



A man walks along Bridge Street West on Wednesday morning. Many residents were forced to walk on the road this week after a heavy snowfall that left sidewalks covered with deep snow.

Weather causes Quinte closures but college decides against it

By Zachary Shunock and Jessica Campbell

Heavy snowfall in the Quinte region yesterday resulted in multiple closures of schools, businesses and roads throughout the area.

Some students and faculty at Loyalist College said they were surprised the school remained open Wednesday, after the college's decision to cancel classes Monday.

"It's ridiculous... today is way worse than Monday for road conditions and snow. Highway 401 is closed in both directions. I don't understand how they expect students to get to school in this weather," said Megan Fenton, a first-year pre-health student.

Kristy Henderson, a first-year radio and broadcasting student, made it clear that she was upset over the school being open.

"I'm pretty mad. People have to drive here in this and it could get worse while they are here, so they are risking their lives twice."

President Maureen Piercy sent out an email to all students and faculty early Wednesday, saying decisions to cancel classes or close the college are based on current and predicted adverse weather and road condition information.

If unable to travel to the campus or to the clinical or other placements, students are asked to communicate with their professors and their placement organization, and staff are asked to communicate with

their supervisors.

"I want to emphasize that the safety of our college community, students, staff and visitors is always a top priority," said Piercy in her e-mail.

While the college remained open, major highways including the 401 and highways 62 and 33 in Prince Edward County were closed as a result of the weather. The Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board made a decision to close all schools in the area.

The OPP posted warnings advising drivers to stay indoors because of the unsafe road conditions.

Cst. Gina Giouroukos of the Belleville Police offered some advice and information to drivers in the Quinte area.

"The subzero temperatures, heavy snowfall combined with high winds cause changes to roads and road conditions so it's always important to remember to drive for the road conditions. Give yourself plenty of time and space between you and other vehicles."

Gerrard Forestell, who has been a driver for Blue Bird Taxi service for 15 years, said "The driving conditions are terrible. The city is plowing the roads and just started plowing the sidewalks, but there is no salt or sand down yet so the roads are extremely slippery and some of the roads are even impassable at this point."

Another challenge with this week's poor weather is the condition of parking lots on campus.

In the winter, plowing in the parking lot doesn't begin until during the day,



Students at Loyalist College walk to the Kente building from the parking lot Wednesday morning through the snow and cold weather.

when students and staff are trying to get to classes or meetings.

Loyalist students and staff are required to purchase a parking pass, on top of the

tuition fees paid to attend the college, ranging from \$125 for an annual pass, to \$470 for an annual reserved spot.

"I could barely get in the parking lot,

let alone out of it. It's crazy how we pay all this money and the lot isn't even plowed during school hours," said Hayden Vaughan.

Communities show support for Ukranian cities

By Michelle Heshka

Communities around Canada are showing their support to Ukrainian citizens, demanding that Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych step down.

Following the deaths of three protestors allegedly shot by police during the demonstrations in Kiev, hundreds of Ukrainian-Canadians rallied outside Toronto City Hall on Sunday to commemorate those who lost their lives.

Ukrainian-Canadians who attended the rally called the situation a grave injustice to the citizens of Ukraine.

Dmitriy Kuzakov, who attended the Toronto rally said, "If the whole situation could be presented in a role-playing fashion, the government would play the bully and the beautiful people of Ukraine,

the victim. People broke out in hopes of justice, therefore this chaos and conflict manifested."

While Ukrainians said they feared a state of emergency because of rising violence, President Yanukovych made a concession to protestors, offering to scrap the anti-protest laws.

On Tuesday, the Ukrainian parliament held an emergency debate. Parliament voted 361 to 2 to repeal the anti-protest laws. With the decision also came the resignation of Ukraine's Prime Minister Mykola Azarov.

On Jan. 27, Yanukovych released a statement that said, "A political decision has been made to abolish the laws adopted on Jan. 16 that caused multiple discussions."

According to a statement made by Ukraine's Justice Minister Olena Lukash,

Update

Ukraine's President, Viktor Yanukovych, announced today he is taking sick leave due to an acute respiratory illness and high fever. No indication was given about how long he might be away, and what role he'll continue to play in the country's ongoing unrest.

part of the agreement to abolish the anti-protest laws is amnesty for arrested protestors. The proposed amnesty would only be offered if protestors agreed to leave the buildings they were occupying.

"Eliminating the laws would be a substantial concession to the opposition. But it does not meet all their demands, which include Yanukovych's resignation," said

Lukash.

After Yanukovych's anti-protest laws were implemented on Jan. 16, anti-government protestors intensified their demonstrations.

The protests began in Kiev on Nov. 2013 after Yanukovych refused to sign a political and economic association pact with the European Union in favour of financial aid from Russia. Over the past three months, Ukraine has seen the biggest demonstrations since the 2004-2005 Orange Revolution, when Yanukovych was denied his first attempt at presidency.

On Jan. 16, Yanukovych banned the unauthorized installation of tents, stages or amplifiers in public places, and any gathering involving more than five vehicles in convoy. The ban included provision to arrest protestors wearing masks or helmets, stipulating fines or jail time for

breaches of law.

The demonstrations started peacefully in central Kiev in November, and have occasionally been broken up violently by police, but never to the extreme witnessed in the last few weeks.

Since the anti-protest laws were put into effect, there have been many altercations between protestors and police. Violence has been at an all-time high.

Ukrainians continue to control key parts of Kiev's city centre, including its main Independence Square, and three major buildings, including City Hall.

Kiev police reported that only three protestors have been killed during the demonstrations. According to the EU Observer, Yanukovych's security forces are suspected of killing six additional people.

New music school opens in Belleville

By Paulina Uy

The newly opened All Access Music Performance School at 40 Wilson Ave. is all about passion. That is one thing that inspired Belleville resident, Rob Waite, to open the school in September 2013. He has been teaching music lessons for 15 years and has been playing for 27 years. “I’ve been teaching for a long time from home, and this is kind of an expansion of what I was doing at home and it’s a bigger concept,” said Waite. Waite plays the piano, drums, bass and guitar. “Guitar is my baby. That’s what I always come back to. Guitar is my passion but everything else kind of flows from there.”

He started playing when he was 13. He said that once you start getting into learning an instrument, the theories are applicable to other instruments. “So you learn the guitar, then you can transfer that to piano, drums, keyboards, bass, all that kind of stuff, vice versa.” He said his dad had a equestrian shop — that’s what he grew up with — which is why he turned to playing guitar — to get away from all the horse stuff and do his own thing. “For some reason it (playing the guitar) caught me, and I’ve always done it.” “Nobody in my family plays, I had no lessons growing up, it is just something I wanted to do and it kind of evolved and grew from there and it became a part of me.” Having no family member to sit around and teach him or play with him, also became a motivation to open a school where “people could go and experience” music.

