

Editorial

Freedom

EDITOR'S NOTE: It is the tradition of The Independent of Petrolia and Central Lambton to mark Remembrance Day in this spot with a poem. Freedom was written by Petrolia's Danielle Mentley.

Freedom!
The tears, the anguish, the pain they went through,
they did all of this with thoughts of you.
Their children and grandchildren
and ones they may never have known,
yet they took up their cross and held their own.

Freedom! Freedom!
"We must not fail, too many at home we must prevail!"
"In God we trust, He will deliver us."
Only heard by the larks that did fly above them in the sky
that marked the place in Flanders Fields where they now lie

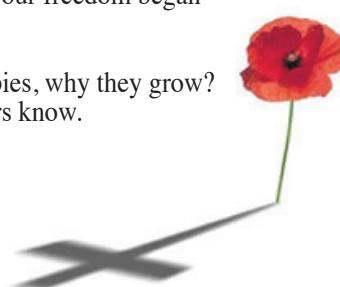
Remember the story we must not fail
to remember the fight, remember the travail
Tell your children, your grandchildren too...
these men and these women they died for you!
They loved and were loved and now they lie in Flanders
Fields.

Freedom! Freedom!
Now we cry, our hands won't fail, the torch held high
Our faith won't waver, our faith won't break,
we'll remember what you did, we remember what you do,
through the stories retold we hold dear and true.

Freedom! Freedom!
Lest we forget
In Flanders Fields where the poppies blow
that marks the place where our freedom began
and now we know.

Do you remember the poppies, why they grow?
Water them by letting others know.

- Danielle Mentley



Letters to the Editor

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Our Story



As we pause to remember those who paid the supreme sacrifice in service to Canada, a photo from the collection of veteran Don Gibson of the E Company of the 27th Battalion enlisted for the foreign service August 1914.

Don Gibson Photo

Remembering one of Canada's heroes Si Steele

One of the greatest regrets I've had in 30 years of journalism is a story I didn't tell.

In 1994, I was fortunate to travel with a group of Canadian veterans as the federal government brought them to Belgium for the 50th anniversary of that country's liberation from the Nazis. One of the people on that trip was a man named Si Steele.

Before we left, I did an interview with Mr. Steele in his Chatham home. He was a lovely, gracious man. I honestly don't remember a lot about the interview but in typical fashion of people who have served this country, he told me

about what happened without a lot of embellishment. It was clear it was difficult. He had been injured. He had lost friends. He had seen things no one should see. Mr. Steele stopped several times, lost in his memories.

I wrote about his service, but young and foolish as I was, I didn't realize his words that day were just the tip of the iceberg of what Steele had seen. There was a chance to get the rest of the story but much to my regret, I wasn't astute enough to get it.

The day the tour visited a site near Antwerp seemed to be light on official ceremonies, so I decided

this would be a great day to see where my father was born without missing much. While that was a wonderful experience, I learned afterward that Major Si Steele was honoured for his actions there. I still feel sick in the pit of my stomach when I think that I missed that moment.



Heather Wright
SEE STEELE PG 5

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Opinion

Steele is one of Canada's many unsung war heroes

CONT'D FROM PG 4

It's a feeling I always get around Remembrance Day.

This year when I started thinking about Remembrance Day, my thoughts drifted again to Si Steele. I can see him in his Essex Scottish Regiment cap with his whitish grey hair tucked beneath it walking proudly in a parade in Belgium. And then, there is regret.

So I started looking online and found his story on the Gathering of Heroes. Today, let me tell you about Canadian war hero, Si Steele.

Major Steele commanded the "D" company of the Essex Scottish Regiment. His company was to capture the orchard and a house south of Caen in France July 29, 1944. The platoon was pinned to the ground by heavy light machine gun fire and wasn't able to move forward. So, Major Steele, with "total disregard for his personal safety" led the platoon through the fire to get to their objective. Two men were killed, but Major Steele regrouped his men and led an

attack which stopped the German's advance.

