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Portion of Highway 6 renamed Jack Johnson Memorial Highway

by Olivia Rutt

MOUNT FOREST - A portion of Highway 6 was dedicated as the Jack Johnson Memorial Highway at a ceremony here on Sept. 25.

The section, from south of Mount Forest to north of Guelph, was named after the former MPP who passed away six years ago.

Johnson served in the former ridings of Wellington-Dufferin-Peel and Wellington from 1975 to 1999.

Perth-Wellington MPP Randy Pettapiece and Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott offered their memories of Johnson at the dedication ceremony last Friday.

"Jack Johnson may have left the

legislature 25 years ago, but to this day his legacy at Queen's Park lives on," said Pettapiece.

"As mayor of Mount Forest he worked to bring new industry to town. As an MPP, he worked hard for all the people in his riding, showing sincere dedication toward all and favoritism towards none because Jack knew his obligation was to all his constituents, not just those who voted for him. Jack put partisanship aside."

Earlier this year Arnott, who served as Johnson's executive assistant, first proposed the idea of naming Highway 6 after his mentor.

He said, "Some might ask why do

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Wellington literacy scores close to provincial average

by Jaime Myslik

WELLINGTON COUNTY - Secondary school students in the county generally exceeded or stayed within two per cent of average provincial scores on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) last year.

Reports released on Sept. 23 indicate Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) students fell 2% short of the provincial average, with a 80% success rate.

The Wellington Catholic District School Board (WCDSB), on the other hand, saw 87% of participating stu-

dents achieve successful scores.

"Our Catholic schools are committed to excellence and improving outcomes," WCDSB director of education Tamara Nugent said in a press release.

"We are very proud of the academic achievement of our students and that our board results continue to exceed the provincial average. The dedication and commitment of our staff to assessment, analysis of results, and personalized instruction, ensures that our students remain among the top performers in the province."

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Young farmer - Tegan Hyde, 2, of Guelph, rides a tractor on display at Thatcher Farms in Guelph-Eramosa as part of the Fall Rural Romp hosted by Taste Real on Sept. 26. Participants at the event could visit seven farms and four local food retailers across southern Wellington County, where they could meet those growing and producing food, pick up farm-fresh food and taste the fall harvest.

Additional coverage on page 1B.

photo by Olivia Rutt

Wellington-Halton Hills candidates speak out at debate in Aberfoyle

by Mike Robinson

ABERFOYLE - Federal candidates in Wellington-Halton Hills faced tough questions at the Puslinch Community Centre here on Sept. 23.

It was certainly not a capacity crowd, with roughly one quarter of the seating left vacant, but those in attendance made their interests and opinions known throughout the meeting.

All questions came directly from the floor at the event, which was sponsored by the Optimist Club of Puslinch.

On stage were NDP candidate Anne Gajerski-Cauley, Liberal candidate Don Trant, the Green Party's Brent Bouteiller and Conservative Michael Chong (Harvey Anstey of the Canadian Action Party was absent).

National pharmacare

The first person to ask a question was Puslinch councillor Susan Fielding, who stated every country with socialized medicine has a national pharmacare program, except for

Canada. She asked what each party's stance was on establishing such a national program.

Gajerski-Cauley said having grown up in Manitoba where a pharmacare program existed, she was shocked to discover one did not exist in Ontario. She said socialized medicare has been advocated by the NDP.

"With an aging population who use a lot of drugs ... we need this ... and we need this now," said Gajerski-Cauley.

Trant said pharmacare would be great, but there are drug benefits in Ontario for seniors. "But unless you have private coverage, you may have to pay out of your own pocket."

As a physician, he suggested that perhaps one-in-five (or more) don't fill their prescriptions because they can't afford it - or they decide to take one pill per day instead of three pills per day so the pills will last longer.

He believed there should be discussions with the provinces to establish a better system.

"The Liberals absolutely do support providing drugs for all its citizens," said Trant, adding he believes this could be achieved with no increases in taxes.

Bouteiller said his party does plan on developing and implementing a pharmacare system. He noted pharmacare costs in other countries are much lower because comparatively the cost for generic Canadian drugs is much higher. Even so, the cost to implement the program is included within the Green Party's proposed balanced budget.