He wanted people to have a place where they could do the things they loved doing. And he also wanted an opportunity to play and not just teach. Waite worked professionally in Toronto before moving back to Belleville in early 2003. He had worked with Toronto-based alternative rock band Our Lady Peace, and French-Canadian band, Simple Plan. Loyalist College student government president, Chan-



Photo by Paulina Uy

Belleville resident Rob Waite presents his All Access Music Performance School at 40 Wilson Ave. It opened in early September.

tel Johnston, has joined forces with Waite to teach vocals at the school. Johnston has been singing for years and has been a part of a tour with three other young artists. “It’s a family-oriented atmosphere, great for opening up and fostering a love for music. All the teachers are fantastic and I simply can’t say enough about Rob. He has started a great thing here and I’m glad I can be

a part of this experience.” Since opening the school in Belleville, classes have held about 20 to 25 regular students, of all ages, from all over the Quinte area. Most classes are held during evenings and Saturdays, by appointment. Students range from five to six years old, to seniors who are just starting to play or have played for a long

time, but want to advance their skills. “Music connects — it connects people, it connects stuff that’s going on, it connects stuff in your brain. I want people to, if they want to do it, come here and we can do whatever you want.” Waite plans to hold workshops and seminars in the spring and summer. He also wants to organize camps for March break.

Time to have a conversation about mental health

By Dawn Barger

On Tuesday, Bell Let’s Talk invited Canadians to be a part of the conversation to fight the stigma surrounding mental health with Bell Let’s Talk Day. For every text message sent, wireless call and long distance call made by Bell and Bell Alliant, and for every person who joined their campaign on Facebook and Twitter, Bell contributed five cents to programs dedicated to mental health. On Wednesday, Bell donated a further \$5,472,585.90 to Canadian mental health programs. Since 2010, Bell Let’s Talk has committed \$62.5 million to mental health initia-

tives in Canada. Loyalist College opened its doors to the Bell Let’s Talk Day. The college also offers many services for students dealing with mental health issues. On campus, Student Success Services had a table set up outside of the Shark Tank from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. to promote the event and share information on Loyalist’s mental health resources and the community services available. Counselling Services co-ordinator Adam Gosney, “We recently partnered with the Good To Talk help line, which is a help line for college and university students. Not everyone wants to see a counsellor face-to-face, not everybody can.

Sometimes we have booked appointments and someone walks up and needs to just talk to someone, but it’s not a crisis where we would interrupt a session. Or perhaps they want to call from the privacy of their own home.” Some of the symptoms of mental illness include changes in any of the following: sleep patterns, appetite, energy levels, mood, relationships or the ability to take pleasure in your daily life. The college also has mind and wellness services which give students an opportunity to receive assessment, education and referrals to support them through a variety of difficulties in maintaining balance in their life. A mind and wellness practitioner is

available to teach relaxation techniques to help students learn how to keep their stress levels balanced. Mind and wellness services can provide students with feedback, information and referral to counsellors at Loyalist or services available in the local community, depending on the students need. Common concerns with students include alcohol and drug problems, anger, anxiety, bipolar illness, depression, eating disorders, gambling addiction, homesickness, learning to live with chronic pain, loneliness, porn addiction, schizophrenia, sexuality questions, stress, trauma, relationships/socialization difficulties. “On Feb. 12, we are going to be rolling

out the Good To Talk official launch from 1 to 3 p.m. in Alumni Hall. They’re going to be here talking about their service and highlighting some on campus mental health supports as well,” said Gosney. Bell Let’s Talk partners with a growing number of mental health leaders across the country, including Kids Help Phone to support the mental health of young people in Canada, Adolescent Mood & Anxiety Disorders at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto, student mental health, and Canada’s first university-certified workplace mental health training program in support of Canada’s National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.

Many still can’t live on Ontario’s minimum wage

By Duncan Cairns-Brenner

After a four-year freeze, the provincial government is raising Ontario’s minimum wage from \$10.25 to \$11. Kathleen Wynn’s government is acting on advice from the Ontario Minimum Wage Advisory Panel, a non-partisan group of stakeholders that issued a report Monday outlining five recommendations for minimum wage in Ontario. The report asserted that the minimum wage should rise with inflation. The committee also recommended that there be four months’ notice to employers when minimum wage is to be raised, and that these issues be reviewed every five years. This past week discussions centred around whether the Liberal government would decide to retroactively adjust minimum wage based on the 6.7 per cent inflation since 2010. This retroactive

adjustment would have brought the minimum wage to \$10.94, just below the \$11 rate announced today. According to a 2013 report by the Ontario Association of Food Banks, over 10 per cent of those who regularly access food banks are fully employed. Susanne Quinlan, director of operations at Belleville’s Gleaners Food Bank, concurs. “It’s hard for minimum wage workers,” she said. “Raising minimum wage is a two-headed thing... Can small business support the new wage without just cutting people’s hours?” When asked if the number of working people who attended the food bank will change when minimum wage is raised, Quinlan sighed. “It will stay the same; that’s the reality of it,” she said. “They pay 75 per cent of their income to rent. That’s the issue right there. If the food bank closed, landlords wouldn’t get paid. People need to eat... It’s a vicious world out there for those earning minimum wage.”

The increase to \$11 will predominantly affect youth under 24, women, and newcomers to Canada, who comprise the majority of minimum wage earners, according to a 2013 research study by the Toronto-based Wellesley Institute. Even with the raise, minimum wage employees would still be living under the poverty line. If employees worked 40 hours a week, 52 weeks of the year, their annual income would be \$22,880, leaving them \$418 under the low-income cut-off, based on the 2011 census. Small town economies are becoming increasingly service-based, as manufacturing jobs are increasingly being shipped off shore. The recent layoffs at the Sears logistics centre are a prime example. Advocacy groups in the province have been demanding the government to increase minimum wage to \$14, putting low-wage employees above the poverty line. Wynn’s government was not swayed, instead raising minimum wage by 75 cents.

Art partnership

By Taylor Hermiston

The John M. Parrott Art Gallery and the Belleville Art Association have partnered to put on regular monthly art workshops on the last Tuesday of every month. The workshops will be held at the John M. Parrott Art Gallery, located on the third floor of the Belleville Public Library. A wide variety of art forms will be taught at the workshops, including painting, drawing, crocheting and sculpting. It’s a way for people to explore art in an unstructured environment, which gives the participants an opportunity to learn at their own pace, depending on their level of expertise. It also allows them a chance to get to know other artists and learn new skills from them. Both organizers emphasize that anyone can take part in the workshop, artist or not. There is a fee of three dollars to attend the workshops. For a multi-media presentation, go to: <http://www.qnetnews.ca/?p=33846>

Party planned for Chinese New Year

By Mandy Larade

The end of January is quickly approaching, and so is the beginning of a new year. Chinese New Year, otherwise known as the “Lunar New Year” or the “Spring Festival”, is this Friday, Jan. 31. For Cherry Wang and her family, not only does this mark a new year, but it also marks their 10th anniversary of moving to Canada. Wang and her husband, Morris Mao, immigrated to Canada from Hangzhou, China roughly a decade ago. The couple taught English in Chinese schools, and Wang is currently teaching French in Belleville, saying that moving here from a standpoint of communication was not difficult. “We didn’t have the language barrier,” Wang said. Although there were many different factors for wanting to come to Canada, Wang said that one of the main reasons was that they wanted to have a second child. “If we had a second child, our jobs would be done with, so we couldn’t. We wanted to have more children and that’s why we applied to Canada – for a possibility to move here and have more children.” They have two children: Bobby Mao, who was born in China, and Justin Mao who was born in Belleville. Overall, Wang and her family have had “such a good impression of Canadian people,” especially people in Belleville. “We still recall when we came here that people here were so, so friendly and they just smiled to you on the way and said, ‘hello’. We were not used to that because we came from a big city,” Wang said.



