



Photo by Megan Voss

A squirrel crosses the street near Cannifton road in Belleville, on March 13. Close to Memorial Park with many trees, it is where many squirrels spend time.

# Spring a tough time for animals

*Roadkill has huge impact on some species*

By Megan Voss

Spring is the season of refreshment, renewal and – roadkill.

As the weather warms up, animals are coming out of hibernation. Many of them go onto the road and are hit by oncoming traffic, resulting in their own death. There are also injuries to humans and damage to their cars. Roadkill even poses a problem for a few already endangered animal populations.

Sgt. Ron Abrams, an OPP officer for Prince Edward County, said that the spring and fall are the worst times for roadkill.

“Last year, we probably had several weeks where we had two to three collisions a day out in the county,” he said.

If there is a positive side to roadkill,

it’s the lifecycle for animals. Shannon Simpkins, of Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, gave an example of a raccoon that is killed on the road.

“There are certain birds like turkey vultures that will come and eat that raccoon,” she said.

“There is its own ecology and its own trophic levels that is supported by roadkill.”

Simpkins also talked about a couple different species at risk – populations that are already endangered are being negatively affected by roadkill.

“Turtles are probably the biggest class of species at risk that are in danger of roadkill,” she said.

“Roadkill has a huge impact for them because a lot of them will come up and nest along the side of the road, because they can dig in the sand and lay their eggs. In some cases, the little turtles – when they hatch, are hit by the cars.

“Turtles take an insanely long time to become reproductively viable and so when a 60-year-old turtle is hit by a car,

it’s kind of tragic,” she added.

“In their lifetime, after laying hundreds and hundreds of eggs, there will only be one or two offspring that will reach full adulthood,” Simpkins said.

Snakes are another class of endangered species at risk from roadkill, Simpkins said. They already don’t have a good reputation with people, even though they’re not a threat to humans.

“They like to sunbathe on the road and consequently they are hit by cars,” she noted.

“Even though Ontario only has one native poisonous snake, people get concerned about having them. But, in reality, ultimately what they end up doing is persecuting and killing other snakes, or ruining their habitat. Poisonous snakes are not a concern for the majority of Ontario.”

Turtles and snakes may be some of the only populations at risk of extinction, and roadkill doesn’t help that, but they are not the only kinds of animals that are killed.

“Deer is an issue. Anywhere in south-

ern Ontario you’ll also get a moose, which is even worse up north,” Abrams said.

“The deer will stand at the side of the road and then all of a sudden as you approach them, they’ll take off right across the road. They can make it across before you have time to react or stop.

“They’re heading so fast that people don’t have time to swerve, and so the deer gets hit, but doesn’t do a lot of damage.”

“Moose up north are more critical for injuries because their centre of gravity is higher above the hood. The cars go under them and so the moose comes through the windshield,” he said.

However, little animals are just as dangerous – if not more dangerous – than moose.

He says people will swerve to miss small animals, then go right into the trees, telephone poles or roll their car as a result.

“It sounds cruel, but it is so dangerous. Your natural instinct is to swerve, and of course that’s when you lose control, and other vehicles on the road are put into real danger, as well yourself and your pas-

sengers. Most of the time, you’re better off just hitting them,” he said.

“You’re doing 100 km/h and all of a sudden you turn the steering wheel, and the first turn is okay – but it’s when you try to come back is when you lose control of the vehicle.”

So, what happens after the animal dies? Cruickshank, based out of Kingston, is a company that does roadkill removal. For the bigger animals, often they have to use special tools, such as winches, to remove the animal from the vehicle. Smaller animals are easily picked up, but there are certain guidelines the company has to follow in terms of how to dispose of them.

For the smaller animals, they do burials within the right of way – digging graves for them. The larger animals are sent to a facility that removes them.

The company also gets calls about lost pets – and although they are difficult cases to deal with, they are often able to give the pet owner peace of mind about their missing animal.

## Few attacked by the flu

By Jessica Corriveau

Flu season has barely started this year, but already the numbers are low.

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) says “The percentage of laboratory specimens testing positive has just recently reached 10%, which is much later than other years. For comparison, in 2009, this number exceeded 40%.”

Whether it’s due to the mild winter, or how effective the flu vaccine was this year, it’s good news.

We aren’t out of the woods yet, however.

In week nine of the flu season, according to the PHAC, the numbers have picked up. FluWatch, part of PHAC, is reporting an increase in positive influenza B detections compared to last week, the majority of which were from Ontario and Quebec. Ontario has reported some surveillance regions with localized activity, and some regions with sporadic activity.