Chong said he is open to the idea of such a program, noting the other option would be for the provincial ministers of health to work on systems unique to each province - but nationwide in scope.

He said the single best way to ensure health care is to ensure stable federal transfers to the provinces and he believed the government has a good track record in that regard.

Senate reform

A Rockwood resident suggested 50% of voters have no faith in the government and the Senate is now akin to a lavish retirement home for political insiders. He asked candidates what they would do to issue layoff notices to the Senate because of government cutbacks.

Chong agreed reform is needed to hold senators accountable. At the same time he said "abolition is a political impossibility" and would require unanimity of all the provincial legislatures and the government of Canada.

Reforms Chong endorsed include recalling senators to hold them accountable for their actions, and introducing limited terms to ensure a turnover of members. But to Chong, more important than Senate reform is reform within the House of Commons.

Bouteiller said one of the first things that could be done without opening the constitution is to reform expense rules.

"This should have been done right away as the (Mike Duffy) scandal first unfolded," he said.

Bouteiller said the Green Party is ready to open the constitution with the provinces and noted the Greens also believe the Senate should be an elected body via proportional representation in order to actually provide sober second thought. Bouteiller also advocated proportional representation for the general election as well.

Trant said "the one thing everyone can agree upon tonight is that the status quo for the Senate and its behaviour is not acceptable."

He did not support abolition of the Senate, noting that opening the constitution to accomplish that is too cumbersome. "We have more important issues to deal with as a country right now," he said.

Trant explained the Liberals have a plan that would make appointments to the Senate non-partisan and merit-

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THANK YOU TO OUR READERS

IN CELEBRATION OF NEWSPAPER WEEK (OCT. 4 - 10) AND "THE POWER OF THE PRESS," WE ARE PRESENTING A SPECIAL FEATURE ON *THE WELLINGTON ADVERTISER* (PAGES 19-22). WE ARE PROUD TO PRODUCE YOUR WEEKLY NEWSPAPER AND WE THANK THOSE WHO ENJOY WHAT WE DO.

THE HOUNDS ARE COMING!

To the Elora Mill
Sunday, October 4th
at one o'clock
See page 23

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Wellington-Halton Hills federal candidates talk agriculture

by Jaime Myslik

ROCKWOOD - Agriculture was the topic of choice at the third Wellington-Halton Hills all candidates meeting in Wellington County.

The Wellington Federation of Agriculture and the Halton Region Federation of Agriculture hosted the Sept. 28 debate at the Rockmosa Community Centre in Rockwood and those in attendance kept their questions rural-focused for the most part.

Liberal candidate Don Trant, NDP candidate Anne Gajerski-Cauley, Conservative candidate Michael Chong and Green candidate Brent Bouteiller participated in the debate.

Business risk management

The first question of the night was about what each party would do to improve the responsiveness and effectiveness of business risk management (BRM) programs and whether they were willing to collaborate with farmers and provinces to make improvements.

Trant answered first saying the Liberal position is that farmers shouldn't suffer as a result of things they have no control over, such as climate and weather events.

"The Liberal party is committed to meet with the provinces and the farmers to enhance the current ... risk management programs and make sure that they deliver what the farm community needs," said Trant.

Gajerski-Cauley said although the NDP is committed to improving BRM, if elected, it will put a program in place where farmers won't

lose money if a customer goes bankrupt.

Chong explained Canada is currently in the second year of a five-year joint federal and provincial plan for agriculture, run by Agricorp. The 60/40 funding program, split between the federal and provincial governments, provides the BRM "suite" of programs. The plan is not negotiable for the next three years due to contracts, he said.

"At the end of the five-year period I'm open to improving the BRM suite programs, in particular, as an Ontarian and a member of parliament representing an agricultural riding in Ontario, I believe strongly that agri-recovery really doesn't do anything for farmers east of the Manitoba border," he said.

He sees agri-recovery as only available to western farmers and said it shouldn't be part of the national program.

