

NOVEMBER
30TH, 2024

Noteworthy In Norwich

REMEMBRANCE SERVICES

VIC WHITCROFT



On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month each year we pause to remember and pay tribute to those who fought to defend our freedoms, as well as veterans who served in peacetime, prepared to oppose any enemy should the need arise.

This year at the cenotaph located out front of Emily Stowe Public School attendance was estimated at 800 people. All stood solemnly as host Chad Cornish, the Norwich Music Society Band and several wreath layers conducted this annual ceremony.

A large number of well behaved students from Rehoboth Christian School and Emily Stowe Public School attended so this message will not be forgotten. “Lest We Forget”.

I also noted many of the trucks passing on Stover Street either stopped or slowed to an appropriate speed to show respect as they went by.

After the ceremony a very informative presentation was facilitated by Chad Cornish highlighting soldiers who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom, many from the local area.

At the end of Chad’s presentation a special announcement was made by Legion President Wayne Cartier which will appear in this issue as a separate story.



TRILLIUM CARE RETIREMENT LIVING VIC WHITCROFT

As almost everyone in town knows by now the Trillium Home is closing, in fact they shuttered the doors on November 11, 2024, with the possibility it may never open again. It has been reported that the OPP is investigating alleged fraudulent activities associated with the Norwich location.

In a most undignified manner, the residents were given just a short time to vacate, making for a very stressful situation, as beds are simply not available and wait lists are months and years long at most such facilities in Ontario, let alone near Norwich and close to loved ones.

Reports have said residents are experiencing food shortages, while staff have gone unpaid for some time. These staff members are to be commended for their commitment to the residents, knowing if they simply walked away from the situation, the elderly folks living there would be far worse off facing such dire circumstances.

As a person who has lived in Norwich all my life, I want to thank all who stepped up and donated food via the Norwich United Church and Salvation Army store on Main Street to ensure the Trillium inhabitants were provided with fresh food before the day came when they were forced to move out. It has been said it takes a village, Norwich and surrounding area has done our community proud with your care and compassionate giving to help others in a dilemma such as these folks found themselves in.

We often see a news piece in which a couple has gone south for the winter, snow birds they call them. Said couple leaves in November and returns home in March nicely tanned and carefree. Upon arriving home they find squatters in their house, neighbours indicated they took over the place one week after the owners left for the winter. The new neighbours claim they have sublet the house for six months.

The law, it is often reported, seems to side with the squatters saying it is a civil matter. Really what they are saying is they can't help. Meanwhile the rightful owners are forced into a hotel while a couple of lowlifes live free in their home, no heat, electricity or water bills to pay, that all falls back on the owner. All the while the owners must worry what condition they will find their home's interior in if and when they actually retake possession. The bad guys win again!

So if squatters can take over a vacant house, how can it possibly be that elderly people must vacate a care facility? A facility where they have settled in knowing this is most likely the place where they will reside until the end of their time on planet Earth.

Perhaps people who find themselves in such an ordeal should declare themselves squatters and say to hell with you when given notice of eviction.

What a shameful thing to do to the elderly, who to some extent feel like a burden on their families. I know, business is business, not much one can do about such things.

Let me suggest that Mr Ford, rather than spend Billions on Highway 413 and his tunnel in order to buddy up to his friends. Steer that money into a project that will show much faster results and have a greater impact, Mr Ford. Do it now, at a time when it is needed urgently.



FESTIVE SEASON RUINED BY HOUSE FIRE

VIC WHITCROFT

On Saturday Nov 30, 2024 fire destroyed a home on Main Street west in Otterville. Stations from Otterville, Norwich and Burgessville attended the scene to bring the blaze under control. The home appears to be a total loss.

