

Rain doesn't put damper on Pumpkin Fest

By Bradley Ruskowski

The rainy day and grey skies did not sway the swarm of people heading out to the County for Wellington's 18th annual Pumpkin Fest.

On Oct. 18, the country's largest squashes and plump pumpkins attempted to smash the past record holders weight of 1,818.5 pounds. The Guinness book of records "World Heaviest Pumpkin" was recorded a couple of years ago on these same hallowed grounds beneath the water tower in the centre of town.

This year's winners of a \$1,000 grand prize, the Timm family, said they were ecstatic.

"You can never tell just by looking at them!"

When all was said and done a big cheer, fist pumping and many hugs were shared all around the last humungous pumpkin to be weighed. The winner's entry was 1675 pounds (824.9 kilograms). To put that into scale, that's the same weight as a John Deere diesel engine!

The Prince Edward County Pumpkin Growers Association managed to produce some serious produce this year such as 50-pound cabbages that separated the straw bail seating that the spectators occupied from beginning to end of the official weigh-in. The seemingly small forklift was put to the stress test as was the industrial-sized scale.

Trust was placed fully in the volunteer staff's ability to adequately strap and secure the obese masses, sweep and clean off the dirt from the bottom and snip the excess stems to give an accurate final score.

From under their umbrellas, spectators witness gourd, squash, watermelon and tomato vie for their place in the record books in this internationally prestigious agricultural showcase.

The Pumpkin Parade down Main Street went well attended despite the storm. Pickup truck sized vegetables bulged out of the tops of the boxes. Only one pumpkin would fit safely inside to ensure no cracks or holes were compromising the contestants so as to not disqualify the entrants from the strict rules set forth by the officials. The attendees were dressed in a lively fashion and full of cheer, clad in orange knit pumpkin head wear among other costumes.

Even the dogs were out on the town from the costumes on the sidewalks to the obedience routines in the parade.

Clog dancers entertained the bystanders on the west side of the United Church while children played in inflatable ball tents and climbed rock walls erected in the Lions Club park on the limestone shelf banks of Lake Ontario.

Although there were no world records this year, over \$6,500 was divided out among the top placed entrants and everyone interested got an amazing balloon animal from the gang of clowns by the gazebo.



The Timm family's winning entry in Wellington's 18th annual Pumpkin Fest winner is hoisted during the weigh-in Saturday. It tipped the scales at a whopping 1,675lbs (824.9 kg), which is roughly the same weight as a diesel engine.

Photo by Bradley Ruskowski

Waste reduction a national initiative

Pilot project includes random audits of community's garbage

By Amanda Cheung

Waste Reduction Week is a national initiative to encourage and empower Canadians in reducing, reusing and recycling waste. It started in 1984 and takes place the third week of October every year.

This year, Quinte Waste Solutions partnered with the City of Belleville in a pilot program called the Set Out Challenge.

Residents who have properly set out their waste will be rewarded with a new indoor blue box, a garbage tag and compost green bin liners.

"We're picking random streets and we're just doing visual audits," said Dan Orr, communication co-ordinator at Quinte Waste Solutions. "We're not touching anybody's goods or going through anything. We're just going to look at it and if it's done properly, then we award it."

The first visual audit was done Tuesday of this week and another audit will take place tomorrow morning. Since this is a pilot project, it is just being tried out in Belleville.

"We thought that Waste Reduction Week would be a good time to actually do that," said Orr. "If it's successful and we find that it's working well, residents like it and they like receiving these gifts for doing a good job, then we'll probably spread it out to our other municipalities for future years."

Streets to be visually audited are selected on a completely random basis.

Another initiative in conjunction with Waste Reduction Week is Belleville's Repair Café taking place this Saturday at the CORE from noon-4 p.m.

"If you have a broken radio or lamp or stereo or something that needs to be fixed, or you need a pair of jeans stitched up, you can take it to the repair café," said Orr. "We have volunteer fixers, professional fixers who are volunteering their time to help people fix those things for them instead of throwing them out and having to buy a brand new something."

