

# The Journal TOWN HALL

## Looking Back Part II: July-December 2019

### JULY

Our St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival kicked off its “Passion and Panache” season with premieres of *The Winter’s Tale* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Weather was cooperative for our little slice of Stratford on the St. Lawrence River. *Cyrano* stole the show thanks to the superb performance of festival Artistic Director Richard Sheridan Willis in the title role.

Fundraising for the new Prescott and area arena and recreation complex continued in the summer with a beach party at the Leo Boivin Community Centre itself sponsored by *The Row*. A big crowd enjoyed the music of Healy and Orr, partook in some libations, and raised \$5,000 for the rink build fund.

Prescott’s Sunday Night Concert Series continued to draw huge crowds through the month of July. The Fabulous BelAirs pushed the needle to well over 500 people at the start of the month, and every show clocked at least 300+ attendees in the friendly confines of the Kinsmen Amphitheatre at the Prescott Marina. Thanks to organizers Gord and Paulette McNeil and Bill Roberts for providing the riverside tunes.

### AUGUST

Prescott officially opened its new Fire Hall on Sunday, August 25. Some four years of planning and construction culminated in a celebration of the grand new \$5-million facility and our outstanding Prescott Volunteer Fire Department at virtually the



**MAYORAL MUSINGS**

Mayor Brett Todd

same site as the former fire hall and police station.

St. Lawrence River water levels finally began to subside after the second summer in three years where surging H2O caused significant shoreline troubles. While erosion was the main problem—virtually the entire beach at Kelly’s Bay was washed away early in the summer and not fully restored and reopened until August—the high water plus a cool start and end to the summer made for an abbreviated swimming and boating season.

Our summer of St. Lawrence Shakespeare in the Fort Town closed with the now-traditional community play at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church on the last weekend of August. This year’s treat was *Cabaret*, which delivered a saucy and timely message of tolerance as apropos for small towns in Ontario as for the time when shadows fell over Weimar Germany.

### SEPTEMBER

Fundraising for the new Prescott and area arena topped an incredible \$1.45 million this month. Fundraising committee co-chairs Judi Baril and David Beatty delivered this great news to the community at our September council meeting. This took us to 48% of our \$3 million goal, and set us strongly on the path to making our new arena a reality.

Ceremonial shovels

went into the ground on Friday, September 20 to mark the official start of construction on our Centennial Park Splash Pad. Thanks again to the Trillium Foundation for its grant support, MPP Steve Clark for his backing and attendance at the ground-breaking, and to the local Splash Pad Committee. Preliminary construction was finished in October, and everything is on track for a grand opening in June 2020.

Homeland Security in the United States gave the green light to covering border security for the pilot project of the proposed Prescott-Ogdensburg Pedestrian and Cyclist Ferry. Work was delayed this summer due to the reluctance of our American friends to join the Canadian Border Security Agency in offering this service for no fee to help us get this great tourism-promoting concept off the ground. But this great news allowed us to move forward with plans for three weekends of ferry service for 2020.

Hwy. 401 expansion and safety work returned to the front burner in September. A Friday, September 13 meeting that included myself, local MPP and Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark and Minister of Transportation Caroline Mulroney, and other regional mayors resumed the tasks of the Highway Operations Safety Review group that halted in 2018. That day also saw the announcement of engineering plans on the 401 overpasses between Kingston and the Hwy. 416 junction, a key step toward expanding the 401 here to a desperately

needed three lanes in each direction.

The nautical community along the St. Lawrence River joined Prescott in mourning Joanne Crack, who passed away on Monday, September 23. Captain Jo was first and foremost a lovely person who truly cared about her community, but she was also a river icon thanks to her operation of *The Prescott Anchor* on Facebook. Few people loved our river like Jo, and she is greatly missed.

### OCTOBER

After some revenue shortfalls over the past two seasons, the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival approached town council in October for a \$30,000 injection of funds to ensure that our summer theatre company can continue. After some discussion at the council table, the request was accepted and we chose to move forward together to ensure the future success of a festival that has become an ingrained part of the Fort Town.

Halloween season frightened the Fort Town this year. The spookhouse chills of Town Hall Terror ran every Saturday night at the Municipal Building. Our Zombie Walk had its third hit year. LeMar Luxe Spa Studio once more turned into Luxe Bootiques with its haunted basement. And Olde Magick hosted the fantastic Paranormal Show put on by illusionist Scott McClelland, proprietor of Spencerville’s eerie Diablo Manor. Halloween night itself was a bit of a wash-out, however, due to rainfall of monsoon proportions

that soaked even the hardest spook.

