

# NOTEWORTHY

## IN NORWICH

A COMMUNITY NEWS PUBLICATION



## The Mudmen Are Coming

Norwich Legion presents, the Mudmen, performing Celtic Rock and you won't want to miss it! **Saturday Feb. 28th Doors open at 6:30.**

Current band members include,

- Robby Campbell - bagpipes
- Sandy Campbell - bagpipes

- Colin Amey - lead vocals, guitar
- Emmett Glancie - bass, backing vocals
- Andy Gingerich - drums
- Alex Showdra - guitar, backing vocals, banjo, mandolin

Formed in 1998 in Petrolia, Ontario. The band's name comes from the Campbell Brothers "founding members" whose occupation prior to forming the band, saw them mixing mortar and carrying bricks for bricklayers, thus the name, "The Mudmen."

In 2001, the Mudmen performed at the Snow Jam festival in Halifax. That year, the band released a self-titled studio album; a second album, *Overrated*, followed in 2003. The band toured across Canada with Bif Naked and performed at several festivals, including Edgefest.

The band's music is influenced by traditional Scottish music, as well as hard rock groups such as AC/DC. Mudmen have opened for many well-known bands, including ZZ Top, Tool, Dropkick Murphys, and Bowling for Soup, as well as fellow Canadians Nickelback, Sum 41, and The Guess Who.

As you may have guessed, the Mudmen are a Canadian Celtic rock band. They are best known NWN for their singles "5 O'Clock," "Saturday," and "Drink and Fight," as well as their covers of Spirit of the West's "Home for a Rest" and AC/DC's "It's a Long Way to the Top (If You Wanna Rock 'n' Roll)".

The Mudmen have released 11 studio albums: *Mudmen* (2001), *Overrated* (2003), *Defending the Kingdom* (2005), *The High Road* (2009), *Another Day* (2010), *Donegal Danny* (2012), *Where I Came From* (2013), *Train* (2015), *Old Plaid Shirt* (2016), *Best of Mudmen* (2021), and *Farmers Tan* (2022).

## **Council Rejects Safe & Well Oxford Plan**

The January 27 meeting of Township of Norwich council hosted a delegation from Safe & Well Oxford, each municipality is mandated to have a plan in place as legislated by the provincial government.

The County of Oxford has no legally recognized authority to be part of the plan. As I spoke with Warden Ryan, he explained the county, at the request of the city, towns, and townships involved were asked if they would spearhead the plan throughout the county.

Municipalities from the county are, The City of Woodstock, The Town of Ingersoll, The Town of Tillsonburg, The Township of Blandford-Blenheim, The Township of East Zorra-Tavistock, The Township of Norwich, The Township of South-West Oxford, and The Township of Zorra

The delegation presenting were Sarah Hamulecki, Oxford's manager of strategic initiatives and intergovernmental relations, and Marcus Ryan Mayor of Zorra Township & Warden of Oxford

County. Norwich was their last stop on what was a visit to all eight municipalities within Oxford County.

Each of the eight county wide councils was presented with the same presentation and were given an opportunity to question the presenters, before voting.

During the questioning and discussion phase of the Norwich meeting, tempers flared when Ward 3 Councillor Shawn Gear felt he was being slighted by what he perceived as a smirk from Warden Ryan during a question, and again when Mayor Palmer suggested the meeting move on while Gear was making a point. Gear made a passionate speech while he had the floor about one of the issues in question.

Ward 1 Councillor, Karl Toews had serious concerns about the plan as written. Toews took acceptance to the phrase "priority groups." Priority groups, Toews stated, was a discriminatory label, he felt a better description would be "groups of particular concern."

Before voting a request was made to make this a recorded vote.

Ward 2 Councillor Lynne DePlancke, a yea vote, offered this explanation when I spoke with her, "The definition makes perfect sense," referring to the definition of the word priority from the dictionary. DePlancke also added she felt the wording in the plan "was no reason to reject the plan. "Its not discriminatory by any stretch of the word!" Councillor DePlancke went on to say, "My interpretation of priority in the document is pertaining to those who need help the quickest." "Compare it to being accessed in the emergency room the person(s) who need help the quickest should be treated first." "It's not being prejudice or discriminating to anyone else".