Bouteiller said the Green party thinks BRM programs are good programs and would work to make sure risks are dealt with in the best way possible. However, the party has different focuses, one of which is to ensure farmers are getting a fair share of the consumer dollar so they have more income and can buffer more of the risks themselves.

Infrastructure

Candidates were asked what their party would do to make improvements to roads, bridges and internet connections.

Gajerski-Cauley said her party's platform is to allocate and transfer one cent per litre of the gas tax to municipalities to rebuild roads, bridges and the required infrastructure.

Chong pointed out that in the last 10 years there has been a record amount of federal money put into municipal infrastructure and last year the federal government announced another \$70 billion over the next 10 years for infrastructure.

He also said the government has put millions of dollars into rural internet access and has auctioned off the 800 MHz spectrum and telecommunications companies will be rolling it out soon for rural areas.

"If re-elected we'll put another \$200 million in improving broadband access for rural and remote communities," Chong said.

Bouteiller said the Green Party wants to take five cents of the gas tax and transfer it to the provinces to address infrastructure challenges and debt. He also suggested changing the tax laws to allow for new municipal RRSP bonds, allowing municipalities to develop the funds necessary for infrastructure needs.

Trant said the Liberal Party has announced the largest infrastructure initiative in Canadian history, rolling out \$6 billion dollars a year over 10 years, in addition to what is already going to municipalities.

He said when he talked to farmers two of their biggest concerns were roads and bridges.

"They've got to be able to move their equipment around and they've got to be able to get their goods to market," he said. The Liberals are willing to run a deficit to improve infrastructure, he noted.

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Fall Rural Romp - Children were all smiles at Thatcher Farms in Guelph-Eramosa as part of the Fall Rural Romp hosted by Taste Real on Sept. 26. TOP: Hannah Scarlett Johnson poses with pumpkins in her Halloween costume. ABOVE LEFT: Alyssa Wand enjoys the bumpy ride down the tube slide at Thatcher Farms. ABOVE RIGHT: Maisie Wilson of Kitchener climbs on top of a bale pumpkin.

photos by Olivia Rutt



Hall of fame - Two plaques were added to the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame wall at the Wellington County Museum and Archives on Sept. 27. Ray Wightman, not in attendance, was recognized for his work to connect rural residents to their neighbours and the wider world through Wightman Telecom. Peter Hannam was inducted for his development in the soybean industry. They were inducted at a ceremony at the Harvest Home Festival last weekend. From left: Wellington County Historical Society president Ron Hattle, Wightman's son Paul Wightman, Hannam, and Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame secretary treasurer Reg Cressman.

photo by Olivia Rutt

New insurance plan for beekeepers

GUELPH - Ontario beekeepers now have access to a new production insurance plan that will help them manage financial loss from winter bee colony damage.

Production insurance is part of a suite of business risk management programs designed to help farmers manage losses due to events like weather, pests and disease. The costs of these programs are predictable, stable and shared by producers and the provincial and federal governments.

"To mitigate unforeseen risks experienced by Ontario beekeepers, our government responded to their request to add a risk management plan," said Jeff Leal, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, in a press release.

"The new Bee Mortality Production Insurance plan under the Agriculture Insurance Act promotes best management

practices and allows farmers to manage their risk more effectively."

The insurance plan gives participating beekeepers the confidence and security to reinvest in their operations, encouraging greater innovation, profitability and job creation and provides them with the same financial support that beekeepers in other provinces receive.

"The new Bee Mortality

Production Insurance plan recognizes the importance of healthy bees to the livelihood of individual beekeepers and the sustainability of the beekeeping industry," said Tibor Szabo, president of Ontario Beekeepers' Association.

To participate, beekeepers must be registered, operate in accordance with the Bees Act, and implement best practices to ensure bee health. The insurance plan will begin Nov. 1.

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- 1ST - \$500 Dan Schill, Palmerston
- 2ND - \$250 Marilyn Newman, Harriston
- 3RD - \$100 Sue Yungblut, Gowanstown

The 2016 fair theme will be "How Sweet It Is - Honey".

Thank you to everyone who supported the Palmerston Fair from Don Hartung, and the Palmerston Agr. Society Directors

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