# 0:00 – Sponsor

(Woman) The following program was made possible by Wards Lawyers. Find us at wardlegal.ca

# 0:06 – Intro

[Footsteps]

(Grignon) Some people call this ‘cottage country’. And we just call this our home. About a dozen towns, well, communities really, all connected by paved highways, gravel roads, and sure, sometimes dirt roads. It’s an area rich with culture, industry, innovation, farming, art; it’s an area with fascinating people who have really interesting stories. And this is where we celebrate these people and their stories, and report and explore our challenges too. We’ll also have some fun.

This is the Advocate Podcast: Stories from Kawartha Lakes

[Music]

(Grignon) My name is Denis Grignon. Welcome to episode one of the Advocate Podcast, brought to you by Wards Lawyers in Lindsay – your complete legal team. Find them at wardlegal.ca

On this, our premier episode, we’ll talk trivia and why it’s taking over Kawartha Lakes! The people who volunteer as Community Care drivers are much more than a simple shuttle service. We go on a ride-along with one of these special chauffeurs.

# 1:22 – Lindsay Downtown Business Association

But first, we’ll take you inside the Lindsay Business Association’s recent Annual General Meeting, where the topic that’s pretty much on every Kent Street business owners mind is—

[Loud construction noise – machinery and trucks]

Uh, hey folks in the orange vests over there with the jackhammer and the dump truck and the bulldozer, you really have to be doing that right now? We’re trying to tell our listeners about what’s facing Kent Street for the foreseeable future.

[Loud construction noise]

(Melissa McFarland) Um, no doubt about it, the next three years are going to be incredibly challenging, um, there’s great value in working together and that’s what we wanted to make today about.

[Loud construction noise]

(Charlie McDonald) I’d like to welcome all new businesses who joined us in the past year. 2020 and twenty-one and twenty-two is going to be challenging for everyone, but exciting.

(Grignon) Okay, we took some creative liberties there with the sound effects. Melissa McFarland and Charlie McDonald were not competing with heavy construction noise at their recent Lindsay BIA meeting, but they, along with businesses in Lindsay’s downtown core, are preparing themselves for more than a year of their main street being dug up.

But the mood at this meeting; it wasn’t the hostile environment you might’ve expected. There were no pitchforks, no picket signs, heck they didn’t even need a question and answer session. It was offered, but no takers. BIA Board Chair Charlie McDonald says it’s largely because businesses like his (he owns The Grand Experience Restaurant), they’ve been bracing themselves for this.

(McDonald) Our reaction was, always is, is that this was going to be very tough for downtown. We, we knew it gonna happen. We knew the infrastructure had to be done. Uh, we’ve talked to other cities and, uh, we knew that, uh, it’s gonna cause a lot of pain. So, uh, first thing we did right off the bat was got involved with Engineering, Economic Development, talked to the Mayor, and I think that really helped us, uh, so far, uh, getting involved and seeing what we can do to help get past this, uh, reconstruction. Uh, what’re we gonna do to, uh, survive? So, uh, you know, back entrances, front entrances, do you do takeout, do you do things that, uh; how are you going to get the business you might lose just because you might now have the foot traffic, and that’s what we’re all focusing on right now.

(Grignon) There are merchants, I’m sure, that you’ve bumped into that said “Why does this have to happen? Why can’t we just leave well enough alone?” and what do you tell those people?

(McDonald) Well, um, to be positive, you tell them that at the end of the day, it’s going to be a beautiful, beautiful downtown that’ll last for the next fifty to seventy-five years. Um, work with us and we’ll work with you, we’ll make sure that uh, we’ll try to make you successful.

(Grignon) You’re coming from a different point of view too given that you do have a business. You’re not someone omniscient person from the City. How much weight does that carry with those naysayers?

(McDonald) Well, it- um- absolutely and there’s lots of restaurants and lots of businesses downtown and we all look at, uh, ways so we can help each other and I think if we welcome everybody through our back door that can get to our neighbour, I think that’s gonna really help everybody to be, uh, to be successful and, uh, and so far we’re all talkin’ and we have some really good, young entrepreneurs that is really working, and we’re all working together.

