

2008: a year of extremes

Looking back on 2008, it was a year of extremes. We started the year with a rosy economic outlook and ended it with some pundits saying we were in the worst shape since the depression.

It was also a year of political ups and downs. Federally, Liberal leader Stéphane Dion was party leader in January and out in the cold by December. Prime Minister Stephen Harper saw his Conservative party's standing strengthened in an October election, only to find themselves almost tossed from office by a

coalition of their opponents less than two months later. Locally, Orangeville Council found itself on the defensive after there was a severe public backlash to the pay raises it voted itself in October.

There were several opportunities to cheer, however. On the sports front, Orangeville Northmen leveled all opposition en route to capturing the Minto Cup, the national junior lacrosse championship, and Dufferin County cheered Aaron Downey as he brought home the Stanley

Cup as a member of the NHL champion Detroit Red Wings. Following is a chronicle of the year that was.

January

The year began with the arrival of Alexis-Anne Thorne-Brougham, who was introduced to the world as Dufferin County's New Year's baby of 2008. Born at 5:07 p.m., Jan. 1 at the Headwaters Health Care Centre, she was the first child born to mother April Lanktree and Derek Brougham.

Provincial PC leader

John Tory appointed Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones community and social services critic.

Orangeville council was divided on how to best use a \$1 million special dividend it received from Ontario Hydro. In the midst of preparing its 2008 budget, the thrif-conscientious council was divided on how best to utilize the windfall. Mayor Rob Adams and Deputy Mayor Warren Maycock both wanted to lower the town-only property tax rate, then poised to increase 4.89 per cent. Councillor Sylvia Bradley and other council members maintained the money should be put into reserves, an argument that finally won the day, 4-3,

and with further trimming the budget passed with a 3.32 per cent tax rate hike.

As the month came to a close, Orangeville Fire Department officials were interviewing 12 prospective candidates out of an initial 39 applicants to fill the boots of volunteers who were forced to leave late 2007 because they were professional firefighters in the GTA.

February

Town of Mono council voted not to go ahead with a controversial plan to expropriate land as a contamination attenuation zone (CAZ) for leachates emanating from its local landfill.

Investigators determined the cause of a

sports dome collapse on Highway 9 east of Orangeville to be a mechanical failure that induced over-inflation. The inflatable dome at the ACTS Fitness Centre collapsed on Feb. 10 during a soccer game with a reported attendance of about 70. No one was injured.

With all challenges dropped and disputes settled, Orangeville council gave Tribunal Developments Inc. the go-ahead to develop a four-storey seniors apartment building and 16 townhouses on the west side of Riddell Road, north of Alder Street. The controversial project raised the ire of residents of a nearby development who had paid a \$16,000 premium

for properties that backed on to what they were told was a conservation area, only to find much of the area was actually zoned for development.

March

In an effort to attract new business to Orangeville, council voted to give Roto-Mill Services Ltd., a road-building recycling company, a break on the sewer rates it was to be charged. Council voted to give Roto-Mill a two-year reprieve on sewer rates that would otherwise be charged at a rate of \$1.18 per cubic metre. It is estimated that the move saved Roto-Mill \$11,210 in 2008.

Ontario Municipal Board member Norm Jackson approved the Amaranth portion of Canadian Hydro Developers Inc. Melancthon II wind farm. The order included the controversial transformer at Amaranth's 10th Line and 15 Sideroad, but also stipulates that noise monitoring should continue, required the existing transformer to be replaced by a quieter one, and a fourth sound barrier wall must be built, among other things.

On March 17, Orangeville Council gave developers unit allocations of sewer treatment for 2008 necessary to proceed with construction. Recipients of the 150 unit allocations were Edgewood Valley Phase 2A (58 units), Mono Developments (36), and Chartwell Seniors Housing (56).

April

Orangeville Council debated the issue of keeping the town's sidewalks clear of snow, ultimately deciding that all residen-

tial walks would be cleared by the town.

The Town approved the sale of the Orangeville-Brampton Railway to the Highland Railway Group of private investors, effectively ending the town's eight-year ownership of the former CP Rail line between Orangeville and Streetsville. It was agreed that the popular tourist train, the Credit Valley Explorer, would continue to operate in accordance with existing agreements.