Major Steele was among the first Canadian soldiers to enter Belgium during the liberation efforts. Steele was in the Antwerp area on the way to Schelde River; they were taking one of the old forts built by the Belgians in the 1880s. When night fell, a fighting patrol of the German infantry came wading across the flooded dykes behind a fierce mortar barrage. Steele and the Canadian units withdrew some 200 yards until they could get help. They eventually drove the Germans back, but not before Major Steele was injured. A group of soldiers told a Canadian Press reporter about Steele's bravery. He was wounded severely in both legs in the early stages of the attack but refused to be evacuated. He stayed nearby in a control room throughout the battle.

Major Steele was hospitalized and went back to Canada to recover.

Nearly 50 years later, when I met him, he walked slowly with a bit



Major Si Steele

of a limp. But watching him in the parades during the liberation of Belgium, it wasn't noticeable.

Major Si Steele was truly a Canadian hero, one of so many whose stories are often forgotten. Perhaps my regret is a good thing. I will always remember Major Si Steele, the bravery he showed, the gentle man that he was and the unparalleled service he gave his country.

Nova just months away from possible expansion approval

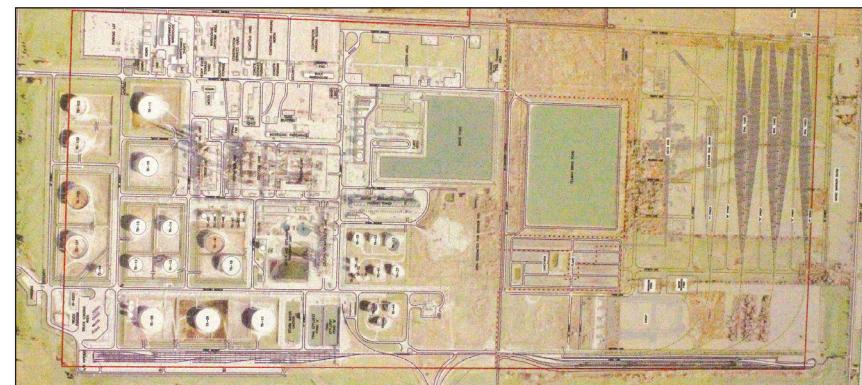
Heather Wright
The Independent

Nova Chemicals is inching closer to a decision on its billion dollar expansion. But it has yet to get a good explanation of how the province's carbon tax will affect the project. And it still needs a deal on hydro.

The company recently held an open house to let the public see how the company is preparing for a possible \$1.5 to \$2 billion expansion which includes a cracker expansion and a new polyethylene unit.

Tom Thompson, regional manufacturing director for Nova says workers have been working systematically to get all the necessary approvals in place. Nova has completed a number of environmental studies.

"We're still looking at a study to see what needs to be done potentially on Rokeby Line," he says. "Everything is going as expected. We're ploughing through a lot of work to get to the



Site plan provided by Nova Chemicals of the possible expansion

finish."

But there are some difficulties. Thompson says it isn't clear what effect the province's new Cap and Trade System will have on the bottom line. "There is a lot of uncertainty around it and we're trying to understand it," he says.

And he says the issue of lower hydro rates for the massive plant also has to be resolved.

But the work is moving forward. Nova is now working with St. Clair Township, Lambton County, and the province on all the permits it needs. Thompson hopes to go to St. Clair Council early in 2017 with a site plan application. With all those items in hand, Nova's board of directors is expected to consider full approval of the project in mid 2017 and the ground work could begin by next fall.

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Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

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Editorial

Don't rush Fairbank House decision

The confusion expressed by members of the public leaving a meeting between Petrolia Council and the owner of Sunnyside - David Burnie - is understandable.

Burnie and his project engineer, Geoff Dale, came to council to listen to people's concerns about the proposal to place a 16-unit apartment building on the grounds on one of the town's most historically important properties.

Historians and residents have voiced concern over the plan worried the apartment will compromise the history of the place; that if the building goes up, there may not be an opportunity in the future to preserve it for history.

The biggest stumbling block to the project and the most important, to concerned residents, is the plan to repair or restore Fairbank House. Burnie says he will have a concrete plan when he comes to council with his site plan for the apartment building this spring. It will spell out what will be done and when it will happen. But Burnie doesn't know yet what it will cost and offered little new information when meeting with the council, Monday.

Councillors did have questions - some pointed; what assurances do we have the mansion will be fixed; will Burnie put up a bond in case the work isn't completed, why not have the home designated as historic; would you sell Fairbank House to someone else?

