



Photo by Jessica Nyznik

Changing seasons

Chris Hardy fishes for steelhead and rainbow trout on the Ganaraska River in Port Hope last week. With the first official day of spring just around the corner on March 20, ice melted on the river but Hardy was still able to find a solid patch to park his chair and cast his rod.

Sweet event introduces first tree tapping of the season

By Gail Paquette

A profession that depends on the whims of nature officially opened its season on Feb. 22 with the 'first tapping ceremony.'

Members of the Quinte Chapter of the Ontario Maple Syrup Producers Association, or OMSPA, poured into O'Hara Sugar Maples on Harts Road north of Madoc for the celebration.

OMSPA is a producer-based organization formed in 1966 to represent maple syrup producers across the province.

Often referred to as the first crop of the year, the "first tapping ceremony"

represents the first rite of spring for the producers. When the days get longer and warmer and the nights remain cold, the sap is ready to run.

Perfect weather is 5C in the day and minus 5C at night, said producer Dan Osmond. Dan and his wife, Faith, have a slightly smaller operation, Maple Ridge Farm in Roseneath, Ont., with 700 trees.

In Ontario, maple syrup is produced commercially wherever maples are found. Ontario is the second largest producer of maple syrup, next to Quebec, with a production level of close to one million litres per year.

Steve Needham, his wife, Heather, and their two children, Vanessa and Jager, hosted the event on their 100-acre property.

Needham has been tapping trees since he was 15, but the family operation is only in its third year of production.

"It's going to be an excellent year for syrup," said Needham. "The ground had lots of frost and there is a lot of snow."

The Needham crop of 4,000 trees is a fairly new bush and will see the next five generations of maple syrup producing, he said.

The celebration included an informa-

tive talk by Needham about their operations, the official tapping of the tree and a hearty lunch.

Prince Edward-Hastings MP Daryl Kramp did the honours of drilling the first hole using a traditional hand brace drill.

"When I go abroad occasionally, it is traditional to exchange gifts and I always bring one thing: maple syrup. Particularly in Asia, where they have never heard of it, I will go around the table during a banquet and pour it onto their dessert. They look at me like I'm nuts but when they taste it, a smile comes across their face."

"Although the industry has been around for generations, the marketing capacity is literally untapped."

Tree tapping for the Needhams began officially Feb. 23 and took two full days with help, to complete the task of drilling the 4,000 trees.

O'Hara Sugar Maples extends an open invitation to anyone wanting to view the operation. The farm is located at 871 Harts Road, east of Madoc, off Hwy. 7.

"If the gate is open, then we are open," said Needham. "We offer free samples of maple syrup and maple butter at the sugar house."

Hospital funding cuts anger protesters

Liberal government keeping Ontarians in the dark about changes, say demonstrators

By Lyndsay-Lee Quinn and Sofia Rojas

Cold weather that swept across Trenton and Belleville Monday afternoon didn't stop the enraged protesters from waving flags and signs at the front entrances of each community hospital.

Because of the changing ways hospitals are funded in Ontario, health centres must find about \$10 million from savings.

About 30 people protested funding cuts on the sidewalk surrounding Belleville General Hospital and over 100 staff and community members rallied outside Trenton Memorial Hospital, the majority of them being elderly.

Protesters say the Liberal government is keeping Ontarians in the dark about what's to come within the province. The estimated cuts to Quinte Health Care revenues have left them with a deficit of almost \$10 million.

According to the official QHC website, Belleville General Hospital will be the only QHC hospital to provide obstetricians, as cuts are to come to a number of beds in Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital. Picton currently has 19 beds, plus two maternity beds. However, staff says it's possible that will be reduced to 12.

Sally Freeman, a councillor of Quinte West who participated in the SOS (Save Our Services) Day of Action protests had much to say regarding the issue.

"We've been told that the government



Photo by Sofia Rojas

About 30 people protested on the sidewalk surrounding Belleville General Hospital Monday afternoon. After Ontario changed its method of funding, local hospitals are now being forced to find an estimated \$10 million from budgets. Protester Doug Parker holds up an SOS sign to passing cars.

is pulling \$10 million out of the four sites of Quinte Health Care, Trenton Hospital being one of them. They are going to take five beds off of us, pulling out psychotherapy, taking away the lab and we are just saying this is ridiculous. We want our hospital lab left alone. We've gone through enough cuts as it is," said Freeman.