Mayor Palmer, another vote in favour of the plan said, "This issue is on the agenda for this weeks Council meeting." (Feb24meeting) "I shouldn't presume to know what that outcome will be." Jim also Stated, "There has been talk between the County and our Township on this matter." "There are several possible outcomes."

"It is discouraging to have to deal with an issue that could have been dealt with last meeting." When asked if the township will have to come up with their own plan, Jim indicated it is mandatory that a plan is in place, then said, "This is likely going to be a hit to our budget but worse it makes Norwich a pariah amongst our neighbouring municipalities".

In an e-mail correspondence with Ward 1 Councillor Karl Toews he answered the following questions.

***Do you see Norwich Township going it alone making a plan of their own?*** "No - as you may have seen in the agenda for tonight's council meeting, (May 24 meeting) Norwich Township Staff estimates that making our own plan would cost about \$100k. That's crazy. I would not support that expenditure".

***In your opinion can the other municipalities be talked into accepting the wording change?*** "I hope so. As you may have also seen in the agenda for tonight's council meeting, this is what our staff is recommending in terms of next steps. I plan to

support staff's recommendation on this. I wonder if now that the issue has been flagged, the other councils may share Norwich Council's concerns and change "priority groups" to "groups of particular concern."

***Are there any comments you care to add?*** “Just that I want to emphasize that I definitely am concerned about the health and well-being of all the people who are described as priority groups in the Safe & Well Oxford plan. I hope my concern about the current wording is not interpreted otherwise. At the same time, in my view, the health and well-being of everyone in Oxford County should be given equal priority. It just does not make sense to me to label certain groups of people as priority groups. If we're going to label certain groups of people as priority groups, doesn't it beg the question - which groups of people are not priority groups”?

The two dissenters, Councillors Gear & Cowenburg, did not reply to my email asking the same questions that Karl Toews replied to.

At the Feb 11 Oxford County Council meeting confusion seemed to be the prevalent thought when it came to the question, why did Norwich turn down the plan. County Councillor Gilvesy asked if the Township of Norwich was completely out? No one had a definitive answer. Warden Ryan said, “I am disappointed that one area municipality didn't see that they could join in, in this but that's their right as a member of council.” “Hopefully they will find a way to come in or they will do their own plan.” “As Oxford residence, residence of Norwich will benefit indirectly from the plan regardless.” “Overall I am very happy to see this move forward, I think there is great potential in our community groups doing this work collaborating with each other trying to make our residence safer and more well”.

Township of Norwich council asked staff to prepare options for council to consider at a future meeting. Here is an excerpt of the discussion, CAO Smith and staff forwarded for presentation to council.

*Staff are presenting the widest possible selection of options for*

*Council's consideration. All of the options below have potential drawbacks, and while staff are recommending Option 2 based on Council's prior discussion, staff believe that it is unlikely that all of the municipalities within Oxford County will agree to make changes to the Safe and Well Plan at this stage in the process.*

*Source Council Agenda*

Six options were presented in the document for council to consider.

**Option 1** – Adopt the Plan as previously presented (requires 'Reconsideration') Based on the Oxford County resolution described above, Council could still choose to adopt the plan as was presented and would then continue to be part of the joint plan, including having representation on the new Plan Advisory Committee. As the motion to adopt the plan was previously lost, this would require a member of Council who voted against adopting the plan to propose a Reconsideration motion and obtain a two thirds majority in favour.

**Option 2** – Ask other local municipalities to agree to

specific changes to the Plan If Council wishes to see specific changes made to the Safe and Well Oxford Plan before adopting it, then the best way to move forward with that would be to pass a resolution requesting that the other municipalities within Oxford County (including the County) pass resolutions to update the same words and re-adopt the plan. Staff believe that this is the best option at present, based on Council's decision to not adopt the plan as it is currently written.

Having said that, there is a challenge associated with this option, as staff believe there is a significant chance that one or more municipalities could refuse to amend the wording within the Plan. If the changes are not made by all participating municipalities, then staff believe that it would be difficult for Oxford County and partner organizations to consider the plan as a 'joint plan'.

If the other municipalities do not agree to update the wording as requested by Council, then there will have to be further consideration of the other options presented in this report.