While Burnie came before council, his answers were less than concrete. There are assurances that the site plan will be legal and binding, but so far, there isn't a plan. And that should worry everyone.

Burnie and Dale have said they want to begin construction on the apartment this spring. It seems rushed, especially when there are so few concrete details.

We urge members of town council to be completely satisfied they have all the answers to every question before they make any decision. This is our history; we cannot make a mistake which cannot be undone.

Letters to the Editor

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Our Story



A view of the Wyoming train station, with a passenger car on the left. There is a lot of detail on the loading dock including a man sitting on a cart on the right side of the photo under the Wyoming sign. The picture was taken around 1910.

Petrolia Heritage Photo

Why give kooks a voice; it's called democracy

As Tom Brady seemed to be fumbling around on the football field in Texas Sunday, I'm sure there were a lot of armchair quarterbacks telling the now five-time Super Bowl winner what to do.

I know how he feels. There's a lot of armchair quarterbacking going on in the world of journalism.

Among the biggest sideline critics is the US President, who seems to have a reflex to say something like 'fake news' or 'despicable people' when he talks about even the most respected news outlets.

While the president gets a lot of attention for his "war" with the media, there are a lot of people who question why we do what we do.

Take for example this week. As part of my work as a reporter in Lambton County, I covered a huge fire which destroyed a sow operation, taking the lives of the 4,000 pigs.

The first news brought many condolences for the family who had lost the large part of their farm. Not a

negative word to be found.

Of course, when you share something on social media, others who don't share the same view of farming as farmers do, hear about it, too.

So, the day after the fire, animal rights activists showed up on the road in front of the now charred remains of the barn to hold a vigil to mark the lives of the lost livestock.

They believe no one should eat meat and raising pigs to be slaughtered is akin to murder.

When news of the protest went on line, people went crazy. Most of the comments were along the lines of "have some respect for the farmers; they just lost their livelihood" on one side to "What about those poor pigs who were burned alive?"

The debate raged on for hours. And more than once the comment came up from the armchair quarterback. "I don't know why we bother to write about these people - it's only giving them the publicity they want."

It's a good question. They're

obviously in the minority. Estimates say vegans are 10 per cent of the population.

But telling their story, recounting their views is the core of journalism and democracy. Everyone has a right to an opinion whether we agree with it or not.

Good journalism doesn't ignore events or ideas because they might be controversial or hurtful, it tells you about them so you can look carefully at what others believe and make up your own mind.

Just like a few armchair quarterbacks probably changed their tune about Brady who rallied to win the Super Bowl in overtime.



Heather Wright

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Editorial

Businesses should have been told of team wear tender

Some times our intentions may be good, but the outcome is not.

It is unlikely anyone disagrees with the concept of using public money wisely. That was the plan behind the Broader Public Services Procurement Act when it was passed in 2010. The concept was publicly-funded entities could save money by purchasing supplies together - kind of like Wal-Mart.

It's not surprising then that like Wal-Mart, someone gets squeezed in the process.

Local suppliers of sports team wear are crying foul after learning the items they supply to local schools will now come from online suppliers based in Toronto and Ottawa.

The local school board was part of a tender for the items and now nine small businesses in Lambton and Kent Counties are losing between 30 and 90 per cent of their business. And they didn't know it was coming.

Local business owners rightly point out that they pay taxes and contribute to the school community beyond just getting business from them, whereas the new suppliers won't. And we also agree that it is great to buy local because it makes our communities grow - meaning more kids for rural schools.

The reality is the provincial legislation doesn't allow that anymore. The local board has no control over this type of purchasing and must follow the rules or face stiff penalties.

What the local board does control however is how it deals with the people who have been working with the school for years. It baffles that someone couldn't have made a call to nine businesses to tell them about the tender and they could apply for the business. At least they might have had a chance at keeping it. Even an impersonal email before the tender happened would have been better than finding out you're about to lose business and you can do nothing about it.