A common theme among protesters is that they are worried about the hospitals.

"We are trying to save our hospital. Put the money back and start looking after patients and all the administration costs. That's why I'm here," said Gary Wilson, a resident of Belleville.

According to the Ontario Health Co-

alition, an estimated \$3 billion has been cut from health care spending. However, according to the Toronto Star, Deb Matthews, the province's minister of health and long-term care, stated they are increasing funding by \$1 billion this year.

"Health-care spending in Ontario, when you talk about hospitals, is actually last in Canada," said Chris Cormier ex-

ecutive board member of OPSEU Region 4 at the protest in Belleville.

"There are a number of things out there in the press that say that health-care spending is rising at a rate we can sustain. But if you look at the numbers, you'll see something very different. Health-care spending in Ontario is actually decreasing," said Cormier.

"These cuts are being made because Ontario has a revenue problem. There are a large number of people that are not paying their fair share and it is those that are making a lot more than any of us standing here today," said Cormier.

"What I want to know here today is how many people can afford physiotherapy? Not many. How many people can afford to pay for X-rays? Not many. How many people paid their fair share in taxes last year? Lots," said Cormier.

"There's an untold story here when it comes to public health care. What it's going to take is each and every one of you to get involved and talk to your elected officials," said Cormier.

QHC has consulted staff physicians, partners and community members and reviewed those proposals with their input in mind. From there, officials will begin to construct further plans; according to the Quinte Health Care press release on Feb 27.

According to the QHC official website, members are planning on continuing to enhance the quality of care, ensure patients are receiving their care in the right place from the right care provider, to ensure the services they deliver are meeting the health care needs of the patients in this region within our available resources, make QHC as efficient as possible, and maximize their revenue streams such as adding fast food and retail services within hospitals.



Photo by Jessica Nyznik

Members of the South Western Dive’s Association and the Etobicoke Underwater Club pulled and pushed their ice floe down the Otonabee River during the Ice Floe Races near Peterborough.

Divers take to the cold Otonabee River

By Jessica Nyznik

Flippers, wetsuits and scuba gear are not the usual attire for Canadians at this time of year, but on Sunday the Otonabee River saw a lot of them.

The 50th-annual Ice Floe Races were held between Locks 23 and 24 near Peterborough and divers did the best they could to stay warm.

Teams consisting of eight to 16 certified divers pushed and sometimes pulled large blocks of ice down the river. Each seven-by-seven metre block weighed up

to 12 tons and was roughly 30 centimetres thick.

With a distance of 3.2 kilometres to the finish line, teams were released in five-minute intervals to avoid crashing into one another.

Each team was timed from start to finish, with this year’s winner being Colt Creek Diving from Newmarket with a time of 53 minutes, 17 seconds.

Rick Le Blanc and Terry Ethridge co-chaired the event that was organized by the Ontario Underwater Council.

“We look like fools, but it’s a lot of fun,”

said Le Blanc, who has also competed for the last six years.

Since Le Blanc was participating in the event, Ethridge was left on the shore to manage the affair, which didn’t seem to bother him one bit.

“It’s exhausting,” said Ethridge.

Having been involved with the race for 22 years, Ethridge said he was disappointed that the number of entrants has dwindled over the years.

In the mid-1980s, up to 45 teams would enter with as many as 2,000 spectators in attendance.

This year only five teams raced, down from last year’s eight and the 40 volunteers outweighed the audience by a long shot.

With a cost of \$55 per person to enter, Ethridge said he feels that money is the main reason there are fewer participants.

Teams from Trenton and Belleville once took part religiously, said Ethridge, but not this year.

Spectator Ed Heuvel, originally from Halloway north of Belleville, was driving along the road that follows the river when he spotted the commotion.

As a certified diver, Heuvel’s interest

was piqued and he said he’s thinking it might be something he would like to do next year.

“It’s a crazy thing to do in the winter-time. It’d be kind of cool and you get bragging rights,” said Heuvel.

While bragging rights are definitely a bonus, that’s not all you can walk away with after the race.

Some of this year’s prizes included one-week cruises, dive and snorkeling trips, first aid equipment, and discounts on equipment rentals among other prizes.

Changing the landscape of video games

New system of play connects users to their on-the-go lifestyles

By Ian Brannan

While the Nintendo Wii U was the first in an array of next-generation gaming consoles, Sony Entertainment appears to be out to change the gaming landscape altogether.