FluWatch helps monitor the spread of flu and

flu-like illnesses throughout the season. Its goal is to detect outbreaks, share information relating to the spread of the flu, and check how well vaccines and antiviral medications are doing against certain strains, such as H1N1. All of this information factors in to which vaccine will be used the following year.

The flu vaccine is decided ahead of time, with three strands chosen as those the makers decide to target. This year, they seem to have a good match, with circulating viruses stable for the past two seasons.

“I have had less students coming in this year with the flu,” said Lauren Deans, the college nurse.

“There has been flu out in the community, but not like the numbers we’ve seen in past years. Hopefully it’s due to a combination of the flu shot and taking care of themselves.”

Deans reminds students to take care and wash their hands, cover their mouths when coughing and sneezing, and to stay home when sick.

## Water worries captured on film

By Chloë Ellingson

Last year Suzanne Brant ended up in the hospital for nine weeks because of what she described as poor water quality at her home on Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory.

“I started having problems with my nervous system,” says Brant, “and the next thing I knew, I couldn’t eat or drink.”

Brant says it took her body six months to get relatively back to normal, and she says she still can’t eat a lot of the things she used to.

Brant’s experience reflects a reality on many reserves across the country. This issue will be explored during Canada Water Week, which falls from March 19-25, at Loyalist’s Aboriginal Studies department, where Brant works as a student success mentor.

On March 22, the department will be screening the documentary *Crisis on Tap: First Nations Water For Life*, on a loop from 9a.m. to 3p.m. in room 3H8.

“The film is very current,” says Brant, who wants

to make known the far-reaching effects of poor-quality water. “People don’t realize how difficult it can be when you don’t have potable water,” she says. “If you don’t have a good quality of water, then your health becomes an issue, environment becomes an issue, social aspects become an issue, economics become an issue. All of those things lead off of one thing.”

Produced by the Centre for Aboriginal Health Research at the University of Victoria, *Crisis on Tap* takes a look at the spiritual value of water in First Nations communities, the causes of bad water on reserves, and the value of water in our ecosystem at large. According to the film, there are currently over 1000 water advisories across Canada, and about one in five reserves fall into this statistic.

One source interviewed in *Crisis on Tap* is Tsartlip First Nation Honoured Elder Tom Sampson.

“They talk about water as a commodity, as something that people must have control of and own,” Sampson says in the documentary. “For us, we don’t own it, we don’t control it. We look after it.”

## Award-winning journalist focuses on United Empire Loyalists

*Peter C. Newman has long-term connections with this community*

By Rachel Cohen

Renowned award-winning Canadian journalist and author Peter C. Newman is living in Belleville primarily because the book he is writing over three years is about the United Empire Loyalists.

“I’ve had long-term connections to the Quinte region, and I believe it’s very important for me to write this book about the United Empire Loyalists and the role they played in developing a Canadian national identity,” said Newman of his current book project.

At age 82, Newman has been famously narrating Canadian politics for more than half a century. Building upon his series of books ranging from the Canadian establishment and how it has gained its power, to the history of the Hudson’s Bay Company and its impact on Canada as a nation, Peter’s new book will be called *Hostages to Fortune: How the Loyalists Invented Canada*.

Born in Vienna, Austria, Newman emigrated from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia to Canada in 1940 as a Jewish refugee. Escaping the war at the age of 11, Newman has said of himself, “What I wanted when I ultimately arrived in Canada was to gain a voice, to be heard. That longing has never left me.”

As a child, Newman enrolled in 1944 as a “war guest” at Upper Canada College – the training ground for children of Canada’s most wealthy and powerful families. Newman’s extensive collection of books he has written have been about many of those very boys he went to school with – recounting the lives of the rich and powerful: business tycoons, political players and prime ministers.

“I always felt like an outsider when I first came to Canada. I was labelled a ‘Jew boy’. It took some time before I found my way,” recalls Newman.