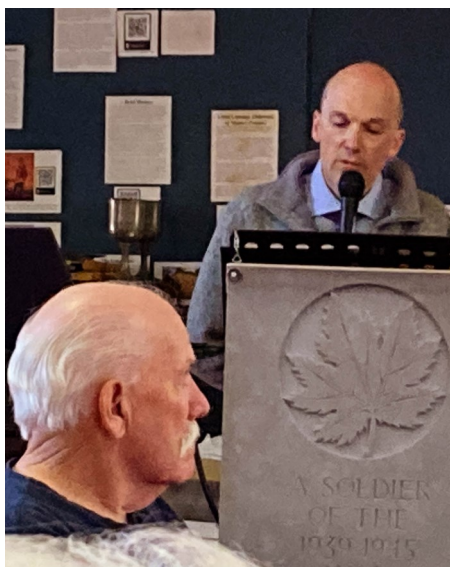


LUNCH AND LEARN

VIC WHITCROFT

Wednesday Nov 13th saw the Norwich District Historical Society host the monthly “Lunch and Learn”. Chad Cornish spoke about the 80th anniversary of D-Day landings, June 6, 1944, and the Battle of Normandy. Chad spoke to the valour and sacrifice of the Canadian soldiers who took part in this monumental event.

Chad, a very popular speaker, has a wealth of knowledge when it comes to the Second World War. Because of Chad’s popularity and the ever popular “Lunch and Learn” series extra chairs had



to be added to accommodate the crowd. Chad took questions from the audience at the end of his presentation.

As always, a light lunch was served thanks to the NDHS volunteers who prepare the food and clean up when everyone leaves. These folks are to be commended for keeping this running smoothly.

If you have never been to a “Lunch and Learn” presentation it is worth checking it out. The next L&L will be held on Dec 11, 2024, with Bill Butt speaking about turning local history into theatre.

NORWICH UNDER CONSTRUCTION

VIC WHITCROFT



Construction is well underway within the Village of Norwich, or should I say nearing completion. What has been a long project at the Norwich Post Office appears to be winding down. Major construction rebuilding the courtyard between the clock tower and the main building has been ongoing all summer.

At Branch 190 of the Legion in Norwich the much anticipated and costly addition of an elevator is about to be finished. The exterior work is now very noticeable, while the interior is taking shape. Of course the elevator has yet to be installed. At that point it will

simply be a few minor details to take care of.

A good bit of fundraising was required to see the project to fruition. With accessibility requirements and the aging baby boomers, the elevator will be a welcome convenience.

On a historical note, in the sixties a one legged gentleman named Don McKenzie was a member of Branch 190. The legion went to a man who could conceptualize and build just about anything, Jim Body. Mr Body set about making a mobility scooter, Mr McKenzie was the first full time Norwich resident to

have such a mode of transportation.

Another Branch 190 member and frequent visitor to Norwich with a more sophisticated “store bought” mobility scooter came to town each year from New York State, to visit the Farrell family. Oddly, both these men resided on North Court Street just six houses from one another.

Okay you're right, what's this have to do with construction? Nothing! However for anyone in this day and age, the elevator at the Legion and the refurbished ramp at the Post Office will make life much easier.

DECEMBER

E.A. WILD

December has two birth flowers, Holly, symbolizing protection and respect, Narcissus, hope and health. The birth stone is Turquoise, used by Egyptian and Chinese for health and good fortune.

December is Universal Human Rights Month, World AIDS Month, and Read A New Book Month.

1st World AIDS Day
Rosa Parks Day
2nd World Pollution Prevention Day
3rd Giving Tuesday
4th Wildlife Conservation Day
7th Hannukah begins
12th Gingerbread House Day
21st Winter Solstice
24th Christmas Eve
25th Christmas Day

26th Boxing Day /St. Stephen's Day
31st New Year's Eve

Giving books at Christmas is a tradition that began in the early 1800s, when publishers began creating books specifically for Christmas. That tradition continues, and despite digital books other forms of entertainment being so popular, the tradition is still going strong. There is something so personal about choosing just the right book as a gift for someone special. Whether a baby's first board book, discovering a new author for a family member or a book in a series for a friend, there is something heartwarming about browsing through a book store. Take time to slow down and careful-

ly choose a book you know will be loved and maybe find one for yourself.

Iceland is famous for its love of stories, ancient sagas and Literature. In 1944 a tradition called “Jolabokafloð” (Christmas Book Flood) began. On Christmas Eve Icelanders give and receive books, at least one per person, and then spend the evening reading them together. If you are thinking of starting a new family tradition, consider Jolabokafloð. The joy of sharing a good book with a dear friend or family member is worth experiencing over and over again.

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS AT NORWICH UNITED CHURCH: OPEN DOORS. OPEN HEARTS CELEBRATING GOD'S LOVE!