**Option 3** – Adopt the existing plan, and propose changes through the Advisory Committee

As mentioned above, in 2023, the Plan Steering Committee passed a resolution to ask all participating municipalities to amend the existing Safe and Well Oxford Plan to include an additional priority risk area. Following that request, all municipalities agreed to make that change.

If Norwich were to adopt the plan (see Option 1), it could then propose changes to the new Plan Advisory Committee. Staff believe that other participating municipalities may be more inclined to update the wording in the plan if the request came from the Advisory Committee, which will include representatives from all participating municipalities and partner organizations.

However, if Norwich chooses to pursue this option and the Advisory Committee decides not to recommend changes, then the Township would be committed to the Plan as it is currently written.

**Option 4** – Amend the plan proposed by Oxford County, and adopt as the Township’s Plan

During its last discussion, members of Council discussed replacing certain words in the Plan and then adopting it. This is an option, but staff are concerned by the potential knock-on effects.

Based on conversations with County staff and the recent discussion and resolution at County Council, staff do not believe that the County would consider Norwich to be part of the ‘joint plan’ if any of the existing words were amended or replaced. This would likely mean that additional changes were required, at least to rebrand the plan as a Township document, and remove references to the Safe and Well Oxford Advisory Committee and Oxford County staffing resources. Norwich would also not be able to participate in the Advisory Committee, and therefore would not have representation which could negatively impact some of the programs and services being offered in the Township. Staff do have a concern about ‘rebranding’ the plan that was developed by an external

consultant as a joint plan and paid for by the County, as this could lead to legal implications.

If the plan becomes a Township plan, instead of the joint Oxford County plan, then staff are concerned that the Township may be seen to have not met the requirements of the Community Safety and Policing Act regarding consultation during plan development, which may cause long-term issues with the Ministry.

**Option 5** – Develop a new Township Plan Section 248 (2) of the Community Safety and Policing Act allows for the joint preparation of a community safety and well-being plan with multiple municipalities, but does not require that all municipalities within a geographic area or upper-tier government take part. The Township is under no obligation to participate in a joint plan, but would be required to develop a separate Township plan in order to meet the legislative requirements. If the Township chose this route, then all of the consultation and implementation requirements specified in the Act would be required.

This option would involve a significant amount of both staff time and money, as resources would have to be allocated to the project whether it was completed by a consultant or as an in-house exercise. Staff do not believe that a comprehensive Township community safety and well-being plan could be developed for under \$100,000, with additional costs for implementation. Additionally, there is a question over whether the partner organizations who would normally be involved in developing a plan, such as health, education and social services agencies, would be able to commit resources to supporting a Township plan, particularly as they have already been involved in developing the Safe and Well Oxford plan.

The Township would also not be involved in the ongoing work led by the County with partner municipalities, and would have no influence on future projects.

**Option 6** – Do nothing at this time While the legislation requires that municipalities with responsibility for police services adopt a Community Safety and Well-being Plan, staff are unaware of any immediate

consequences if the Township does not do so. Section 257 of the Act allows the Minister to appoint a community safety and well-being planner for a municipality if “the municipality has intentionally and repeatedly failed to comply with one of its obligations under this part.” If the Minister appointed a planner, then the Township would be responsible for all costs related to it. Staff are not aware of a ministerial appointment to any community in Ontario at this time, but have not consulted with the Ministry to confirm this.

It could be argued that the amendment of the plan in December 2023 to add an additional priority risk area meets the Act’s requirement to ‘review and update if necessary’ at least every four years. If that argument was successful, the Township would have until December 2027 to complete another review. However, the plan that was updated in 2023 was administered by Oxford County, who would now consider that plan to have been replaced, leading to many of the same concerns expressed in Option 4 about implementation.

Source Township Council agenda

At the Feb 24 council meeting Ward 2 Councillor DePlancke gave a definition of “priority groups” from the computer dictionary. After DePlancke’s presentation of the definition, she stated “so my request moving forward would be to ask a members of council who voted against the final draft to reconsider and move to accept option one on page three of tonight’s report”. At this point the councillor was asked if this was an AI generated presentation.

After further discussion it was recommended council take a break to allow time for members to go over the literature provided by Lynne in depth.

