

THE HALDIMAND PRESS



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"Northern lights" come south to Haldimand



HALDIMAND—Aurora borealis, or northern lights, is a spectacular light show created when energized particles from the sun smack into Earth's upper atmosphere at speeds of up to 72 million km/hr. The planet's magnetic field protects us from the hit, redirecting the particles toward the poles and creating this cinematic atmospheric phenomenon. While most common closer to those magnetic poles, Haldimand was among Canada's more southern areas able to view the show on the weekend of May 10, 2024. Above, Dave Erauw caught this shot of the lights just south of Caledonia on Hwy. 6. See more photos on Page 11.
—Photo courtesy of Dave Erauw Photography.

'This little one needs to be not forgotten' Seeking answers in Dunnville Baby Doe case 2 years later

By Tamara Botting
The Haldimand Press

DUNNVILLE—After two years, Nancy Labuda's heart still aches when she thinks about Dunnville's Baby Doe.

On May 17, 2022, just before 1:30 p.m., two people fishing came upon a grim discovery – the body of a young girl floating in a marshy area off Grand Island on the southern banks of the Grand River, directly south of the Dunnville Boat Club.

Labuda said she and a friend had been by the boat club earlier that morning, praying for the community. When she heard the news the next day, "I cried. It just pulled at my heart, that someone would do something so dreadful to this little girl."

In May 2023, the case remained unsolved and the girl unidentified, so Labuda paid for a memorial to be put in The Haldimand Press; she did it again this year.

"Her little life was important, and she should never be tossed away and forgotten," Labuda said.

The sketch with the memorial (on Page 6) is a sort of self-portrait of Labuda, who said she suffered trauma as a child and is a survivor with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Art has been a way for her to process emotions, and this sketch was

an expression of the fear and sadness she felt when young. Labuda said she used the sketch in the memorial because she thought it would honour Baby Doe's experience as well.

She hopes the memorial will encourage anyone with information that could help solve Baby Doe's case to come forward. She also hopes it will encourage people to notify the authorities if they believe a child might be experiencing neglect or abuse – part of what concerns Labuda with this case is wondering whether Baby Doe had any siblings, and if so, whether they're safe.

While Labuda finds some comfort in her faith, and the fact that the girl's suffering has ended, "Still, something happened to her, and she deserves justice.... This little one needs to be not forgotten until we know her name, until she's claimed, and until she's properly put to rest."

The investigators on the case share the same conviction and have taken steps to try and make that happen.

On May 13, 2024, the OPP released a 3D facial approximation of the girl in hopes that someone would see it and recognize her. The same day, a documentary titled *The Grand River Baby: Unsolved* was released.

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Appeal denied: Stelco out of options to stop Nanticoke land going to Empire

By Mike Renzella
The Haldimand Press

NANTICOKE—A recent decision at the Ontario Court of Appeal may be the end of the line for Stelco Inc.'s efforts to stop the conveyance of a portion of land near its Nanticoke facility to DGAP Investments, which could then complete a sale of the lands to Empire Homes, the developer behind a proposed large-scale development in the area.

The Press spoke with local attorney Ed McCarthy of McCarthy and Fowler for a breakdown on the decision.

McCarthy said the issue dates to the sale of the lands to LandCo, which he described as an "outfit owned by the Stelco pension plan."

"I think it all goes back to Stelco's financial trouble, back when US Steel took it over.... US Steel of course didn't care about all these extra lands. When Stelco found out that these lands would be sold to Empire, they got upset and tried to delay the thing," said McCarthy.

The land in question is approximately 1,200 acres on the west side of the steel plant, according to McCarthy's interpretation of legal documents related to the appeal decision.

"When you search the title of these properties, this land west of the steel plant is still in Stelco's name, but the 600-odd acres to the north of the Stelco operation ... they're in the name of this land company," he said.

The parcel is one of 14 parcels DGAP agreed to purchase from LandCo. McCarthy noted that the original sale required a severance agreement from Haldimand County to proceed. That agreement had conditions related to easements between the severed parcel and Stelco's retained lands.

Stelco, which was subsequently ordered to transfer the parcel to LandCo as part of a 2018 reconveyance agreement, has to-date refused, attempting to appeal the reconveyance agreement on the basis of non-consensus over how to implement easements between the two pieces of land.

McCarthy couldn't say for sure what the easements in question would be used for, but posited that it's likely they would relate to rights-of-way through the sold land for a range of operational issues.

"They've been balking because in the original agreement ... there was a provision about these easements," said McCarthy. "They haven't come to terms on how these easement agreements are to be worded, and that's what Stelco is hanging its hat on."

"It looks to me like they've tried everything under the sun," added McCarthy. "The court of appeal has said no, this appeal has no merit.... I think what's going to happen is the court is going to settle this easement question under the powers they have under the company's creditor's arrangement act, to impose terms."

