised through this year's event is expected to flow throughout the entire hospital, with HHCF's Annual Giving Manager Nicole Hand stating every department would benefit from this latest windfall. While one of the chief priorities will be to replace aging equipment in various units across the hospital, the primary focus of the 2017 gala, according to Ms. Hand, was to ensure the ER receives a much-needed makeover. Expected upgrades include brand new vital sign monitors, specialized stretchers, a state of the art medication cart, overbed tables and fluid and blood warmers.

? By the time the final tally was recorded, the proceeds from the Jennifer Widbur Memorial Hockey Tournament totaled \$60,000 that was donated to the Headwaters Health Care Foundation. This was the largest amount the event has raised since the tournament began 10 years ago.

The Tournament also donated other funds to local causes in Shelburne.

The funds donated to Headwaters will go to help supply the new oncology department currently under construction at the hospital and scheduled to open in late July.

The tournament was held on Friday, April 7, and Saturday, April 8, at the Honeywood arena. Organized by the Honeywood Hockey Moms ? a group of local volunteers ? this year's tournament had 13 all-women hockey teams and 175 players taking part.

? Two members of the Twisters Gymnastics club have made their mark in high level competition, returning with gold medals for their efforts.

Brooke Rutledge and Victoria Burgess competed in the Eastern Canadian Championships as members of Team Ontario in Sackville, New Brunswick on May 6 and 7. The competition pitted teams from Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, P.E.I. and Nova Scotia against one another. Both girls won gold in team competition.

? The Orangeville A's played what turned out to be their last ever game on May 9, losing out to the London Lightning 121-102 at Athlete Institute. The game marked the A's third straight defeat in the first-round playoff series, bringing an end to the team's 2017

season.

The A's ended the year with an overall record of 16-27, good enough for fourth place in the Central Division of the NBL.

May 25

Orangeville food bank is celebrating 25 years of helping those in need, recognizing the many involved throughout its historic time of receiving, giving countless amounts of food, and volunteering.

Back in 1992, the world was certainly a different place. People were singing to "Smells like teen spirit," while cell phones, the computer and the Internet were beginning to take shape.

For the food bank, it began with just four volunteers, but has grown now to over 70. It currently serves roughly 500 individuals per month.

Following a nearly decade-long search for a home in Orangeville it is expected that Town Council will finally sign off on a permanent location for Bravery Park next week.

A concept almost eight years in the making, the innovative project was launched back in 2010 by mother-daughter tandem Shannon and Valerie McGrady as they sought to provide local residents with a "place of reflection" to honour the bravery, achievements and sacrifices of members of the Canadian military.

The park, which, pending council approval, will be built beside the Alder Recreation Centre, is set to become only the second such structure in all of Canada, following on from a site in Prince George, British Columbia.

While the notion of Bravery Park today represents a number of positive ideologies, it was one born out of tragedy. On May 25, 2007 Orangeville native Matthew McCully "brother to Shannon and son to Valerie" was killed by a roadside bomb near a small village outside of Kandahar City, Afghanistan

In what was his second tour of the war-torn Middle Eastern nation, Cpl. McCully was a member of the Operation Mentoring and Liaison Team that trained Afghani soldiers before his untimely death.

Plans for the \$170,000 project include a seven-foot bronze monument, which Valerie says will display a Canadian soldier kneeling beside two Afghani children, a memorial wall, medicine wheel and a playground. One of the key themes pressed home by both McGradys throughout this entire process has been the importance of educating local residents about the Canadian military, with a specific focus on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the debilitating effects it can cause. With plans now firmly in place for the site, they both feel Bravery Park will be able to do just that.

Local elementary school principal Dan LaCute is a man on a mission as he prepares for one of the rides of his life next month, participating in the 13th annual Healing Cycle bike ride to benefit Hospice Dufferin.

Taking place in Brampton on June 11, the fundraiser will feature participants from across the province as they seek to raise funds for their local hospice chapter. Right here in Orangeville, Mr. LaCute has been one of Hospice Dufferin's most active members since he started volunteering with the organization in 2012, and he's certainly been busy thus far in his efforts for the upcoming ride "currently sitting atop the provincial fundraising charts with \$3,666 collected as of press time.

With a tentative goal of \$5,000 in mind, Mr. LaCute still has a bit of work to do if he's to reach his total. He's confident however that he will get there prior to the event taking place and is now focusing his attention on growing the "Dufferin County" team in this year's ride.