Prescott lost a dedicated member of its downtown in Cardinal Flowers and Gifts owner Mike O’Brien on Monday, October 21. Mike was a big part of the local community even before opening the store on King St. a few years ago, and was much loved by all who knew him. He is greatly missed.

### NOVEMBER

Our grant funding application for the new arena and recreation centre was submitted on November 12 as the culmination of a very long month of negotiations with both of our municipal neighbours in Augusta and Edwardsburgh Cardinal. As the old song goes, two out of three, ain’t bad. We were very gratified to have Augusta Township formally join our efforts and agree to an operational cost-sharing agreement, and for Mayor Doug Malanka to join myself and our team when presenting our arena plans to the Ministry of Infrastructure on Monday, November 4. We now look forward to the results of this grant application, expected early in 2020.

The Christmas season began with another hit edition of the Prescott Volunteer Fire Department’s Light Up the Night Santa Claus Parade. While the parade was early this year on Friday, November 14, it was already beginning to look a lot like Christmas due to cold weather and a good accumulation of snow.

Work formally resumed with the Highway Operations Safety

### DECEMBER

Our Downtown River-Walk District was full of mistletoe and holly in December as Santa Claus visited on numerous occasions. Three visits with Santa were hosted by the Downtown BIA in the impromptu North Pole Workshop set up at Property Guys, while Santa also popped in for the town tree-lighting festivities and wagon rides on Friday, December 13 and to see youngsters again on Saturday, December 21.

The annual 107.9 Coast FM Radiothon for the South Grenville Food Bank brought in \$12,362 after a day of airwave-elicited pitches on Friday, December 6. Sadly, this outburst of generosity still fell short of the \$25,000 needed to help the food bank hit its budget targets and serve its over 1,000 clients in Prescott, Augusta, and Edwardsburgh Cardinal.

And that takes us pretty much up to Monday, December 23! As this will be my last column of the year, I’d like to wish all my readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. See you in 2020!

*Mayor Brett Todd  
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## The elephant rolls over...twice

If the headline above has helped create a mental picture of a five-ton elephant rolling over in its resting place, I’m sure that you can see both the crushing damage and unintended consequences sustained by nearby persons or property. Hence, the expression “the elephant can roll-over on you” is often used to describe situations where the senior levels of government reverse their political position on matters - thus causing some financial damage and unintended consequences for persons, corporations or contracts which relied on the initial positions.



**E-C MAYOR NEWS**

Pat Sayeau

The elephant has rolled over twice in the last two weeks and we are still trying to assess the damage caused and the unintended consequences which are sure to result.

The first unexpected reversal of policy came with the announcement that the Government of Ontario had cancelled the Nation Rise Wind Farm, now in mid-construction with 12 of the 29 contracted wind generators already

constructed and 11 of 13 ship-loads of wind generator components already landed at the Port of Johnstown - and two additional ships on the way. Construction of the wind generator farm near Chrysler and Finch ceased immediately and daily shipments of components from the Port of Johnstown to the construction site also ended the same day.

The full consequences of this roll-over are not yet clear, but from a local point of view it appears that components (blades, tower sections, generators, etc.) already at the port will remain in storage, on

port property, for an undetermined period. The Port of Johnstown charges a daily storage fee based on the number of square-metres of lay-down area used and there are assurances that these daily fees will continue to be paid while the owner of the wind farm, the construction contractor and other parties sort through their alternatives, which will of course include lawsuits against the provincial government. We learned at the Port Management Committee meeting on Wednesday, December 18 that there are a number of other possibilities in play and that we can

expect an update around Jan 6 after the Christmas vacation period. When the elephant rolls-over the damage can be extensive.

The second roll-over came in the form of a letter from the Minister of the Environment notifying the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville that the Minister had cancelled the Provisional Certificate of Approval for the controversial ED-19 Waste Disposal Site. Because the announcement came after the agenda for the December 19 county council meeting had already been finalized and circulated, there has been no opportunity for county

council to assess the consequences of this decision which was more or less expected after the hard work and political pressure mounted by the Citizens Against The Dump (CAD) group. There are of course always unexpected consequences resulting from such decisions which may or may not become clear in the near term but will slowly become evident with the passage of time.

Watch my future columns for updates on these matters as they become available.

*Pat Sayeau, Mayor  
Township of  
Edwardsburgh Cardinal.*