Photo by Mandy Larade

Cherry Wang holds a banner which translates to “a happy/joyful heart”. Wang and her husband Morris Mao are organizing this year’s Chinese New Year celebration at Quinte Alliance Church Feb. 1 at 6:30 p.m.

Their only complaint is the lack of Chinese food available in grocery stores and supermarkets in the Quinte area. “It’s not so easy to get Chinese groceries,” Wang laughed. Wang and her family are ringing in the new year on Saturday at 6:30 p.m. with other members of the community at Quinte Alliance Church in Belleville. The annual celebration usually takes place at

the First Pentecostal Church, but because there weren’t enough people to organize it this year, Wang and Mao are organizing the event. “There’s the talent show...International games, riddles, singing, and dancing,” Wang said. There are 12 animals that circulate for each new year in the Chinese calendar, and each animal symbolizes

something different for the upcoming year. This upcoming year is the year of the horse. “It means ambition, hard working, success,” Wang said. For more details on the Chinese New Year celebration at the Quinte Alliance Church, phone 613-969-4473 or email office@quintealliancechurch.ca.

Canadian funnyman visits

By Melyssa Gloude

He’s an East Coast Canadian funnyman, a comedic wordsmith and he’s taking no prisoners. Ron James delivers poetically-charged two-hour long sets that never fail to leave the audience laughing, and one of his stops on this Canadian “Take No Prisoners” tour is Belleville’s Empire Theatre, on March 1. Andy Forgie, the promotions manager for the Empire, says he is looking forward to the performance. “Ron has performed at the Empire many times. He’s always been a fan favourite,” says Forgie, who believes that the comedian’s visits mean extra business for downtown Belleville. “Tickets always sell out when he comes to town, which means more business for the downtown core. Restaurants fill up before and after the show so it’s great for the community as well.” James, a Nova-Scotia native, has had six critically acclaimed one-hour comedy specials and a television series entering its fifth successful season. He has also appeared at the Just For Laughs Comedy Festival in Montreal, as a headliner with his own show. His filmography includes but is definitely not limited to, credits for writing, acting and producing multiple television series and films. “The Empire has an excellent reputation with booking agencies all over the world, which can land us some great performers,” says Forgie. “Ron is very funny. He’s very clever. He’s definitely what you could call a ‘thinking man’s funny.’ “I fully expect that there wont be a seat left in the house by showtime.”



Photo by Mary Barber

(From left) Katie Closs Couchie, Rachel Dawson, and Zoe Bevan, professional division students at Quinte Ballet School of Canada, make last-minute costume adjustments before a 1950s-themed dance performance to *Boy From Ipanema* by Peggy Lee. This year's Mad Men-themed gala helped raise funds to support the QBSC student scholarship and bursary fund.

Mad Men theme for Quinte ballet gala

By Samantha Quinn and Mary Barber

Boldly-lined brows and dramatic colours filled the Greek Hall on Saturday as ladies and gentlemen wiggled about the dance floor in a 1950s romp.

The Quinte Ballet School of Canada held their annual fundraiser on Jan. 25 in Belleville. This year's gala theme was based on the AMC television series Mad Men.

"Dance fundraising is important because at an early age they have an idea of where they want to see life go. It's rare. It needs to be supported," said Catherine Taylor, artistic director at the QBSC.

The event was held to raise funds for bursaries and scholarships for young dancers pursuing their dreams.

The school put together two performances, held by the recreational and professional divisions, respectively. Both numbers were dedicated to the evening's theme, choreographed by Kristina McIntosh and Taylor. The accompanying music came from the *Mad Men Suite*, by David Carbonara, and *Boy from Ipanema*, by Peggy Lee.

Creating choreography to fit with the 1950s theme was a challenge for Taylor, who is used to working in the classical music genre. The contemporary concept, though successful, was a longer process for the students who were not familiar with the music from that era.

"Helen Wells, administrator at the recreation desk, helped me decide on the song to use. I have always loved the song *Girl from Ipanema*," said Taylor.

"Then I saw Peggy Lee singing *Boy from Ipanema*, same words, changed gender, which was perfect to incorporate Isaac, our only male student."

The event included special guest MC Orlena Cain from Mix 97 FM. Cain was the mistress of ceremonies and auctioneer. Mayor Neil Ellis, who was also

in attendance, was auctioned off as a lunch date by the Political Knights.

With sales from the event's \$125 tickets, which included dinner, performances and dancing, a cocktail bar, and live and silent auctions, the school was able to raise \$12,000. This was significant compared to last year's Frosty Fiddle Frolic Fundraiser, which raised \$4,000 without the live auction.

Auction items were donated to the gala by places such as the Belleville Bulls, Tim Durkin, the Belleville Public Library, the Stirling Festival Theatre, Boretski Galleries, as well as many more businesses and independent donors.

Retirement home holds mandatory fire drills monthly

By Adam Dietrich

The small town of L'Isle-Verte, Quebec, is struggling to understand a sudden, tragic fire that took place at the Résidence du Havre retirement home on Jan. 23. The whole nation watched in horror for a week, as firefighters entered the frozen remains to search for bodies. In the end two are missing, presumed dead.

The questions a dumbfounded country

has been asking is: How could this happen and how could it have been prevented? Those will be answered in the coming weeks, but until then, what about the safety of our seniors already in retirement residences?

According to a 2011 Statistics Canada report, approximately 352,205 seniors in Canada live in some kind of collective dwelling devoted to seniors, or 7.1 per cent of the country's total aged population.

A large and increasing number of people

are left under the care of government-licensed facilities.

In Belleville, there is Amica at Quinte Gardens, an independent retirement home. They conduct monthly fire drills, according to their general manager, Pierce Ivan.

"We practice fire drills once a month," said Ivan.

"The drills are conducted across all shifts and all departments with all residents."

The emergency evacuation drills are provincially mandated.

With 180 plus residents and 118 staff members at their facility, Amica at Quinte Gardens is one of the largest independent retirement homes in the area. As part of their emergency contingency plan, Ivan said that they have made arrangements with another retirement home and a church in the area, in case of a fire in the winter that destroys the retirement home.

"The safety of our residents is obviously priority number one," said Ivan, who talked about some of the home's other safety measures. According to Ivan, all contractors, visitors and residents sign-in and out of the home, which helps keep a running tally of people on the property.