And a major milestone was reached at the Avalon Retirement Home with resident Florence Ellis celebrating her 105th birthday.

May

The Ministry of Transportation gave Dufferin County \$1,453,363 for road and bridge construction. The funds came as part of a \$400-million grant announced in the provincial budget for municipalities outside Toronto.

In Grand Valley, a 12-hour standoff with the OPP resulted in a 41-year-old Grand Valley man facing 15 charges. The incident involved as many as 40 OPP officers who used the East Luther Grand Valley council chambers as a command post.

On a happier note, the Choices Youth Shelter broke ground on a 1,600-square-foot addition to its Townline shelter.

Once complete, the addition will have two storeys. The top floor will house a meeting room and a sound-proofed office, while the downstairs one will have a rec room and storage area.

2008 in review will continue next week



The 2009 Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl for Kids Sake campaign was launched last week with a breakfast hosted by the Best Western Inn & Suites. This year's event will be taking place on Thursday, February 19 and Sunday, February 22 at Kingpin Bowl. On hand for the announcement were Kevin Tamming, President BBBS of Dufferin, Andrew Lake, Chair of the Bowl for Kids Sake Committee, Chief Moore, Shelburne Police, Chief Tomei, Orangeville Police, Doug Thomson, Vice-President BBBS, Rob Adams, Mayor of Orangeville.



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Bookworm sez

Book has tidbits, surprises on Mounties

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Ever since you've been old enough to walk, your parents have taught you that a policeman is your friend.

If you're lost, look for a policeman or woman to help you find your way home. When you're in trouble, you can dial 9-1-1 and the police will help you. Even at school, I'll bet someone in law enforcement talked to you about staying away from drugs.

But what if the officer showed up riding a horse? Read more about it in "M is for Mountie: An RCMP Alphabet" by Polly Horvath, illustrated by Lorna Bennett.

Almost 150 years ago, settlers arrived in the Canadian West just as they had in the American West, and with them came whiskey traders. Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald knew he'd need good law enforcement in the newly-settled area, so he created an elite military force to keep the peace. The members rode horses across the regions and in 1920, they officially became the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Mounties get their starts at school, just like you do. They work hard to become cadets; they learn how to chase a criminal or climb fences safely, and they learn to see both sides of every disagreement. Wouldn't that be handy when you have arguments with your sister?

While you might think only of Mounties on horseback, there are lots of jobs in the RCMP. There are Mounties in forensics (like on TV), Mounties who do lab-work, and there's a fleet of Mountie airplanes! A highly-specialized group of Mounties called the ERT (Emergency Response Team) is always ready to go in an emergency or dangerous situa-

tion. Royal Canadian Mounted Police have kept the peace during the Klondike Gold Rush. They've made dogsled journeys in very, very cold weather. They've helped keep trouble from happening during the construction of the railroad. They've helped avoid war through their International Peace Operations Branch. You'll see their bright red uniforms on parade and on Musical Ride, when they perform with special highly-trained horses. And according to a saying that came from Montana in 1877, the Mounties "always get their man", but they can arrest women, too.

So you think you know everything there is to know about the RCMP? Think again, because this book may have some interesting tidbits and surprises for you as well as for your kids. Using gentle rhymes and sidebar information, author and British Columbia resident Polly Horvath gives kids an easy-to-understand overview of the RCMP. The narrative is supported by full-color, detailed drawings from Alberta resident Lorna Bennett. What I really like about this book is that it can be enjoyed by kids of any age: little ones can follow along with the pictures as you read the rhymes aloud, and older kids won't feel babied by the lengthier, more informative text on each page.

Bonus: they'll actually learn something. If you've got a child who loves cop shows or wants to be a law officer someday, pick up this book. For them, "M is for Mountie" is quite arresting.

"M is for Mountie" by Polly Horvath, illustrated by Lorna Bennett, c.2008, Sleeping Bear Press, \$19.95, 40 pages



BookLore

"M IS FOR MOUNTIE"

by

Polly Horvath
\$19.95

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