After the break a comment by Mayor Palmer “I don’t like being told we have to do something.” It was also noted if the plan is not accepted, Norwich Township cannot participate in the plan.

Councillor Cowenbuer stated “I have to agree with option two.”

Gear stated “every time I turn around there is a new priority group,” “whether that someone who decides to represent themselves as a dog or a cat which I have visually seen from

the high school that my son went to.” “My trouble is when we start to use language like priority groups. Where does that begin and where does it end?”

“Someone who feels they need to be at the start of a line in a variety store because they decided they’ve decided to have cat ears and a cat tail, I’m sorry,” “I do not consider that a priority.”

“I think that Oxford County needs if their going to use language such as priority, priority groups, then outline what those priority groups are.” “I’m looking for transparency, clarity and accountability”.

The six priority groups selected for participation fall into the categories listed in the Safe & Well Oxford Plan include, people

affected by Mental Health and Well-Being, Housing for All, People and Belonging, Substance Use and Addictions, Gender Based Violence, and Affordability and Economic Stability.

When all was said and done this issue remains unresolved. Option two is dependant upon the other seven municipalities in Oxford County to allow for the wording change. Noteworthy will be watching what transpires and will keep you posted when the resolution happens.

## I Choose Canada

Editorial by Vic Whitcroft

Lately on social media as well as in conversation with people, I often hear the statement Canada is a terrible place to live. Canada is broken and so on, I disagree.

I know prices are high on everything from groceries, housing, household goods, and car repairs to kids clothes, essentials for school, and the list goes on.

When one looks at the situation with an unbiased mind, and not because they dislike the current government, you get a real look at how Canada is doing.

Let's start with those who smoke, I'm told a package of twenty cigarettes cost around \$12.50 pre pack. If the man of the house goes through 2 packs per day, while the his wife uses 1 pack per day, you have a cost of smoking at \$37.50. That amounts to just shy of \$14,000 each year.

Now let's look at beer, on the low end which I'm using for this piece, is priced at \$47.60 for a case of twenty, four. Consumption in Ontario is slightly below the national rate of consumption, nonetheless the rate is nearly 24 beers pre week. Let's round that number to \$2500.00 annually.

Moving on to toys, I describe toys as vintage or collector cars, motorcycles, personal water craft, boats, ATV's, travel trailers or motor homes, and cottages. All of these items are expensive to buy and maintain. Not to mention travel to far away destinations.

Your daily coffee break, if you take two daily will cost \$3.20 per day or \$1170.00 per year.

If you doubt the validity of the items listed, drive down any residential street in most any town. You will see many yards abundantly littered with these toys. A travel trailer in the driveway while the boat sits in

the yard. At the same house the owner polished his vintage muscle car as he smoke a cigarette and drinks a beer.

Everything listed above is strictly want rather than need items. Hopefully purchased with disposable income.

It's a given that the needs of a family or individual is expensive. Years ago a family had just one phone, now everyone in the family has a phone, with the average age (NWN) for a first cell phone at 11 or 12.

So when you think of Canada as a bad place to be, look around and see the prosperity of the country.

Now look again, this time at other countries around the world. We Canadians have a good life.

Just look at the US and see American citizens being grabbed off the streets by masked and armed ICE agents.

I'm not so naive to think there is no improvement needed. But I choose Canada!



## **Flag Protocol**

The National Flag of Canada and the flags of provinces, territories and local governments are symbols of honour and pride for Canadians.

The way flags are displayed in Canada is governed by internationally established practice.

The National Flag of Canada always takes precedence over all other national flags when flown on Canadian soil. Therefore, it should always be placed in the position of honour.

### **Two flag protocol**

If you stand facing the flags, the position of honour is to the left. Canada's flag is on the left, and the other, whether it is a national or sub-national flag, is on the right.

### **Three flag protocol with a foreign flag**

If you stand facing the flags, the position of honour is in the centre. Canada's flag is in the centre, the flag of the foreign country is to the left and Ontario's flag is to the right.

### **Three flag protocol with a municipality**

If you stand facing the flags, Canada's flag is in the centre, Ontario's flag is to the left and the municipal flag is to the right.

### **Multiple flags**

When more than three flags are flown, the position of honour is furthest to the left, followed by other flags in order of precedence.