"All of us at Amica at Quinte Gardens are watching this carefully. Our hearts and prayers go out to the families and the community," said Ivan.

Puppet show tells story of pipeline opposition in light-hearted way

Kingston company will be at Belleville library for February show

By Victoria Thoms

Enbridge Inc. is planning to reverse the direction of the Line 9 pipeline to carry diluted bitumen from the west to Ontario and Montreal, but has faced opposition.

The struggles faced by the opposition will be presented in a more light-hearted manner at Birdbone Theatre's puppet and clown production entitled Tar Sands Dragon Opera. It will take place Feb. 15 at the Belleville Public Library at 2:30 p.m.

Looking for ways to bring new awareness to communities across the country, Birdbone Theatre of Kingston will be travelling across Ontario and Quebec putting on the Tar Sands Dragon Opera to attract new supporters.

Activist, John Lewis of Brighton, will definitely be in attendance.

Lewis has been involved in past protests and petitions against Line 9, and is involved with a group called Toronto East End Against Line 9.

The Line 9 pipeline runs through all major communities north of Lake Ontario, including Belleville.

Lewis's grandchildren live in Belleville, and he is worried about this toxic threat to the communities' drinking water and air quality.

Lewis has been involved in the fight against Line 9 for many months now, and doesn't plan on quitting anytime soon.

"As a young worker, I was outside all the time. From the 1960's onward, there was always more stuff to worry about,

including smelly air, nuclear threats, poisoned water, and the unrelenting pressure to consume and make more money. There was a gradual reduction in sound, solid jobs for most people around me," said Lewis.

Lewis is retired now, and said the world has drastically changed from when he was a boy. He is committed to the fight against Enbridge, and passionate about bringing awareness to his community.

The process of tar sands extraction uses three to six barrels of fresh water for every barrel of oil that is produced. The water is not recovered, remaining poisoned, claimed Lewis.

Lewis is concerned about First Nations communities living near the tar sands projects, as cases of unusual cancers have been reported. Allowing the reversal of the flow in a pipe that is already 38-years-old could increase the risk of a toxic spill.

Birdbone Theatre says they are looking to talk with local communities about the expansion of the tar sands industry and how it directly affects the amount of carbon emissions that the country produces.

Educating young people about what exactly a pipeline reversal would mean can be a challenge. Birdbone Theatre's solution is to approach the issue in a more creative and unconventional way.

The puppet show is geared towards all ages, and discussion about the Line 9 reversal and tar sands industry is set to follow.

After raising \$1,560.24 through donations to finance their trip, the team will be on the road from Feb. 1 until Feb. 28.

Donations will be accepted at any of the shows along the way to help support Birdbone Theatre.



Instagram pic of the week

Thanks to @andrewjbmeade, winner of this week's Pioneer Pic depicting the heavy snowfall on residence this week. Don't forget to follow us at @Loyalistcollegepioneer!

To check out all of the week's submission, search #Pioneerpics on Instagram. The deadline for submissions is every Wednesday by noon.



True Love

By Anna Brown

Pets have an incredible impact on our lives. They give us someone to care for and someone to love. In return, they give us an ounce of sanity and their unconditional affection.

Getting up in the morning and seeing a smiling face on your pet, or coming home to this little being who thinks you are perfect, can turn a bad day into a great one.

Not only does having a pet warm your heart, taking care of an animal can help you mentally and physically.

Dog owners have to get up and out of the house to take their dog for a walk, giving them a chance to get some exercise, fresh air, and a little time to think – or not.

Dr. Kim Drysdale, a veterinarian at Belleway Animal Hospital said “multiple studies in humans show that pets lower our blood pressure, elevate our self-esteem, can give added longevity to seniors and help disabled persons either physically - guide dogs, or emotionally/mentally- therapy dogs.”

Loyalist College recognizes how animals can have a calming effect on people and reduce stress levels. In December 2013, the college brought therapy dogs to campus to help students relax during the exam season.

Whether it’s training a dog, or teaching a parrot to talk, working together to learn something new can make a person feel special. Pets can help people feel more confident and more able to deal with the everyday trials of life.

Pets can also help their owners meet new friends. They can offer common ground in a conversation, or be the reason people get out to exercise and socialize.

Whether you’re old, young, rich, poor, attractive, or not, your pet will love you no matter what.

As long as you are kind and caring towards them, they will trust you and treat you like you’re their whole world.

Having an animal depend on you can bring so much joy and warmth. And that love is the reason why owning a pet is so special.

(Above) Pamela Murray and her labradoodle, Betsy, at their house in Belleville. “I’m the boss of the two, especially when it’s time to choose where to sit,” says Murray, who could not imagine herself without her best friend. Photo by Guillaume Nolet

(Left) Todd Moor adopted his bullmastiff, Kodachrome, 9, when he was a one-and-a-half years old. Moor is the fourth owner of Kodachrome and he adopted him from the Quinte Humane Society. Photo by Paulina Uy

(Below) Blake Moynes feeds a treat to his 11-year-old dog Sambo. Moynes has owned Sambo for 10 years. Moynes is a volunteer caretaker of the James Moore dog park at Zwick’s Park. Photo by Mitch Ward



(Left) John Moors and his wife Kay adopted Buddy just over three years ago. After learning that he was found starved and severely abused, they knew they had to adopt him. Kay unfortunately died last May. Buddy is John’s best friend. Photo by Brianne Ste Marie Lacroix

(Above) Peter Zamanis gestures to his seven-year-old cockatiel, Pipitro, in Zed’s Diner and Billiards. Zed’s has been owned and operated by Zamanis since 1972 and has been at its Front Street location for over 30 years. Photo by Jonathan King

On the street

We asked people at Loyalist College the following question:

What are your Super Bowl traditions?



Brennan Roy, second-year culinary, “I paint my body my favourite team’s colour.”



Brittany Downie, first-year radio broadcasting, “I wake up and have my big bowl of Captain Crunch, make a smoothie the same colour as my favourite team.”



Charlise Morrow, first-year art and design foundation, “I paint half my face my favourite team’s colour and dress up like football players. Eat lots of junk food and drink with all my close friends.”



Brent Cotton, first-year public relations, “I half pay attention to the game until half time then I change the show and make sure to catch up on the score at the end of the game.”



Kristy Henderson, first-year radio broadcasting, “I make sure to get it off work and if not I call in sick – shhh. Then I post my excitement on social media, wear my favourite team’s colour and enjoy the game!”



Kenneth McBrien, third-year automotive, “I wake up and have a big pancake breakfast and then invite friends over to play Madden NFL for the two teams playing then open some drinks to the pre-game show.”

Editorial

Sexism in sport: learning lessons before Sochi

Last week 19-year-old Eugenie Bouchard became the first Canadian to move on to a Grand Slam semifinal in 30 years.

After defeating Ana Ivanovic in a historic win, TV reporter Samantha Smith, a former British tennis champ, pointed to a cohort of male fans in the crowd, and asked Bouchard:

“They want to know: If you could date anyone in the world of sport, of movies – I’m sorry, they asked me to say this – who would you date?”