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Province offers \$50K reward for info on Baby Doe case

Continued from Page 1

In the video, members of the investigative team go over some of the details of the case and discuss the fact-finding process that has been underway to date.

OPP Det. Insp. Shawn Glassford shared his memories of that day. He said when he was initially informed of the situation, he hoped that the report was wrong, and that it would turn out to be a doll in the water.

"It's difficult to stand there and look down at the body of this poor child in the water and try to understand how somebody could basically just throw a child away like that," he said.

OPP Det. Const. Darryl Graham said the investigation has been extensive; police reached out to local schools, the Children's Aid Society, and the public to ask if anyone was familiar with a family that left the area suddenly at that time. They have also checked missing persons databases on a global level.

Glassford said after all that, "We never got anything."

Another big part of the investigation was determining where the girl had entered the river. Graham said investigators consulted with a hydrologist with the Grand River Conservation Authority to learn more about the dam structures and the flow patterns in the area.

"We determined that the child's position of discovery was likely not a great distance from where (she) entered the water," he said.

Because Baby Doe was found in the wa-



Baby Doe 3D Approximation

ter, her postmortem examination was hampered, said Dr. Carolyn Lemieux, forensic pathologist with the Forensic Services and Coroner's Complex in Toronto.

"Generally, bodies that are found in water may or may not show varying signs of decomposition of different types, and/or skeletonization," she said. "It's an ongoing task to try and determine her identity."

Further complicating the efforts to identify Baby Doe is her age. Investigators estimate that she was between the ages of 10.5 months and three years at the time of her death.

Forensic anthropologist Dr. Katherine

Gruspier said that her task has been to build a biological profile for Baby Doe, which included determining her age, biological sex, and ancestry. The problem is, determining a person's ancestry generally relies on measurements and a statistical program, Gruspier explained, "but the program doesn't work for children."

Graham said they tried to check dental records, but nothing they were able to access was a match.

"It's very likely that the child had never been to a dentist."

Glassford added, "This is a little child who was born likely in the Covid time (and) may never have seen a doctor."

In the end, investigative genetic genealogy (IGG) was used to determine the child's ancestry; it shows she was half Chinese (or Chinese southern border neighbours) and half north African.

This information helped inform OPP Ident. Const. and forensic artist Duncan Way's approach as he created a 3D facial approximation of Baby Doe.

Way explained that when Baby Doe was found, she did have soft tissue, meaning that he had some clues as to her hair length and colour.

While it's a normal practice to work directly on a person's skull when creating a 3D facial approximation because "the skull offers a framework for the soft tissue," Way explained that children's skulls are pliable and soft, so a 3D replica was created instead.

When choosing how to portray her skin tone and eye colour, Way used the best infor-

mation available, but cautioned that it might not be exact to Baby Doe's actual appearance; her regular hairstyle might also have been different. The purpose of the facial approximation is to give people an idea of what she looked like.

This image is now being circulated in hopes that someone will recognize Baby Doe and come forward with information. The Province of Ontario is now offering a \$50,000 reward for information leading to Baby Doe's identification. Anyone with information as to who the girl was, or the circumstances leading to her death, are asked to call the tip line at 1-844-677-9403, or to remain anonymous, contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

Glassford said investigators are hopeful that they'll get the information they need — perhaps even from those responsible for Baby Doe ending up in the river in the first place.

"There could be a number of different reasons why this child was placed in the water, and we want to know why. I can't imagine it's a good feeling to have, and to walk around every day knowing what you've done. I think that coming forward might help with that and bring some peace to this child," Glassford said.

Ultimately, "We want to give this child her name back."

Glassford noted that while deaths and homicides have an impact on communities, "This seems different."

That's certainly how Labuda feels.

"She matters to me. Don't know why, but she matters to me."

Nanticoke land sale expected to proceed

Continued from Page 1

McCarthy continued, "I think what it means is that Stelco will be forced to close the deal and transfer these lands to the land company, who can then sell them to DGAP."

Last July, Stelco VP Trevor Harris appeared at a Haldimand Council meeting, where he said Empire's proposed development of a residential community in Nanticoke "puts us at risk.... We can provide you no assurance that we will be here in 20 years."

The Press reached out to Harris following the appeal decision but received no reply ahead of publication.

"Their concern is that all these lands will be used for residential development, which will be incompatible with their steel operation," said McCarthy. "That might be posturing, but that's the concern."

He noted that once the transfer has taken place and LandCo has sold the lands to DGAP, the generated funds will go to Stelco pensioners; however, no further information was available as to how much money that sale will generate.

The decision removes an obstacle for the Nanticoke development, which remains up in the air on whether or not it can proceed.