This landscape will include the next generation of Microsoft X-Box consoles, and the Steam Box by Valve, the newest competitor.

On Feb. 20, 2013 Sony Entertainment announced the arrival of PlayStation 4, apparently the next greatest thing in gaming. With enhanced computer technology, newer buy-only-what-you-love mindsets, a more in-depth social system

which follows your game play trends then recommends games that seem to match that trend, and a new system of play that connects your on-the-go lifestyle with game play, fans of all ages are abuzz with excitement.

“Overall I’m hopeful,” said long-time PlayStation player Adam Paul, a Belleville student from Guelph studying broadcast engineering technology at Loyalist College.

“Sony really fixed everything that was wrong with the PS3,” he added. “Before they didn’t really have any big launch titles and now they have a bunch for third party developers too.

“I really look forward to where it goes. Sony has really put out a solid platform and they have support from the industry.”

Exciting innovations including being able to connect your games to many mobile devices, such as your PlaySta-

tion Vita, tablet computer and even your smartphone allow flexibility in how you live your gaming experience. However, at least with the first generation of PS4, it will not be compatible with games from the earlier consoles. It will continue to have some of the favoured services, like Netflix, that PlayStation 3 had.

Other innovations include a share button on Sony’s new and advanced controller. This allows a player to take a video of the last period of time in your game play, and then allows you to share it over the network. This, Sony is hoping, will become as popular as screenshots of moments in games had been in previous years.

The announcement, however, wasn’t just about the console game system. It also introduced fans to the wide array of partnerships that Sony has started and continues to grow, and introduced us to

a number of their new game titles that will be coming out with the PS4. These titles included a couple of completely new games that are sure to become franchises of their own, such as Knack and Drive Club.

“It looks phenomenal, it looks absolutely gorgeous,” said Mark Emerson from EB Games in the Quinte Mall. He did some research after missing the initial big announcement from Sony. “The graphic fidelity looks beyond anything I’ve seen so far. Some of the footage that was released was obviously CGI, while other pieces were obviously footage from in-game and the in-game footage appears unreal by today’s standards.”

Emerson said he was impressed by the console features and predicted orders will begin in June, followed by an actual shelf date between September and November of this year.

Winning streak in shambles

By Jeff Peters

The Belleville Bulls’ home winning streak suffered a slow death this past Saturday. The Bulls had been riding high on a home winning streak that hadn’t seen a loss since Jan. 3.

The first period was marred with lost scoring opportunities for both clubs. The teams failed to capitalize on power plays in the first half of the first period. That was until the Niagara Ice Dogs’ Dallas Stars prospect Brett Ritchie railed one in at 17:52, beating Charlie Graham with a rebounded wrist shot courtesy of Ice Dogs defenceman Luke Mercer.

The second period was fast and furious for the Bulls, dominating the Ice Dogs physically, which was echoed on the scoreboard. The score was evened at the 2:22 mark of the second period, with a crushing hit by left winger Carter Sandlak pinning Ice Dogs defenceman Tyler Mort into the back boards, causing a turnover and allowing Belleville Bulls’ Aaron Berisha to tie the game.

The Bulls burst out of the gate in the third with Sandlak lacing up a goal at the 1:34 marker to give the Bulls the lead early in the period. The Bulls’ fiery momentum was tended to by an exuberant crowd of 2,955 who leapt to their feet as the Bulls’ left-winger racked up his eighth goal of the season.

Sandlak would notch another goal with a powerful drive down the ice with Belleville right-winger Austen Brassard dangling the puck around a determined Ice Dogs defensive rush, ultimately the pressure paid off with Sandlak laying pipe against Ice Dogs rookie goaltender Brent Moran to bring the score to 3 – 1.

The Belleville organization would lose momentum after a delay-of-game penalty suffered on the Bulls by netminder Charlie Graham. The ensuing power play had the Eastern Conference leaders out of tilt which forced defenceman Jordan Subban to battle behind the Bulls’ blue line against a formidable attack by Ice Dogs Ryan Strome and Brett Ritchie. The deluge was too much for the Bulls’ skeleton defence and the Ice Dogs were able to gain capital with just 3:40 to go in the third period, bringing the match to 3 – 2.