Twitter erupted with backlash from both women and men, chastising Smith for the sexist question.

“Really? Do they ask the men tennis players who they want to date when they win? Sheesh!,” tweeted @AmandaParriag

@budgie_girl2 wrote, “Stupid question to ask a tennis athlete. Let’s talk about hard work getting to @AustralianOpen #GenieArmy.”

Media outlets around the world reported on what was widely seen as a major faux pas and blow to female athletes.

Toronto Star’s Rosie DiManno wrote a scathing column about the incident.

“In the annals of stupid questions posed by an interviewer — right up there with Barbara Walters many years ago asking Katherine Hepburn “What kind of a tree are you, if you think you’re a tree?” — was the query put to Eugenie Bouchard by a courtside ditz after the Canadian tennis star had just won her quarter-final match at the Australian Open Sunday.”

Bouchard appeared more embarrassed than offended, responding playfully that Justin Bieber would be her celebrity of choice.

The public was almost as outraged with Bouchard’s answer, as with Smith’s question.

Some saw the incident as little more than an unfortunate but singular gaffe on Smith’s part. Others pointed out that it was part of a larger, long-standing problem in sport of devaluing female athletes.

People expressed anger and disappointment that in 2014 a female athlete would be asked about her dating life, instead of her momentous victory. Many pointed out that a male player would never have been posed the same question.

Regardless of whether it was one reporter’s blunder, or indicative of ongoing and underlying sexism in sport, it has reignited an important conversation around how gender and other aspects of our identity determine how we are treated and valued in the world.

With the 2014 Olympics less than two weeks away, it seems a good time for the media to reflect on their role, in terms of how their reporting impacts public perception.

And just as people spoke out against the inappropriate question posed to Bouchard, hopefully we will see the same kind of critical thinking and dialogue concerning equality and human rights at the upcoming Sochi games.

Natalie McMullen

Is Facebook on its way out?

Social networks are ubiquitous in modern society these days. Twitter for brief updates and communiqués, Instagram for visual updates, LinkedIn for professionals, Snapchat for friends. So where does that leave the bemoaned that is Facebook?

A recent Princeton study compares the recent explosion of the social network to the outbreak of a virus. They also predict that Facebook will eventually destroy itself in the same way a virus does, claiming they will lose 80 per cent of their user base by 2017.

While it is certainly attention grabbing, it may be a bit of a hyperbolic claim.

Facebook isn’t a virus, it’s a computer program. That’s an important distinction because viruses usually wear themselves out by destroying their host. Unless Facebook suddenly starts corrupting its users’ computers or somehow manages to kill the Internet, it’s simply not a valid comparison.

In the end, Facebook is another communication tool, which serves its own purpose. The problem it actually faces is a crisis of confidence. For a long time, Facebook was “the” social network; now it’s just “a” social network.

However, that does not mean that there will be a sudden mass exodus of users over the next three years. It won’t happen, because Facebook will still offer a service people want.

Another thing to consider is the role the social network plays in the modern world. Facebook in many ways has become as integrated into daily life. People use it to keep in touch over vast distances, plus with the networks integration into Twitter, Instagram, Skype, Netflix and many other platforms, simply having a Facebook account is a type of online passport.

What may change dramatically is the amount people use the network to post publicly; that has been part of the adjustment to the network. People overused it and abused it. However, after eight years, it has settled into its place in society and it is unlikely that will change.

While it is true that the over-dependence on Facebook is a trend, and trends shift, the projected 80 per cent drop in users at this point simply seems to high, and the virus comparison seems like a stretch.

What seems more likely is a smaller decrease, as users currently on the site who don’t need it discover that, and begin to only use social networks that suit their purposes.

However, the type of social networking which Facebook allows for, and because of the universality of the application, it will continue to be a valuable tool for a while yet.

Adam Dietrich



Opinion

Bieber becoming role model for trouble

By Taylor Hermiston

At a tender age of 13, his success story had inspired millions around the world, becoming a positive role model for kids to follow their dreams.

Now at the age of 19, dripping in ink and deportation threats, Justin Bieber has unquestionably kept up his role model status.

He now inspires kids to give up hard work and privilege for a chance to learn how to get arrested, smile for a mug shot and construct eggs to be a new exterior design medium on neighbouring houses. Bieber has yet to understand how his actions affect the people around him.

Bieber’s recent antics involving the Miami law enforcement last Thursday seem to have been the last straw for citizens of the United States. Thousands have rightfully signed a petition to have Bieber deported from the U.S. and sent back to Canada. Many have expressed that he is wrongfully representing the pop culture scene in the States and they want him gone. The online petition had over 15,000 signatures within 48 hours. It can be found on the White House’s ‘We The People’ page.

The surprise in all this turmoil is pop star Lady Gaga. More than enough people have

A case like this just proves that Bieber will never grow up and face real consequences because it’s people like Lady Gaga who will cradle him and say that everything is still alright. He will probably only ever learn when he changes someone else’s life permanently.

spoken against Bieber and his adventures and it’s frustrating for most when they see that she wants to support him through ‘this difficult time’. She has also pleaded with her fans to support their fans and not give up on him.

In a message posted on her official website, Littlemonsters.com, Gaga writes, “I know ev-

eryone today is talking about Justin’s arrest and all sorts of words and judgments are happening on the Internet. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, and to stand up for themselves, but I think we should be supportive of Beliebers. They deserve, just like any other fan, to feel strong for each other and Justin so they can continue to share the bond they have through music.”

After a message like that, what would it feel like if she received a message from a person who lost a loved one to a driver under the influence, like Justin? A development like that should have a heavy enough impact to realize that Bieber doesn’t deserve sympathy.

A case like this just proves that Bieber will never grow up and face real consequences because it’s people like Lady Gaga who will cradle him and say that everything is still alright. He will probably only ever learn when he changes someone else’s life permanently.

For another teen, this can be considered teenage angst and rebellion, but when is enough, enough?

Bieber needs to grow up and accept his mistakes. If he still wants to be considered professional in this business, then he should consider getting a hobby to relinquish his angst.

Are garbage tags worth the price we pay?

*Costly price tag
a huge expense
for those living in poverty*

By Anica James

If you are like me, you have a love-hate relationship with taking out the trash. You love it because it keeps your house clean and the flies at bay, yet you dislike it because it means that you are at least \$2.50 poorer thanks to those fluorescent green tags which we have to affix to the bags to have them removed from our property.

For residents like myself, I think that it is asinine that the citizens of Belleville have to pay as much as they do to remove their trash. \$2.50 per tag is quite a bit, especially when you take

into consideration that you cannot purchase them singly, you have to buy them in sheets of five, giving you the total of \$12.50.

Yes, I know that that does not seem like a lot to some people, but to others that is a lot. According to Statistics Canada, one in three children in Belleville live in poverty.

