

# WHY DO YOU EXPECT CORRUPTION?

A mother calls us to say her child has come home from school with tales of other students being whisked away by ambulance after overdosing on drugs.

A former tradesman, closing in on 60, back broken twice and with a second mortgage on his home to pay for the prescription opioids he relies on to get through his day calls us to say he has been arrested in the midst of a medical crisis. He is most upset, he says, because police threatened to shoot his dog. He can't afford a lawyer.

One caller told us they couldn't stand up against the mistreatment they felt they were receiving from a municipality because they were going to need a building permit in a couple months.

What do these stories have in common? We can't tell them.

None of these callers would go on the record. They were irate, but at the same time paralyzed by fear of the people elected or appointed to serve the public.

When regular citizens come up against authority or the juggernaut of massive power systems like justice, education or politics, they too often cower before their public servants.

In each case, the caller believed it was reasonable to expect corruption.

Is blind obedience hammered into us in school so fully that we never get over it? Do we never grow up and understand teachers, principals and school board trustees work for us?

Is the military might of the police force so intimidating we fear holding them to account when they've used the weapons we gave them to bully us?

Has cynicism about the people who get into politics tainted our opinion of our neighbours at the council table so much that we think they will use whatever power they have against us?

We know local mayors, police officers, principals and bureaucrats that got into public service with the best of intentions, and who continue to give their all for their community. If there is corruption, it's the exception not the rule.

So we put it to everyone in power to take action to earn the trust of the citizen.

A good first step would be a serious commitment to transparency. Too often you try to manage the message when we do call with questions based on what the community wants or needs to know. Information gatekeepers give the public PR spin when organizations should be admitting mistakes and taking responsibility.



Rev. Fraser Williamson photo

Josh Barry and Fred Disomma of the Eagle Lake Narrows Country Store, set out a tire, tied to a rope, on the ice surface of Eagle Lake. The person who chooses the day that the tire falls through wins the pool.

## WHEN THE ICE WILL GO OUT ON EAGLE LAKE?

### DO YOU HAVE A PREDICTION, ASKS SUNDRIDGE/SOUTH RIVER COLUMNIST



REV. FRASER WILLIAMSON  
Column

In previous years, I have announced in my column when the ice on Lake Bernard is out.

I never had the chance to write on other lakes in our area until this year. I was made aware that there is a long tradition at the Eagle Lake Narrows. The owners of the Country Store out there have held a community pool for the person who can guess the exact day the ice is out. They have a unique method of determining a winner. Each year, they take a tractor tire (which is tied to a rope so it will not permanently go to the bottom) and put it on the ice. The person who predicts the day of the tire falling through the ice is the winner of the pool. I was also informed that some of the previous winners have donated all the money back to the store so the children could have free ice cream in

the summer. (I wish it was still a kid. I would definitely take advantage of the free ice cream!) The tire is out and its now just a waiting game to see when it will fall through. My guess is sooner than later, as we had several days where we were over 10° last week.

One of those warm days — Tuesday, March 23 — was the first day of COVID-19 vaccinations at the Sundridge-Strong-Joly Arena. The parking lot as seniors over the age of 80 came from all over Almaguin to get their shot. I also think these seniors chose to make a day of it. I went into Foodland to pick something up for lunch, and saw a sea of grey and white hair as I walked around. I have not seen that many seniors in one place since the last time I played cards at the Happy Gang and South River Friendly Circle. I am glad Foodland is benefiting from having a vaccination clinic so close by!

Whether you have been vaccinated or are still waiting your turn, have a great week, and please remember to wear a mask and physically distance!

Rev. Fraser Williamson is a columnist with the Almaguin News. His column, 'Sundridge and South River News', appears weekly. He can be reached at nnpchalmaquin@gmail.com.

### Bleeker the Rechargeable Dog



### OPINION

## BINGO! COME OUT ON MONDAY AND PLAY SOME GAMES

### TABLES ARE IN PLACE FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING, SAYS SPRUCEDALE COLUMNIST



LYNDA HOWSE  
Column

Monday Night Bingo at the Sprucedale Community Centre is back up and operating.

The first night back is scheduled for March 29, and we look forward to seeing everyone. Come and support our Sprucedale Seniors Friendship Club. Doors open at 6 p.m., and bingo starts at 7 p.m. Tables are in place for social distancing, with a maximum capacity of 40 people to maintain social distancing; masks or shields must be worn, and patron screening and contact information will be taken.

A scavenger hunt is being presented by the

McMurrich/Monteith Recreation Committee. The hunt is open to all residents and property owners of McMurrich/Monteith. Come explore Sprucedale, a town rich in history. We have hidden 10 objects around the town for you to find. Check the McMurrich/Monteith Recreation Committee Facebook page regularly between April 10 and 20 for clues to the location of the items. For those not on social media, physical clues will be hidden along with each object. Please do not remove clues or the objects. Keep an eye on your mailbox for the

rules and your first clue. Prizes for all who participate.