A three-one rush 46 seconds later would tie the match 3–3 with a demoralizing goal from Ice Dogs centre Carter Verhaeghe. The goal left the Bulls dazed and confused which allowed for another scoring opportunity by the Ice Dogs with 51 seconds remaining in the third. The Bulls would go in all-or-nothing, drawing goalie Graham to gain a man on the attack. With seconds remaining, the Bulls were able to tie the game up with only five seconds to spare with a solid offensive play by Alan Quine beating Ice Dogs’ goaltender Moran with help from Brassard.

Despite the dramatic finish leading into the first overtime period, the Bulls were dogged in the extra window of the match and at the 4:56 marker Carter Verhaeghe scored the game-winning goal.

The Bulls play their next game against the Ottawa 67’s on March 6 at Yardmen Arena.

Psychics share their powers at annual expo

By Benjamin Priebe

It’s a dark, intimate room, hung with technicolour banners and blue gauze curtains. It’s stuffed wall-to-wall with mobs of chattering people and powerful items for sale. Tables are filled with gems, energy stones, salts, balms, potions, spell books, tarot cards, pendants, and crystal balls. An overwhelming psychic energy hangs in the air as fortunes are read and prophecies told.

One of these clairvoyants was Michael, who only gave his first name, a remote viewer who studied at a psychic institute in California and also had a career as an escape artist. A remote viewer is a person who uses extra-sensory perception to observe, communicate with people or find things from a great distance using only his mind. Michael was interested in pushing the physical and mental limits of the human body from a young age.

“I was 14 years old, sitting in my high school music class. My teacher was smiling and playing the piano for us and he was surrounded by this aura of bright yellow,” says Michael.

“I nudged the kid next to me and asked him if he saw it too. His response made sure I never mentioned it in school again. That was the first time I knew that I was psychic.”

That dark room in Belleville was the scene of the 25th-annual Psychic Expo. Organized by Linda Fulcher, who is The Electric Psychic, the show was held at the Travelodge on Hwy. 2 last weekend.

“When we visit Belleville, it is always a very special weekend. We feel welcome and we have regulars that come back every year,” says Fulcher. “There is a good energy and sense of community here.”

The show featured items for sale, free education on the world of clairvoyance as well as private classes, demonstrations and lectures by psychics and a room full of like-minded and spiritual people.