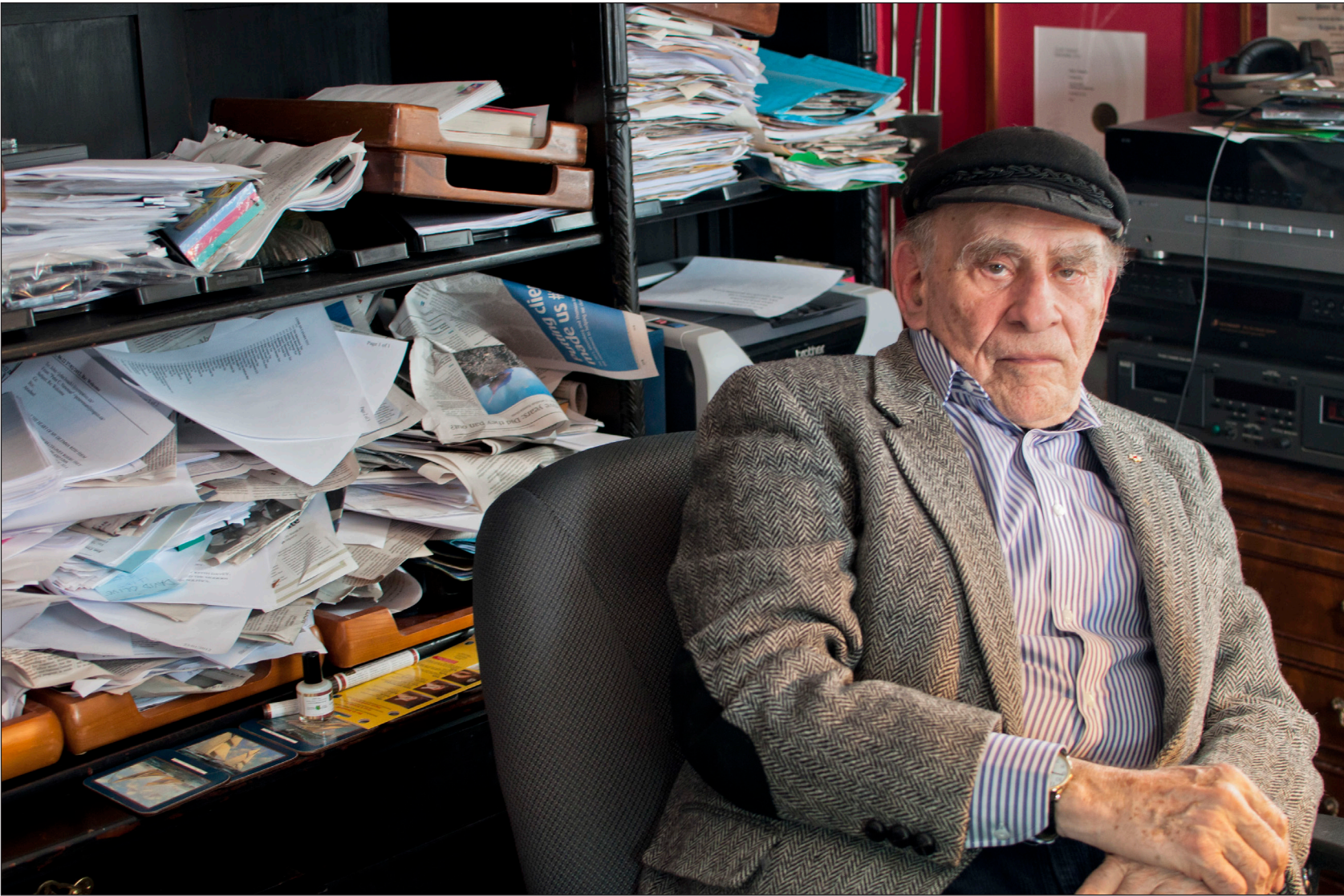


Photo by Rachel Cohen

Award-winning Canadian journalist and author Peter C. Newman is living in Belleville because the book he is writing over three years is about the United Empire Loyalists and role they played in developing a Canadian national identity. At age 82, Newman has has dedicated his life to recording the story of this country.

It was from there that Newman embarked on a remarkable career, which included writing for the *Financial Post*, *Maclean’s Magazine*, and *Toronto Star*. As a novelist, Newman has written over 20 books, selling more than two million copies.

“My plan was to make a lot of strong statements about Canada, and I think that’s important,” says Newman. “I am neutral,” he says of his opinions. “I attack everybody.

“I think they need to be attacked. They are responsible to us. They may have

the power, but I have taken responsibility for proving the powerful accountable,” says Newman about the importance of his work. “That is what I try to do in my books.”

Spanning over six decades, Newman has dedicated his life to emphasizing how

Canada will survive, and has ultimately recorded the story of this country. Newman has retired to his beautiful Victorian home in Belleville and is happily married to his wife Alvy in Belleville.

People can expect to see his book released in the upcoming year.