Sign, sign, everywhere a sign

Election signs cause irritation for many voters

By Bryan Eneas

The 2014 municipal elections may just be remembered as the year of the election sign. In mid-September, Mayor Neil Ellis had been called upon to bring in a new bylaw concerning election sign placement during elections.

During the early days of the campaign, several candidates were spoken to regard-

ing sign placement, and a memo was sent around to candidates regarding improper placement of signs.

This move prompted Jill Raycroft to remove all of her signs on public property, leaving only her signs on private property behind.

Raycroft left a message on her Facebook page stating, "Sign placement across the city has made a mockery of the campaign..." as well as saying "A sign on someone's lawn or business location represents an earned vote of confidence in the candidate, not just random hope that someone will recognize the name on the ballot."

Raycroft has suggested that the bylaw

be worded in a way that the candidates know where they cannot post signs, as opposed to where they can place signs.

Local resident Scott Seymour says that he has only really noticed one candidate's sign as the most predominant over the Belleville landscape.

"Lonnie Herrington's signs are everywhere, they're the only ones I'd say are really polluting the landscape," says Seymour, a Belleville resident of 10 years.

Herrington has been under fire seemingly the entire election, ever since his first sign went up on July 21, 2014 on private church property. He has been signaled out multiple times by candidates and media alike for abusing the election

sign bylaws by placing signs in boulevards and in gardens.

"In all honesty, I have the same amount of signs out there as any of the other candidates, I just think that I have chosen to place my signs in a more concentrated area of the city," says Herrington.

"In terms of name recognition, sure election signs are an asset, but the most important thing is actually getting out there and meeting people face-to-face so they can tell you about the issues they may have," he adds.

Bylaw 2006-55, which is the most recent bylaw regarding election signs found on the City of Belleville website, says that

signs may be posted on public or private property so long as they stay within the suggested proportions, and are 10 feet from the shoulder of the road, or one foot from sidewalks. Many of the candidates seem to be within these requirements, with a few minor discrepancies.

The bylaw currently has no limitation on the number of signs a candidate may be allowed to place around the city. Officials have hinted that a new bylaw will be voted upon at city hall, however no new bylaw has appeared yet.

Perhaps it will be left to the new council to decide how election signs will be handled in 2018. Until then, we must bear with the signs for one more week.

Blood shortage brings out donors to clinics

Only three days worth of blood available at hospitals before donations made

By Amanda Cheung

Canadians are responding to call for help for blood donations.

Blood supplies in Canada have not experienced a shortage such as this since 2008. Hospitals across Canada typically like to have an eight-day supply of blood on hand, but at its worst, hospitals were supplied with only three days worth of blood.

Jessica Stergiou, territory manager for Canadian Blood Services, said that clinics experienced a 40 per cent no-show rate in September. There were people who made appointments and cancelled or some who didn't show up at all.

The call for help was made the first week in October and since then, clinics have seen an influx of people.

Gina Levya, Canadian Blood Services territory manager for Kitch-



Friends Roseanne Eckert (front) and Merissa Reynolds donate blood at the Canadian Blood Services permanent clinic in Waterloo, Ont., last week.

Photo by Amanda Cheung

ener-Waterloo's permanent clinic, noted that "some donor services might be experiencing some wait times which may give a convoluted message."

"We're in this time of need and we need them, and then they are coming here and seeing that they have to wait. But that is only because Canadians have responded so well, overwhelmingly well, to our call for help."

Every day, Blood Services clinics across Canada have a quota that needs to be filled. A quota is the amount of units of blood per day, week, month and year, which the hospital needs from Canadian Blood Services.

The first blood clinic which ran in Belleville after the call for help was made came in over target.

As of last week, Levya said that hospital supplies had climbed to about five-and-a-half days.

"Things are improving now but we're really trying to get the message out there that your time and donation is needed, not only during this time but ongoing because the need for blood is constant."