Haldimand County, which initially re-

quested a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) in early 2022 to explore the proposed development, called the court decision a "private matter" that does not involve the County in any way. The County statement responding to a request for comment noted there "has not been any formal meetings with Stelco and County representatives" since the CIC meeting last July.

There has been no word on the progress of the MZO request to date.

McCarthy, however, noted several obstacles remain in the pursuit of the proposed development moving forward.

"If it's really Empire that wants those

lands, they'll need to get them rezoned," he said. "It's all zoned for industrial. On top of that, there's the provincial policy statement that says the lands are to be used for industrial purposes.... The designation of these lands for employment is another provincial policy, and that has to be changed if they want to develop them for residential purposes."

As for the land in question, in contention now for the better part of a decade, McCarthy said, "This is the end of it. It looks to me like now they're going to have to go ahead and complete these deals as originally agreed on."

Aurora borealis makes spectacular show in Haldimand

By Haldimand Press Staff

HALDIMAND—Thanks to a series of powerful solar storms, residents across Haldimand had the rare opportunity to see the northern lights from their own front porch on Friday and Saturday night this past weekend.

They were not alone, with the aurora borealis visible across parts of Canada, in addition to the northern United States, and parts of Europe.

Solar storms are much more prevalent during the maximum phase of the sun's 11-year cycle, which we are currently in. They are the result of sunspots, which are an entanglement of magnetic fields on the surface of the sun erupting into a solar flare.

Those flares are known to cause coronal mass ejections (CME), which consist of a burst of charged particles carried through space by solar winds.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), this past weekend's show originated from a series of CMEs that began on Wednesday, leading them to issue their first severe geomagnetic storm warning since 2005.

For those in Haldimand lucky enough to catch the show however, the lights, like last month's solar eclipse, are an experience they'll likely remember for a long time.



HAGERSVILLE—This photo of the aurora borealis event on May 10 was taken on Concession 13 Walpole just outside Springvale.

—Haldimand Press photo by Jillian Taylor.



HAGERSVILLE—This photo of the northern lights was taken facing northwest at Bradshaw Corners around Haldimand Road 55 and Concession 12 Walpole. It required a 30 second exposure.

—Photo submitted by Albert Tyson.

RECREATION

A blast from Haldimand's past


Our museums in Caledonia, Cayuga and Selkirk offer a variety of programs and workshops for all ages and interests. Visit us in person or explore our virtual exhibitions!

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BIRTHDAY


Happy Birthday



Lorraine is 80!
May 20

Thanks for the many things you do!
You are the pot of gold at the end of **our rainbow.**

♥ All the love in the world from your family.



Happy 95th Birthday

Jean Nixon

♥ Love from all your family

ANNIVERSARY

Happy 73rd Anniversary
Peter & Florence Zynomirski
May 19



With love, from your family

RETIREMENT OPEN HOUSE

RETIREMENT
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honouring
Emily deRuiter
FRIDAY MAY 31, 2024
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DEATH

WERNER, Mona
July 11, 1925 –
May 11, 2024

With thankfulness to God for the cherished years and beautiful memories with our loving, nurturing mother, we sadly announce the passing of Mona Werner, two months before her 99th birthday. Mona was the only child of the late Wilfred and Leta Held and the dear wife of the late Daniel Werner (1979). Loving mother of four children – Lynne (Bob) Swent, Karen (Brent) Zavitz, Bev (Dwight) Daley, Lee (Chris) Werner. Loving grandma to Andrea (Richard), Mike, Todd (Deanna), Jennifer (Mike), Laura (Mark), Jessica, Angela, Josh (Meghan), Kate (Wes), Sarah (Dave), Meghan (Brian). Much loved by 25 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren. Mona was predeceased by her brothers and sisters-in-law – Catherine (Russell), Carl (Vera), John (Hazel), David (Florence), and is survived by Mary (Don, deceased), and many nieces and nephews. Mona was a longtime faithful member of the Rainham Mennonite Church. For the past four years, Mom was a resident at Leisure Living, Jarvis, Norfolk General Hospital, and Norview Lodge, Simcoe. Thank you to the staff who compassionately cared for Mom at each of these facilities. Visitation will be held at Hyde & Mott Chapel, R.H.B. Anderson Funeral Home, 60 Main Street South, Hagersville on Wednesday, May 15 at 10 a.m. with a service following at 11 a.m. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Rainham Mennonite Church or Haldimand-Norfolk REACH would be appreciated. www.rhbanderson.com

*“When I come to the end of the road
And the sun has set for me
I want no rites in a gloom-filled room,
Why cry for a soul set free?”*
—Christina Rossetti



IN LOVING MEMORY

BERKMORTEL, Kristine
July 2, 1968 - May 20, 2016



Whisper “I love you” to a butterfly and it will fly to Heaven to deliver your message. We love you, Mom, and miss you.