An estimated 34.1 per cent of children are residing in homes where the income is 50 per cent less than the cities median household income, which is approximately \$68,200. People who live in lower income situations also tend to have more children, which in turn leads to more garbage being produced and tossed to the curbside every week.

I know that a lot of cities throughout the province do require garbage tags, but they are not all as expensive as Belleville.

The city of Orillia, a community two-thirds the size of Belleville, mails 30 garbage tags to each residential and commercial unit at the be-

ginning of every June, free of charge. If citizens need to purchase more garbage tags throughout the year, they are available at city hall for \$8.25 for a set of five.

On the other hand, in nearby Kingston, a city approximately two and a half times the size of Belleville, garbage tags cost \$2 each and residents have the option of being able to purchase them online.

Thanks to recycling and green bins people can cut back on the amount of trash that they throw out, but then again, not everyone does that. Also, there are roughly 30 locations in Belleville that currently sell garbage tags, and not all of them are easily accessible for people with financial or mobility issues.

I think that the city of Belleville should re-evaluate Bylaw No. 98-175, look at current stats, and take into consideration that not everyone can afford to pay every time they need to take out the trash.

The Pioneer

Editor, Natalie McMullen
Photo editor, Christopher King
In Focus editor, Anica James
Multi-media editor, Taylor Hermiston
Faculty advisers: Patti Gower, Frank O’Connor, Scott Whalen, Luke Hendry, Linda O’Connor

The Pioneer welcomes your letters and comments. Please send material to the editor at the address below before Wednesday. We reserve the right to edit submissions for content and length. All letters must be signed and include a daytime phone number. For advertising information, rates and placement, please contact Sandi Hibbard-Ramsay, at the college, 613-969-1913, ext. 2591; by cell at 613-848-5665; or at home, 613-965-6222. Pioneer newsroom, 1N9, Loyalist College, Box 4200, Belleville, ON K8N 5B9 • 613-969-1913, ext. 2828. E-mail: pioneer@loyalistc.on.ca



The Pioneer is currently produced by photojournalism students for Loyalist College and the surrounding area. In the spirit of the pioneers who settled our community and who were rooted in tradition, these pioneers always had an eye on the future. Our students strive to serve the public interest, seek the truth and uphold the highest standards of our profession.

INFOCUS

Issue #2
Winter 2014

Feral Night in Belleville P.2

Transitioning in Quinte P.3

The Thrill of the Hunt P.4

Taking on Responsibility P.5-6

Every Little Girls Dream P.7

A Place to Call Home P.8





Feral Night in Belleville

Story and photos by Christopher King

Outside Thrasher's Feeds Ltd. in west end Belleville are a few food bowls with pet food and water. Some bricks have been removed from the base of the building to reveal a space underneath the store. Inside are a few blankets and a blue tote box.

During the day there are signs of life.

Thrasher's is located at the intersection of Coleman and Harriet streets. It is a busy intersection in an industrial area. Transport trucks pass by as part of their regular routes to and from the warehouses and depots.

At night, the picture changes.

All that remains is the orange glow and buzzing of street lamps.

At approximately 9 p.m. every night, Grace Thompson drives to Thrasher's with food and water.

The moment her car pulls into the lot, cats jump out from underneath Thrasher's and come running across the street and from all corners. The sound of her car signals their feeding time.

From a distance, these cats look healthy like any normal house cat and their temperament reveals little about their true nature.

Only when you get close or try to make contact is the picture made clear. The cats are incredibly skittish- they are feral.

"A feral cat is very afraid. When I put the food down for

them, yes they're anxious to come to eat, but if they happen to hear a noise that they're unfamiliar with, it scares them and they run," Thompson said.

Once a cat is feral, their nature changes irreversibly.

"A feral cat will be feral if it has not been in contact [with humans] within the first six weeks of its birth," Thompson said. "Within that six weeks, if it has not been held by human beings, it will not be domesticated."

With Thompson, the cats are not as skittish, but they still won't let her handle them. After feeding, Thompson stays behind to maintain a level of contact and interaction with the cats. She talks to them and on occasion

she can pet them, though they quickly retreat or swat at her hands.

"I usually stay around for another five or 10 minutes, whatever time I have, and I just interact with them. Some of them I give a little pet or talk to them and make them feel like they're my cats. I still want them to feel that they're still being cared for and they're loved by me and make them happy and that makes me happy that I do that for them," Thompson said.

The feeding routine ends with Thompson cleaning their food bowls and pouring in drinking water for them. Within 30 minutes, Thompson is gone and the cats return to their normal

lives.

In her home, Thompson keeps only three cats.

"I know that they are safe where they are living, they have the hole underground. For me to go in there and try to make them domesticated...I respect where they are, they were born there as kittens and that's the environment they are used to," Thompson said.

"I try to show them that I care for them, I do love them. But I don't want to infringe on their space as a feral cat. I let them be as they are, but I cannot change that, so they remain feral," Thompson said.

Thompson has been feeding the Thrasher's cats for about four

years. Thompson was notified by an acquaintance that there were kittens running around the streets near Thrasher's.

"I got hooked, once I saw these cats running around and no food and the kitten was filthy, dirty and malnourished... And then I thought, 'This is ridiculous, and someone needs to do something about this.'"

Thompson attributes her love for cats to her childhood growing up on a farm.

"There was always barn cats around, I just like them," Thompson said. "I like the feeling that I'm protecting them, that I'm providing food for them... It's a nice feeling to be able to provide a cat a good life."



Top: Grace Thompson feeds the cats in separate piles. The feral cats arrange their pecking order themselves once the food is put down.

Middle: Grace Thompson feeds over a dozen outdoor cats every day, but at her home, she only keeps three cats. Buzz was a rescue cat that Thompson brought after she noticed he had an eye infection.

Bottom left: Grace Thompson places food and water out near a warehouse on Wallbridge Crescent. Thompson was notified by a local about a possible family of cats living outside with kittens.



Lower right: Grace Thompson uses a blend of wet and dry food to feed the feral cats



Bottom right: A feral cat chooses a pile of food that Grace Thompson put down. The cat in the background is waiting for its turn at the pile of food, suggesting it might be lower down in the pecking order.



Martin Irvine waits for a nurse to return with a needle at a lab in Belleville prior to a blood test. Irvine is transgender and will require a testosterone shot once a week for the rest of his life. Before he can begin hormone therapy though blood tests must be taken.



Irvine holds a picture of himself taken four years earlier before he came out as transgender.



Irvine has blood drawn as part of a series of tests before being able to begin hormone replacement therapy. The blood tests help determine how much testosterone Irvine should be prescribed, also if there are any diseases which may hinder transition.



Irvine and his grandmother embrace at a clinic in Peterborough, Ont. after Irvine recieved his first testosterone shot. Irvine traveled an hour and a half from Belleville to Peterborough to receive his first shot of testosterone to begin physically transitioning.

Transitioning in Quinte

Photos and story by Adam Dietrich

After a three-month hiatus the return of a popular youth group means much needed support and services will be returning to the Quinte region for transgender youth. Transform, a youth focused transgender support group has started meeting once again in Belleville.