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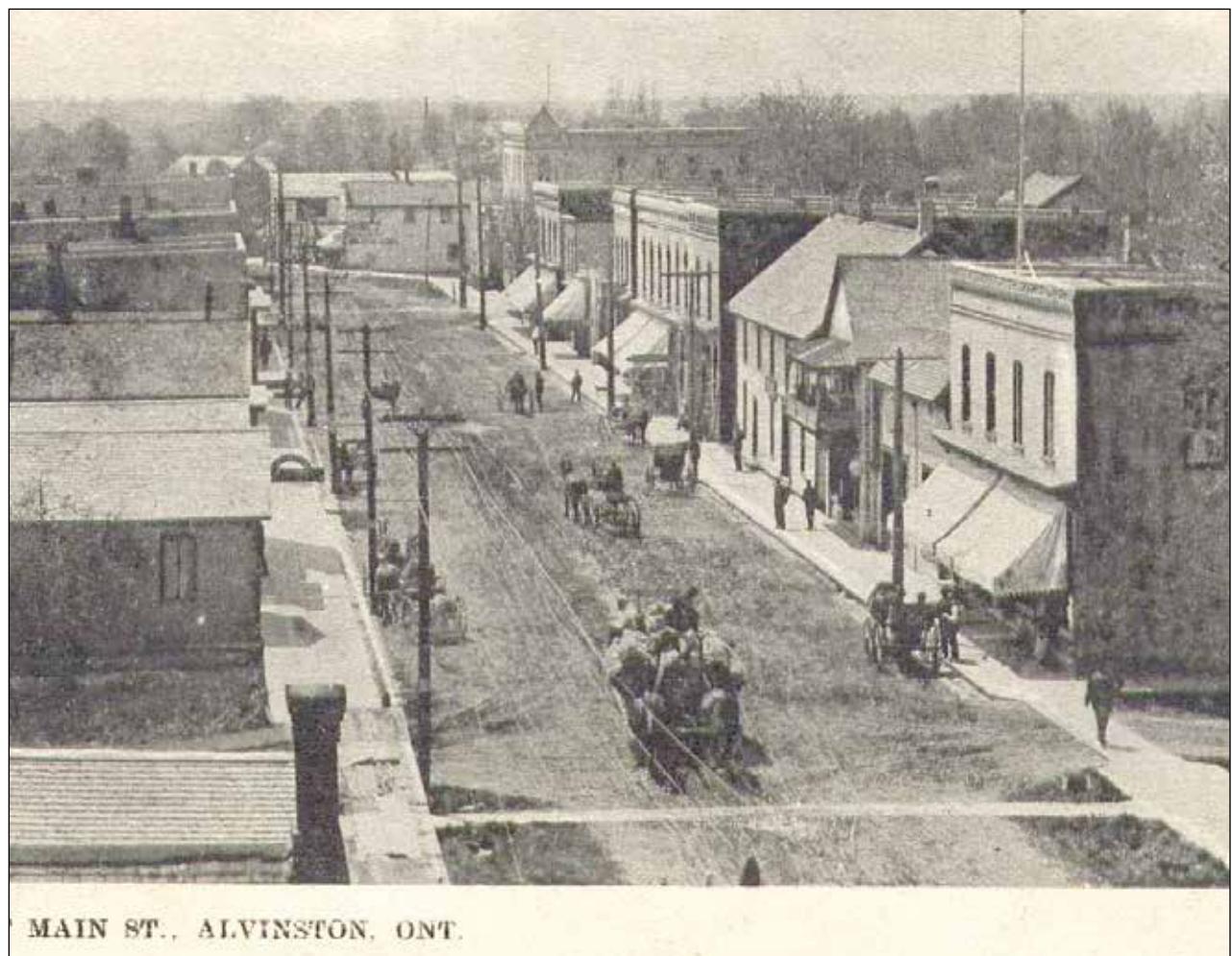
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Our Story



This is a photo of Alvinston's main street. Archibald Gardner a Scotsman, first came to the area in 1835. In 1880, Alvinston became an incorporated village. At that time Alvinston had two flour mills, one stove factory, one planing mill, one foundry, one cabinet factory, four wagon and blacksmith shops, two brickyards, ten stores, four hotels, one livery stable, one school of two rooms, five churches and a township hall. It's not clear when this photo was taken.

Petrolia Heritage Photo

Remembering Jim and Mary Louise Hayter

There are things they don't teach you in journalism.

These last few weeks, I've relearned one of the more difficult lessons you find out for yourself – as a journalist you get to know and like the community leaders you cover. You don't generally hang out with them, but you can spend some time talking with them about politics, sports, their businesses and their families.