### **Half Mast**

Looking at the times when flags are flown at half mast. Obviously this marks the death of an individual or individuals. The province of Ontario has set aside days for annual half masting flags as follows.

Ontario annually half-masts flags from sunrise to sunset on:

- **April 28:** National Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace
- **June 23:** National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism
- **The second Sunday in September:** Firefighters' National Memorial Day
- **The last Sunday in September:** National Peace and Police Officers Memorial Day
- **November 8:** Indigenous Veterans' Day
- **November 11:** Remembrance Day
- **December 6:** National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

To sum this up, the location of the position of honour depends on the number of flags flown and the type of configuration.

- When 2 flags are displayed, the position of honour is the farthest to the left when an observer is facing the display.
- When 3 flags are flown, the position of honour is in the centre.
- When more than 3 flags are displayed, the position of honour is the farthest to the left when an observer is facing the display.

In the event you fly two flags on one flagpole, the position of honour is on top. Generally this would not be done on a government flagpole however, individuals may do this on a residential flagpole.

Flying a flag from the rear of a pickup truck or other vehicle of some kind falls under freedom of expression. This is legal, as is flying an f\*\*\* Carney/Polieve flag although is considered in poor taste.

## **International distress signal**

When a flag is flown upside down it is meant to signal distress. Distress could be that of an individual or vessel in trouble and needs immediate help.

Unfortunately this has lost any significant because many individuals use it as a symbol of protest, crying wolf so to speak.

Vessels would never fly a flag in this manner unless it was truly in distress.

## **Flag disposal**

To dispose of a Canadian flag, you must do so in a dignified manner, burn natural fibre flags (wool, cotton, linen) privately, while synthetic flags (nylon, polyester) should be respectfully cut or torn into strips of single colours, not resembling the flag, before being bagged and binned.

Flag flying protocol and etiquette is complicated and there are more rules as well as exceptions to what is written here. For the full and latest rules go to the Government of Canada's website.

Sources Government of Canada [NWN]

## **Tragedy**

Recently flags across Canada were flown half mast to show respect and to mourn the deaths and trauma caused in the rare occurrence in Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia, where a school shooting took place on Feb 10th, 2026. Multiple students lost their lives, those who did not will suffer from this traumatic event for years to come.

## Black History Month

Feb 17th saw the Pan-African flag raised on the community flag pole located at the community centre in Norwich. Attended by a small group watching the ceremony, with a prepared statement from Heather Rennalls and a poem written and read by Duane Kumala-Thomas.

After the official flag raising by Duane Kumala-Thomas, attendees went into the community centre auditorium to view the display of local black history.



*Above* Duane Kumala-Thomas raises the flag



*Right* Duane Kumala-Thomas and Karen McSpadden discuss the display

## Black History In Otterville

Needless to say, Otterville has a storied past, filled with black history. Wednesday, the day after the Pan-African flag raising at the community centre, Otterville museum hosted a black history event at the former railroad station.

The display covered much of the black ties to Otterville in a cool, normally closed for the season building. Coffee and treats were available as part of the Wednesday morning coffee gathering by local Otterville residents.

**Otterville Area....**  
Norwich Township

Blacks were especially musical due to the need to express themselves, while enslaved. The Williams family, of Milldale, who performed all around Southern Ontario, owned this pump organ.

**K**nowledge of the 1793 legislation stating that no Blacks were to be brought to Upper Canada to be used as slaves may have helped provide information that there were places farther north where Blacks were living free. Word spread that they should 'follow the North Star to Canaan Land'.

## Letters to the Editor

Hello and thanks for the Noteworthy news.

You are not the first to note visual pollution - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9lh7lqZojc> - and I sympathize when I try to find something through all the visual clutter.

Bryan

**The winner is, *Lois Grant*** finding the [NWN] with good deal of difficulty. Try your luck at finding the symbol in this issue. Be the first to reply to [nwn@execulink.com](mailto:nwn@execulink.com) with the correct placement to win a ten dollar Tim's card.

## Did You Know

Allen's Juices, a Canadian manufacturer of a variety of juices got its start right here in Norwich. The factory was located where the library is now situated. The factory also included the property across Tidy Street now site of condominium homes.