Show us your entries for the Easter photo contest, open to all residents and property owners of McMurrich/Monteith. All ages, from zero to 99+, are welcome. First, second, and third prizes will be awarded for the best in each category: black and white or full-colour Easter photo. One entry per person per category. All photos must be original and taken by the participant. No Photoshop is allowed, unless it's used to transform the photo to grayscale. The use of cellphone cameras and digital cameras is permitted. All pictures must be family-friendly. All entries are due April 9 at noon.

Entries can be submitted by email to deputy-clerk@mcmurrichmonteith.com or in the Rec Mailbox outside the town-

## COUNTRY JAMBOREE CANCELLED FOR 2021

### ORGANIZERS SAY COVID VACCINATIONS WON'T BE DONE IN TIME, SAYS BURK'S FALLS/KATRINE COLUMNIST



ANNA BRANCH  
Column

It is with regret that Peter Hall and Bob Gray announce that the 2021 Burk's Falls Country Jamboree will not take place.

While vaccinations are now being given, it is not likely that everyone will receive theirs until the end of summer. They thank you for understanding that their desire is to protect patrons and musicians from the virus.

COVID-19 vaccination is now available in our area.

You can phone 1-800-563-2808 and follow the prompts to book your appointment. Have your health card ready. If you can't get through, keep trying. Hours are 9.30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekdays.

The Village of Burk's Falls Recreation Department has some new activities for you to try. Your child can try their inner Robin Hood or Maid Marion by signing up for archery being held Wednesdays from April 7 to May 12

at the arena. There are two time slots: 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. and 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., with sanitization taking place in between.

Join your friends for a refreshing walk around on our beautiful trails Thursdays from April 8 to 29, 10 to 11 a.m. Snowshoes and poles are available, and all ages are welcome. This is a free event and starts at the arena.

For more information, call Lacey at 705-382-3138, or email recreation@burksfalls.ca. Registration forms are available online at www.burksfalls.net under the 'Recreation' tab.

If you are holding a community event in Burk's Falls or Katrine, please contact me by email, or call 705-382-5610. Please put "Newspaper ad" in the subject line. Deadline is 6 p.m. Wednesday.

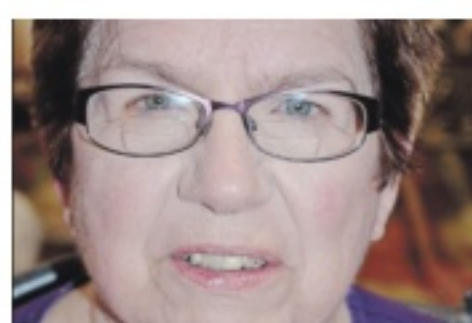
Anna Branch is a columnist with the Almaguin News. Her column, 'Burk's Falls and Katrine News', appears weekly. She can be reached at an-najb08@gmail.com.

## LET'S ALL TAKE THE POWASSAN PLUNGE

Have you heard of the Powassan Plunge? Kesley Ellis and Kathie Hogan are going swimming as soon as there is enough open water to swim at the Hydro Pond.

The object is to raise money for community recreation projects in Powassan, such as the ball diamond repairs, pool repairs and upgrades at the Hydro Pond. You can support the ladies by donating to the cause via PayPal at www.250clark.ca or at the municipal office (cash or debit). Now I hear that Peter McIsaac, mayor of the municipality of Powassan, is going in as soon as the donation total hits the \$5,000 mark.

Both the Grace House and the Powassan United



MARY HEASMAN  
Column

Church Book Room are accepting donations again. The donation drop boxes for both are located in the parking lot behind the United Church.

The 2021 Maple Hill Virtual Sap Run, supporting community recreation in Powassan and the North Bay Regional Health Centre, will be held on April 24 and 25. Because of the COVID-19 concerns, it will be

run virtually for the second year. You choose your route, lace up and run or walk over five kilometres or 10 km for adults or 500 metres for kids. For information and to register, contact www.maplehillhf.com/events or www.facebook.com/maplehillhf.

Please submit your request to have an event like a birthday or anniversary included in the column at least two weeks in advance of publication date to 705-724-2601 or email me.

Mary Heasman is a columnist with the Almaguin News. Her column, 'Powassan News', appears weekly. She can be reached at mary.bob@bell.net.

ship office. Please include your name(s), age, email, address and phone number. Winners will be announced on April 12, 2021, on Facebook and the township website and posted at the post office and Kirk's Gas. The contest is presented by the McMurrich/Monteith Recreation Committee.

Sending thoughts to any Sprucedale residents dealing with health issues or the loss of loved ones during this difficult time. Reach out and check on our neighbours and friends — I am sure they would love to hear a friendly voice. Sending happy April birthday wishes to Jim Kiers and Gay Gupta.

Lynda Howse is a columnist with the Almaguin News. Her column, 'Sprucedale News', appears weekly. She can be reached at lyndahouse@xplornet.com.

### ABOUT US

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