When they die, it is difficult.

I first met Jim Hayter at a Brooke-Alvinston council meeting. Listening to the conversation around the council table, he spoke plainly and honestly and laughed with his colleagues.

My first impression of him stuck; Hayter always seemed honest and

friendly. And then I met his wife.

Mary Louise was at the front desk of the family business in Alvinston and I was delivering papers. As soon as I walked in the door, her face lit up and she welcomed me. She was full of praise for the paper and wanted to know all about me. I came to realize that I really couldn't rush out of Hayter's but I didn't mind.

Mary Louise would tell me about her grandchildren and spoke glowingly about her children. She was obviously proud of them all.

I remember the morning I walked in and out of the blue she asked me if I wanted to split a fresh orange; Mary Louise had such a generous spirit.

A couple of years ago she asked me

to take photos at her family reunion. I arrived before most of the family and watched as nieces and nephews came to Mary Louise and she greeted everyone warmly.

That hot summer day, I got to see them together – Jim and Mary Louise

had been married for decades and had a crew around them.



Heather Wright

CONT'D ON PG 5



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Opinion

OLA wonders about proposed mandatory septic pumping

EDITOR:

The Ontario Landowners Association (OLA) has been contacted about an amendment to the Building Code for mandatory septic pumping, every five years. If one does not have the proof that they have had their septic pumped, within the five year period, they can be fined up to \$10,000 per day. This is already being implemented in some areas.

The OLA had emailed the Ministry of Municipal Affairs on Feb. 20, 2017, a document showing that this amendment is beyond the legislative authority of the Building Code. We allowed 14 business days for a response. We are past this and are still waiting.

The reason for the change, according to the government's documents is; "The proponent requested the change to strengthen the maintenance requirements of septic systems through regular pump outs and to require record keeping thereof to help ensure compli-

ance with the code requirements."

We asked who or what is the "proponent," and yet no response.

The request for the change notice continues "Conventional systems need to be maintained regularly. Current Code requirements do not include regular/periodic pump outs of septic tanks. The proposed requirement will make it mandatory to pump out septic tanks on a periodic basis and to keep the maintenance records of the pump out."

There is nothing, it would seem, in the "Code" specifying this, and when did a private property owner need to maintain records for municipal/provincial administration of their private property? Or is this merely another revenue stream, for the government because none of them can seem to stop wasting money?

Could this be implementing arbitrary law when demanding that an inspector violate superior laws and is the provi-

ence creating a regulation which is in conflict with the Municipal Act, the Building Code Act, and the Criminal Code of Canada, the Real Properties Limitations Act, the Limitations Act, the Conveyancing and Law of Property Act, etc., to name a few?

With the proposed amendment (Bill 68 not passed yet) of the Municipal Act, bringing in Administrative Penalties, does this mean that the government will be fining people for not pumping their septic tanks and merely adding the amount onto the property owner's property taxes? Could be...

This one amendment to the Building Code regulation and a huge amendment to the Municipal Act, etc., that just needs to go.

Final question – where are the Opposition Parties – why haven't we heard about any of this?

Elizabeth F. Marshall,
Director of Research Ontario
Landowners Association

Remembering community leaders Jim and Mary Louise Hayter

CONT'D FROM PG 4

You could see the love, even with petty irritations like some of the littlest ones squirming because they didn't want to be in the photo. It was a good day and an insight into who they were as a family.

When Mary Louise died March 2, all I could think of was Jim and their family. It was so sudden and so unreal.

It would be difficult, especially from those little children she bragged so much about.

I talked to Jim briefly after March 16. I just wanted to say how sorry I was and what a lovely woman his Mary Louise was. I mumbled about how terrible her death was and the tears formed in his eyes.

"She died in my arms, you know," he

said. I could only put my hand on his arm in sympathy.

Driving home I thought how, as hard as that was, it seemed good he was with her, holding her.

I was at my parents when I learned Jim died. I couldn't believe it. I still can't really. I, along with hundreds of other people, will miss them both very much.

SUNNY TRAIN



As we move into spring, the days are getting longer and the sunsets more colourful. A freight train passes over Mandaumin Line near Confederation in the late evening sun.

Heather Wright Photo

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