The return is good news for trans youth like Martin Irvine, 19, a trans man from Trenton who is studying journalism at Loyalist College. “The group is really supportive, they’re like a family,” says Irvine, who started attending meetings last year when the group first started.

Transform was created to compliment the services offered by Say OutLoud! a weekly LGBT youth group that meets on Tuesdays in Belleville. The group began after a few local activists decided that the region needed outreach services following the high profile suicide of Ottawa teen Jamie Hubley in October 2011. Hubley killed himself after been bullied for being gay.

Around this time Eric Hargreaves, a local LGBT activist began trying to organize a support group for local youth. “The group was small originally, but we had some good facilitators,” said Hargreaves. “As the group grew we began to get requests for a place for trans-youth to talk,” said Hargreaves. “While trans issues have long been considered gay issues they’re not really all the same and we knew the trans youth needed their own space,” said Hargreaves

Hargreaves believes this provides an essential service for an under represented demographic of society.

In a study conducted in San Francisco by their police department, they estimate 2-5 per cent of the population is transgender. In a city like Belleville that’s about 1000-2500 people. For trans people like Irvine, resources like Transform and Say OutLoud! have been invaluable.

“It’s such a supportive community,” said Irvine. “They’re the only reason I knew which doctor to go to, to get testosterone.”

The group itself however, operates under a thin veil of secrecy. The exact location, time and date are kept private.

“It is necessary in order to provide a safe space for participants,” said Irvine.

“Homophobia is a problem for us with Say OutLoud! and Transform, which is why we ask people to contact the facilitators before we give out the location,” said Hargreaves about their security measures. “With the trans group it is even more important to have these safeguards because transphobia can really cause some people to act out.”

Despite the concern neither group has had a major incident yet. Attitudes towards LGBT people and issues seem to be changing in the Belleville area for the better though according to Hargreaves and Irvine.

One public example is this past August when Belleville hosted its first ever gay pride parade. Although Pride in the Park has been

an annual event at Zwicks park for ten years, this was the first year streets were closed to celebrate pride.

“We had no issues whatsoever from the community,” said Hargreaves. “We had a great turnout. I counted at least 300 people and there were many more, lining the street.”

Hargreaves doesn’t believe it was hate that kept Pride in the Park off the streets for a decade. “It’s not that people hate gay people and trans people, it’s that they’re ignorant of the issues and the reality.”

“That’s why we say that Say OutLoud! is GLBTQA” said Hargreaves. “The ‘A’ is for ‘Allies’. We are always welcoming for those looking to learn more.”

Hargreaves said the best way to find LGBT support services in Quinte is to go online and look up Say Outloud! or PFLAG Quinte, another resource which offers support services for LGBT people.

Hargreaves said public service campaigns’ like 2011’s ‘It Gets Better,’ which featured LGBT celebrities offering video recorded messages of hope to LGBT youth have helped to expose homophobia and bridge dialogue.

“I had high school guidance counselors, and even parents contacting me through Say OutLoud! asking for help with their trans-youth,” said Hargreaves. So the facilitators found their own space and a place to make it happen.

“I think for a lot of trans youth it is very lonely growing up,” said Hargreaves, “That’s the point of the group, to let youth know, you are not alone.”



Irvine lights a cigarette outside of a clinic in Peterborough where he will begin receiving testosterone shots.



Lucas looks around, surveying the land, during a deer hunt just north of Brighton, Ont.



Brian Lucas exposed, shelters his face from the wind, while hunting for deer along the Trent River.



The Thrill of the Hunt

O ntario is an agricultural morgue after the leaves fall and before the snow lays down for its months of rest. Skeletal tress wave their boney hands, gesturing helplessly in their nudity. Their bark is grey, brown, it is worn down, scraped off, hanging sadly, or clutching tightly. A whole environment preparing to disappear under the duvet of a Canadian winter.

Brian Lucas has hunted in Hastings and Prince Edward Counties for most of his life. He started going out with his dad when he was eight, and continues to do so now, at 40. Lucas is proud to be a hunter and finds a great deal of his identity tied up with it. He sees hunting as an almost existential act,

one of communing with nature, taking only what chance and skill provide for him, which is often nothing at all.

“I’ve gone all this hunting season without seeing a single animal,” he says. “But that’s OK, the animal is just extra.”

There is a certain ethic to hunting as Lucas sees it. For him it is about a symbiosis with nature, taking what he has earned through his own effort and cunning, and using what he has killed. When another hunter told Lucas about a man who killed a deer and left it in the woods, he was repulsed. He was not only angry at the waste of life for meat uneaten, but at the way that such an action reflects on hunters as a community.

Standing, his head swivels from side to side, slowly at times, quickly others, like an erratic radar system. After an hour or two, he sits, still scanning the tree line, the ridge, the grasses. More hours, more searching, waiting. Finally, as the light starts to wane, he gets up, sighs, and stretches. The chair is folded noisily, the rifle slung over his shoulder, and the long wade through the tall grass begins. So ends the last day of hunting season.

“Like I said,” explains Lucas, “It’s not about if you get anything. It’s just about being out in nature, getting away from bosses, wives, all that. It’s peaceful.”

PHOTOS+TEXT/DUNCAN CAIRNS-BRENNER

“I’ve gone all hunting season without seeing a single animal. But that’s ok, the animal is just extra.”



Lucas has hunted the same woods just north of Bancroft, Ont. for over two decades.



Lucas rests during a deer hunt just north of Bancroft, Ont.



Ashlie Eigner and her sister Brienne Eigner folds the laundry after coming home from the laundromat.



Ashlie Eigner prepares some dinner for her and her siblings. She is pretty proud that she is able to prepare some meals on her own.



While Vanessa Eigner puts on a movie, her daughter Ashlie Eigner puts some pants on her brother in his bedroom.



Ashlie Eigner is nine years old and is the oldest of three in a single parent family.



Ashlie prepares a bath for her brother Christen. She helps with her sister Brienne's bath as well. "I don't mind giving them baths. It's kind of fun," states Ashlie.

TAKING ON RESPONSIBILITY

Photos and story by Dawn Barger

Sitting in a chair across from me is a young girl, nine years old with dull green hair that has faded from its original dyed dark blue colour.

For being only nine years old, Ashlie Eigner is well composed and mature for her age.

"You're a helper. You've gotta do stuff for her and it's very frustrating when your sister and brother won't listen to you," says Ashlie.

Ashlie is the oldest child in a single-parent family. Like any young girl, she has hopes and dreams for when she grows up.

"When I grow up I want to be a singer, because I feel I have

a beautiful voice," says Ashlie, with a big smile on her face and a sparkle in her eyes.

Smiling, Vanessa Eigner (Ashlie's mother) says calmly, "It's definitely hard doing this on my own."

"Financially and emotionally it drains you, but it's worth it. My kids deserve happiness and it means a bit of a struggle so be it."

With lots of stress and no help from her children's father emotionally or financially, Eigner says she needs help from her children and other family members around the house.