♥ All our love,
Peter, Matt, Kendra and Baby Dax

CARTE, Adam
April 9, 1993 - May 20, 2018


*We feel a warmth around us
like your presence is so near,
And we close our eyes to
visualize your face when you
were here.
We treasure the times we
spent together and they are
locked inside our heart,
For as long as we have those
memories we will never be
apart.*

*Loving you always, forgetting
you never.*

♥ Love, Mom, Dad, and Aaron
XOXOXXO



Lost Little Angel with No Name
In memory of the little girl found
in the Grand River May 17, 2022.




Every Child Matters

I cry in remembrance of you.
Weep no more Little Angel, rest in peace.
You are safe now, in the loving arms of Jesus.
No more harm can come to you.
Jesus has taken away all your fears, and wiped away your tears. You are safe now, in the loving arms of Jesus. Even though we never met,
I don't even know your name. You hold a special place in my heart; Little Angel, you will not be forgotten.
No longer lost, you are found. You are safe now, in the loving arms of Jesus. Where Every Child Matters, in the loving arms of Jesus.

With the Love of Jesus
♥ Nancy Labuda, PTSD survivor

BRONSON, Connie

Our beloved mother, grand-mother and great-grand-mother, Connie Bronson, passed away peacefully on May 9, 2024 with family by her side at Grandview Lodge, Dunnville, in her 99th year. Beloved wife of the late George Basil Bronson (1966). Loving mother of Murray (Linda) of Burlington, Mark (Brenda) of Dunnville, and Andrew (Heather) of Aurora, Illinois. Proud grandmother of Timothy, Laura, Michael (Olivia), Tyler, Luke, Mandye (Mark), James (Jill Marie), Abbey (Todd), Jana (Ben), Drew, Connie, and Trent. Great-grandmother of Noah, Selah, Lily, Kai, Owen, and Audrey. Connie is survived by her sister Patricia Alfieri and sister-in-law Eileen Forrester. Predeceased by her sisters Gloria Piper and Dorothy McIntyre. Connie was born in Buffalo, NY. In her pre-teens, Connie moved to her aunt and uncles farm in Wellandport along with her sister Patricia, shortly after both parents had passed. Upon completion of high school Connie pursued further education and commitment to her faith while attending Hamilton Business School and Eastern Pentecostal Bible College. While serving in ministry in Cornwall, ON, Connie met and married the love of her life Basil Bronson. Ill health resulted in Connie becoming a young widow left to raise 3 sons on her own. At that time, she returned to Dunnville to be closer to her family of origin, who offered the stability and comfort required in raising her young family. Our mother lived her adult life for her 3 boys, ensuring that they had a firm foundation in faith, hope, and love. Connie was a dedicated and faithful member of Maple Creek Community Church (formerly Dunnville Gospel Church) for over 50 years serving in various capacities and enjoying the fellowship, camaraderie, and personal growth this vibrant community offered. Connie's search to know her Heavenly Father led her into a deep love for nature, glorying in the beauty and splendour evident through creation. She developed a keen talent for painting and continued to develop her artistic ability with the written word through her poetry. Due to these hobbies Connie became a vibrant member of the Dunnville Craft Guild for many years, making many wonderful friends who shared her creativity. We give thanks for our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother who leaves us a rich legacy of faith and value in a life well lived. Visitation for Connie will be held at Maple Creek Community Church, 110 Inman Rd, Dunnville, on Friday, May 17 from 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. Funeral Service will be held at Maple Creek Community Church on Saturday, May 18 at 1 p.m. Interment to follow at Zion Cemetery. In Lieu of flowers, donations to Maple Creek Community Church would be appreciated by the family. Arrangements have been entrusted to BALLARD MINOR FUNERAL HOME, 315 Broad Street East, Dunnville, Ontario. Friends are invited to send condolences and sign the Book of Memories at www.ballardminorfh.ca



IN LOVING MEMORY

HAWKE, Helen Lorraine
November 6, 1924 -
May 12, 2018



To my mother in heaven,
thank you for always
loving me and guiding
me. Even though you are
no longer here with me
I can still feel your love
guiding me. You are
always in my heart. I
love you and miss you
dearly.

Love,
your family

THANK YOU

JONES

I want to thank my family and friends for helping me celebrate my 80th birthday. Thank you for joining in the celebration and making it a day to remember. I am truly blessed to have such a great family and many friends.

♥ Larry Jones

**OFFICE CLOSURE
NOTICE**

The Haldimand Press office will be closed Monday, May 20 for Victoria Day.

Submissions for the May 23 paper are due Friday, May 17 at 10 a.m.

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