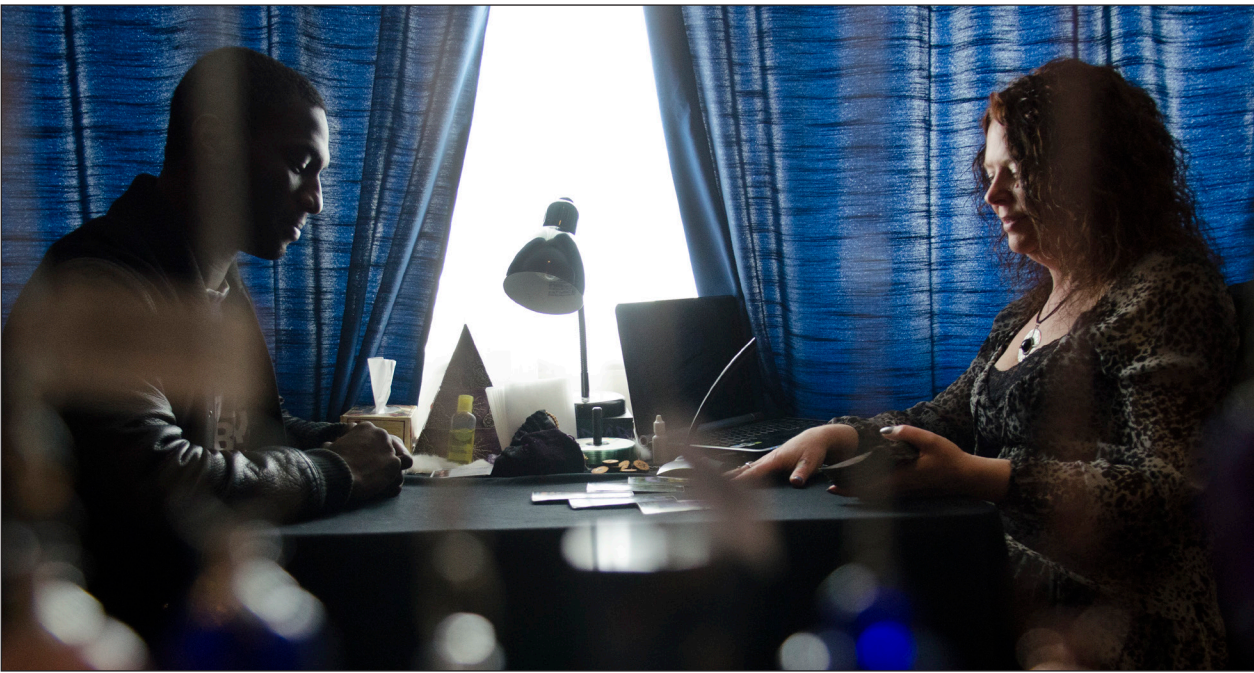


Photo by Benjamin Priebe

Lanre Adetola has his tarot cards read by Jewelee Bayes, a psychic at the 25th annual Psychic Expo Sunday.

“Attendance is around 700 people this year. The shops are doing well with their wares and our 13 readers have booked tables straight through the weekend and even into Monday!”

Fulcher explained that the psychics at the show use a variety of different methods, which fit into two categories: modality and tools.

Psychics who use different modalities use their own minds and bodies to get in touch with the spiritual side. They are mediums who communicate with those who have passed on or use remote viewing and astral projection to foresee the future and people’s auras.

“Psychics aim to help guide others and reveal things to people which they may not know about themselves,” says Fulcher.

Psychics who follow the tool school of thought use crystal balls, smoke reading, tarot cards or client’s own palms to divulge information about a person’s past, present or future.

“Psychics at this show are from all different cultures and nations. We have a palm and chakra specialist from India, tarot readers from England and a shaman from Peru,” says Fulcher.

Clairvoyance and spiritual sensitivity are believed to be worldwide phenomenon, which all-living creatures can take part in, from human fortune tellers to migrating birds and schools of fish who navigate simultaneously together.

The recognized school of thought is that the delta brainwave, the slowest and most ancient of the five brainwaves, has

to be exercised and utilized for these psychics to get in touch with the energy around them.

“People come to us looking for answers and solutions to their problems. We can tune in to energies and give you a good guess. We cannot fix your issues. We can only offer guidance,” says Michael. “It’s like if I have a flashlight in the woods at night. I can illuminate the trail, but not show you a map.”

Fulcher and her husband have organized shows across Ontario since 1988 and she said they will continue long into the future.

“We do 10 shows per year across Ontario,” says Fulcher. “Our next one will be in Newmarket for the weekend of March 15.”

Break time fun in Toronto

By Sofia Rojas
and Jennifer Robertson

Even with a week off from classes, Loyalist photojournalism students still saw life through a camera and took the time to capture others enjoying the final days of winter in Toronto. The city took advantage of what could possibly be our last major snowfall by partaking in winter activities, savouring the falling snowflakes and participating in the annual Bloor-Yorkville Icefest. At Nathan Phillips Square, the rink was filled with couples, families and friends carving up the ice with their skates. Others watched ice carvers display their talents by sculpting into 35,000 pounds of ice, and then were able to marvel at the skills and precision of each creation. It was nice to get out of the classroom for a week, but students couldn't stay away from what they do best.



Photo by Justin Chin

Victoria Walters, three, looks up into the sky when the snow starts falling with her mother, Karen Walters, at the eighth annual Bloor-Yorkville Icefest Sunday. There were lots of activities to photograph during Loyalist's break week in the country's largest city.



Photo by Justin Chin

(Left) A toddler's head is seen sticking out of a photo booth cutout at the eighth annual Bloor-Yorkville Icefest Sunday.



Photo by Justin Chin

(Right) Alizah Karwani, six, plays with an ice sculpture with her mother at the eight annual Bloor-Yorkville Icefest. A total of 35,000 pounds of ice were used and crafted into different sculptures.



Photo by Justin Chin

A little boy wanders around ice sculptures at the eighth annual Bloor-Yorkville Icefest.



Photo by Lyndsay-Lee Quinn

Michael Heddington, 26, from Hensall, Ont., does a carving demonstration on Sunday during the eighth annual Bloor-Yorkville Icefest. Heddington has been doing ice sculptures for 10 years now. Over 75 per cent of the sculptures in Yorkville were carved by Heddington.



Photo by Tom Hicken

Friends and families enjoy the last week of ice time at Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto Sunday.