Ashlie takes on a lot of responsibility for only being nine. She helps her mom with her three-year-old brother Christen. She dresses him, bathes him, takes him out to play and gets him snacks and drinks when he needs it.

"It's six o'clock and I have to give Christen his bath. I hope he doesn't splash me this time," Ashlie says with a look of frustration. She walks to the bathroom and runs his bath and Christen comes running in, all excited.

She also helps her younger sister Brienne , with her homework.

"I am glad my sister helps me with my homework and walks to school with me. She drives me crazy sometimes, but I love her and am glad to have her help me when I need it," Brienne said while smirking at her sister.

"I am happy to be the older sister most times. If I help out my mom I get to do special things like stay up late and get little treats here and there. I know she needs my help sometimes and I love her and love to be there for her when she needs me," says Ashlie with a big smile. "I am just glad to have such a great mommy,"



Ashlie Eigner comforts her sick brother Christen. He was sick, had a temperature and needed some comforting. Vanessa Eigner (Christens mom) was busy in the kitchen.



Suzi Hoogkamer plays with her youngest horse, Juno.



There is a lot of history in the old barn that is home to four horses.



Suzi Hoogkamer is now the proud owner of her newborn foal, Juno, shown here at three days old.

Every Little Girl's Dream

Photos & Story by Lacy Gillott

“I just needed a fresh beginning,” explained Suzi Hoogkamer, 23. Her fresh beginning is what led to living a life-long dream she never expected to come true after moving from Oshawa to Picton in November 2010.

“It’s everything every little girl would ever want and I’ve got all of it and more. I got surprise after surprise.” Hoogkamer was working as a pharmacy clerk at Rexall in Picton where she met Marlene. She later became great friends with Marlene and her husband Russell.

“We started off with just the one horse and a whole bunch of cattle,” said Hoogkamer, explaining the Trottmans’ farm the first time she ever arrived.

“We became close and then he got sick which is how I ended up taking care of the horses,” she said.

When Hoogkamer went to visit Russell in the hospital, Russell elaborated on his struggle and Hoogkamer volunteered to take on caring for their horse, Sunrise.

“I didn’t know what I was doing,” laughed Hoogkamer. “I knew how to pet a horse, but I didn’t even know how to brush a horse at that point.” She was ready and willing to learn, strictly out of compassion.

When Russell returned home from the hospital, he decided the cattle were too much. They shipped all but two orphaned calves away.

During the winter of 2012, the relationship flourished between Hoogkamer, the Trottmans, their farm, and of course, Sunrise and the calves.

That December, Hoogkamer arrived on the farm to find a horse trailer in the driveway. Thinking she was going somewhere with Sunrise, Trotzman informed her they were getting a second horse.

“Blaze came and he had been raised more like a dog than a horse,” Hoogkamer giggled.

As time went on, Sunrise began gaining a lot of weight.

“I am definitely raising them just for pure love and the satisfaction of just having horses.”



Old horse memorabilia can be found on the farm.

Hoogkamer became concerned and called a vet.

“He told us she was not pregnant, just fat,” said Hoogkamer.

After a number of people came to check out Sunrise, it was finally confirmed around Mother’s Day that she was indeed pregnant. It wasn’t until May 2 when Hoogkamer received a phone call at 7 a.m. announcing the birth of Juno.

In the meantime, the two calves were becoming more playful and because they were so big, they were dangerous to be around. Trotzman and Hoogkamer decided it was time for them to go.

They took the calves to a cattle auction block where Hoogkamer was certain they would be used as stock cattle rather than beef cattle. While still sobbing after her calves were auctioned off, a beautiful tan pony walked out on the block and caught Trotzman and Hoogkamer’s eyes.

“I’m looking at her and thinking, what is wrong with it’s face? I mean she’s just beautiful,” said Hoogkamer. The announcer then said the pony had one of her eyes surgically removed.

Trotzman looked at Hoogkamer and said, ‘Should we get her?’. Hoogkamer then replied, ‘No, it’s too much work, we already have three horses.’ ‘But she’s so beautiful,’ Trotzman said.

Hoogkamer put her hand up and said ‘Alright’ and Trotzman jumped up, ran and bought the pony from the man who had the highest bid.

“Now we have four,” laughed Hoogkamer. “I am definitely raising them just for pure love and satisfaction of just having horses because I mean they’re beautiful creatures. They’re smart, they’re loving, they’re just awesome.”



Sunrise is the 16-year-old mother of Juno.



There’s a long list of physically demanding chores on the farm.



Hoogkamer laughs and says Sunrise always has the dirtiest stall.



Tala, 14, Rebekah, 11, Leverage, Cheryl and Chris, 14, gather around the dining room table one autumn afternoon, reminiscing about the time they received their home.

A Place to Call Home



TOP: Cheryl Rohrback holds a photograph of her, her husband Leverage, their three grandchildren, and a member of Prince Edward Hastings Habitat for Humanity in front of the empty lot where their home now stands. BOTTOM: The Rohrback family stands in front of their completed home for a family photo last October.

Photos and story by Anica James

Light filters through the dining room window into the home of the Rohrback family, casting a late autumn glow onto the butter yellow walls of the open-concept space.

The five family members have gathered around the rickety oval oak table, flipping through photo albums that show what their living situation used to be like.

Cheryl Rohrback holds up a photograph of her, her husband Leverage, their three grandchildren, and a member of Prince Edward Hastings Habitat for Humanity in front of the empty lot where their home now stands.

“We all had to work 500 hours in order to gain possession of the house,” Rohrback explained. “It is mandatory, but it was also a lot of fun. It was a great learning experience and very rewarding.”

The family moved into the George Street South home in December 2008 and enjoy the convenient location next to the Jane Forrester Park along Belleville’s waterfront.

Because of unfortunate circumstances, the grandchildren were removed from their birth parents by the Children’s Aid Society and placed in foster care.

After gaining custody of the grandchildren, Leverage and Cheryl were told by CAS that their housing situation was not suitable at the time and that it needed to change in order for the children to move in.

Leverage and Cheryl fought for almost two years to gain custody of the kids.

“Our lives became an open book for a year and a half...it was very transparent. We went through psychiatric testing, psychological testing...just to prove that we were capable for raising the grandchildren.”

“But we wouldn’t change it for anything,” Cheryl added.

Hard on cash and exhausted from numerous court appearances, the Rohrbacks wanted to find a new home that could accommodate all five of them. That is when Leverage stumbled upon the local Habitat for Humanity website and applied for housing right away.

“It was the greatest gift we have ever received,” Leverage said. “There were five of us living in a two-bedroom apartment before, and now we all have our own room and a place where we can grow together as a family.”



Leverage Rohrback pauses for a moment in the kitchen, reminiscing about the day he and his wife, Cheryl, gained custody of their three grandchildren as his grandson, Chris, listens intently.



Cheryl Rohrback discusses an upcoming CanGrands event that she and Leverage are members of to her granddaughter Tala, in the kitchen.