December 1 is the first Sunday in Advent with Norwich Musical Society Band followed by coffee hour. Service begins at 10:30 am

December 8 will be our White Gift Service with presentation of gifts to Christmas Place and Norwich Salvation Army Food Bank. Service begins at 10:30 am

Tuesday, December 10 at 7:30 pm. Norwich Musical Society Band Concert with the members of the Mitchell Legion Band present an evening of great Christmas music and other concert arrangements in an event called **"Greater Than the Sum II."** Admission is by donation and everyone is encouraged to bring donations for the Norwich Salvation Army Foodbank.

Christmas Caroling in the village on **Tuesday December 17 and Thursday December 19.** Meet with Karen McSpadden and other local singers (young and old) in the parking lot behind NUC at 6:30



pm. Dress for the weather! If it's dreadful, we'll cancel but we're not made of sugar!! We'll have bells and song sheets and everyone is welcome. Hot chocolate afterwards!

Christmas Eve Service at 7:00pm with music and candlelight. This is a service of carols with our NUC singers and special singing guests: Caylie Cartier, Rylie Pichie and Chloe Weir. There will also be readings of the Christmas story interspersed with songs.

Join your neighbours at the **17th Annual Christmas Community Turkey Din-**



ner December 25 at noon. Come and enjoy delicious food and good company for no charge! There'll be turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes and gravy, veggies and some yummy desserts. We can use some volunteers on Tuesday, December 24, if anyone would like to help with some potato/carrot peeling! Please call Karen McSpadden 519-424-9601 if you're interested in helping. We can use volunteers on Christmas morning too, if anyone is available. Call Karen at 519-424-9601 or email her mcmusic50@execulink.com

There is no morning service on Sunday, December 29. Everyone is invited to **"Let's Light 100 Candles"** a performance at **Westminster United Church in Thamesford** with singers from NUC and throughout Oxford County. **The event begins at 4:00 pm** and once again, there will be candles and lots of music!

EDITORIAL: REPORT CARD ON TOWN COUNCIL VIC WHITCROFT

The November 12th meeting saw two members of the panel missing with Councillor Gear and Mayor Palmer absent. Ward three Councillor Lynne DePlancke took on her role in the centre chair fulfilling her duties as Deputy Mayor.

After all of the necessary items on the agenda were taken care of, the Council heard from delegations and got down to regular business.

A discussion took place regarding the Newton drain which was long and too in-depth for this poor schmuck to write about, therefore I will include an excerpt from the report as listed in the agenda.

A delegation of Gail Lewis, Helen Davis and Debra Stubbs, representing Friends of Otterville Park attended the meeting seeking council's support when applying for federal funding to refurbish the aging cenotaph at the entrance to the park.

Stating "Presently the cenotaph has stones missing and the plaque with the names of those who served and those that gave their lives has a great deal of mortar missing. In its present state this important memorial is an embarrassment."

Another delegation consisting of Lisa James, Jennifer Lackenbauer, Gail Lewis and Helen Davis from the Otterville Otters Swim Team, Community Board and Friends of the Park, requested Revitalization of Otterville Park and Pool Area. Today we are looking for support to enhance the Otterville park, pool and pavilion areas upholding the long history of community engagement and to stop the decline of this important public asset.

A powerpoint presentation was included in their request to the council. In the end support for the "Friends of

Otterville Park" becoming a committee on council set to move forward with the township clerk looking into what is required.

When discussing the Road Use By-law, it was found that the by-law contains verbiage about no warrant entry to property. Councillor Toews, a lawyer, remarked he could not support warrantless entry onto curtilage. Deputy Mayor DePlancke and CAO Robinson countered that view. Additionally, Councillor Cowenberg highlighted the Bio Security aspect of farm property and used the example of Avian Flu in livestock as a deterrent of not allowing people on ones farm land. In the end this by-law was deferred until full council is in attendance.

Some talk of budget options were discussed in order for the treasurer to prepare for the budget deliberations at the Nov 28 meeting. Frustration began to show as these talks dragged on.

Frustration turned to bickering when discussions began about the Firehall Road gravel conversion. After Deputy Mayor DePlancke requested the vote on this matter be a recorded vote, the motion to take \$68,000.00 from one reserve fund and place it in the road conversion fund, carried.

The vote was two to one in favour of the motion.

The Safe and Well Oxford Steering Committee was discussed having forwarded a correspondence they received from Children's Aid Society of Oxford County. The correspondence stated the CAS is struggling financially and are asking for support from council at the provincial level to see if they can help expedite promised and overdue funding. In support of this correspondence

Councillor Toews stated "First of all I do support additional money for the Children's Aid Society, but as I alluded to when we talking about the Otterville pool, we need to be taking a holistic approach for the welfare of our young people. And, I do want to say publicly and on the record, that in my opinion both our federal government and provincial government over the last decade have made catastrophic decisions with regard to our young people. The legalization of marijuana is one example, the decision by federal prosecutors not to prosecute possession of small amounts of hard drugs, the sex education curriculum that was instituted by the Kathleen Wynne government, and continued by the Doug Ford government, a curriculum that was designed by a fellow named Benjamin Levin who was sentenced to three years jail for making child pornography. Sounds crazy but Google Benjamin Levin, Kathleen Wynne and you'll see what I'm talking about. And, anyone who is reading this part of our agenda should be disturbed and saddened. It's an extremely sad state of affairs. Also as probably many of us know, I'm sorry to say this but I feel bound to, the teen suicide rates are at an all time high, so all of this is cold comfort to the children who are in crisis now and I would say as part of these catastrophic decisions, oh, and we do have drag queens reading stories for our children in our libraries and Warden Ryan has shown up at those events in support of them. So I certainly support additional funding in this way, but that's the situation we're in."

Continued page 7

REPORT CARD ON TOWN COUNCIL CONT.

The Nov 26, 2024, council meeting was well attended by concerned township residents, contractors, businesses and farmers. Added seats were provided to accommodate the larger than normal gallery of onlookers. The Norwich Chamber of Commerce Advocacy Committee delegation of Chamber President, Tim Thompson and former President, Andrew Malcolm presented a 15 minute report card on how Norwich fairs against other townships and how businesses who deal with township staff rate their experiences. It was not a glowing report. Paperwork and red tape revolving around permits, in particular building permits, was a hot topic. The chamber suggested a committee be struck starting in 2025. Below is a complete list of recommendations.

One

We propose the formation of an Economic Development Committee that would run the same term as council.

Potential 7 committee members should include:

2 councillors

- a representative from Rural Oxford Economic Development Corporation

- a representative from the Twp. of Norwich Chamber of Commerce

- a representative from the Norwich BIA

2 community members

- and a secretary provided by the Township to take minutes and prepare reports. So that all 4 wards are represented.

*We bring forward this recommendation to commence in 2025, as this committee will support and promote economic activity within our community.

Two

A thorough review of the building permit process, with the goal to simplify steps and improve turnaround time, as this should be a priority.

In general, businesses perceive the building permit process in a negative light, relative to dealings with other townships.

Three

Based on the numerous comments and complaints from the survey, we feel council has an obligation to address these concerns.

In the detailed comments in the survey, it was indicated that there were difficulties regarding the building permit process in the past, however the obstacles have increased in the last year and a half.

In addition to these results, the survey produced 23 pages of comments as follows:

- Expansion comments – 2 pages
- Working well in Norwich – 1 pages
- Not working well in Norwich – 6 pages
- Concerns to council – 1.5 pages
- Comments on considering moving – 1.5 pages
- Business challenges in Twp. – 2 pages
- Initiatives of advocacy – 1 page
- Building permit comments – 2 pages
- Comments on other Twps. – 1 page
- Consistency – 1 page
- Build permit process – 1 page
- 2 tier – 1 page
- Other info – 2 pages

The advocacy committee has provided to each councilor a confidential complete report that includes all comments.

We assured participants that the survey would remain anonymous, as there is concern about potential retribution from staff. Therefore, on the complete report, we have hidden various parts of the responses that could identify the participants. We trust that this information will provide council with valuable insights to make the necessary improvements. We look forward to your response and are hopeful that you

All of Council was in favour of the Chamber's recommendations.

I recommend that township residents view the council meetings. There is just 97 subscribers to the U-Tube site and only 175 people took the time to watch the meeting by the time this was written.


PUZZLE PAGE

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SOLSTACE BY ROBYN SARAH

A sly gift it is, that on the
 year's
 shortest day, the sun
 stays longest in this
 house—

extends the wand of its
 slow
 slant and distant squint
 farthest into the long
 depths

of our wintry rooms--to
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