(Grignon) What’s the biggest challenge right now? I heard a lot about parking, but that’s certainly not the only one.

(McDonald) Parkin’s always been uh, uh, gonna be a challenge, but we, we’ll address that as it comes and you know what? You can’t foresee and you can’t do anything you don’t know so once we find out things, we’ll work with them. We’ve been taking care of the parking now for a little over two and a half years – the City gave us that responsibility; they’re very happy with what we’ve done – so—

(Grignon) And what have you done?

(McDonald) We hired our own liaison so we decide, uh, uh, when tickets are given out and, uh, you know, it’s never been about the tickets, it’s always about bein’ friendly and welcoming people downtown. And that’s, uh, you know, that’s what we’ve always said so going around giving tickets is not the answer downtown. It’s welcoming people downtown and just keep the traffic flowing.

(Grignon) At tonight’s meeting, you welcomed comments. Nobody had anything to say. I’m just wondering, what has this done for the business community in terms of galvanizing you or maybe even creating conflict possibly with you and some of the others?

(McDonald) Well, I looked at the group tonight and I’ll betcha that we’ve talked to probably every one of them and I think that most of their answers have probably been, uh, answered. And, uh, yes, they might be happy but they’ve been answered and, uh, it was obvious tonight by having nobody having questions, nobody was mad, because we know what’s coming up and we just have to work together to make the best of it.

(Grignon) What do you think this conversation will be like two years from now?

(McDonald) I’m a strong believer that people are going to be very happy the way downtown’s gonna look and I think it’s gonna bring a lot of business so keep working hard, let’s survive, and I think it’ll pay off.

(Grignon) What would you like to tell the consumers out there, the people in Lindsay who are cursing the fact that they can’t drive down Kent street? What can you tell them?

(McDonald) Well, we’re gonna tell everybody out there that you can still come downtown. It’s going to a little painful. We’re gonna be outta there by June. There will always be a way to get to all the businesses. The sidewalks will be open. Please don’t forget about us. Please come down and, uh, and we’ll welcome you to our doors.

(Grignon) I’m gonna ask you point-blank something. Will everyone make it through this?

(McDonald) Well, I hope so. I really hope that everybody does and the people who work really, really hard to, uh, do whatever they can to promote their business, and we promote everybody. I’m very hopeful that everybody will make it. Will they? I’m not sure, but I’m sure are hopin’ that everybody makes it.

# 6:47 – Interlude

[Music]

# 6:58 – Olde Gaol Museum quiz fundraisers at Pie Eyed Monk, Lindsay

(Grignon) Hey thanks for being with us! Quick question: what news magazine podcast from Kawartha Lakes launched in mid-February 2020?

The answer is… Well, you know, it’s this one! The Advocate Podcast: Stories from Kawartha Lakes! So how was my trivia master delivery there? Because there might be a part-time gig in my future. You see, at last count, there were no fewer than seven hundred and fifty trivia nights in our area. That’s based on research I made up just now. Okay, not seven hundred and fifty but trivia nights are becoming a thing in our parts. February 22 at the Omemee Curling Club, March 7 in Downeyville, and in Fenelon Falls, the Fenelon Falls Brewing Company regularly holds one on Thursdays. So why this sudden popularity, locally at least, in trivia?

Well, join me dear podcast listeners as we enter the top floor of the Pie Eyed Monk in Lindsay. This is where the Olde Gaol Museum holds regular fundraising trivia nights. It’s where I, along with Team Advocate, recently competed against about a dozen other teams of eight or nine people each. And it’s where I quizzed the museum’s Barbara Doyle – quizzed, you get it? – it’s where I asked Barbara about this local phenomenon.

[Quiz question asked]

(Grignon) Some people were skeptical that this would work. Why did you know that this would work tonight?

(Barbara Doyle) I think a lot of people are missing that ‘thing to go to’ for a couple of hours on a weeknight that’s a grown-up activity, but not out too long so you know, a couple of hours is great, um, not too late at night, and people like to get together with their friends and have real, face-to-face conversation, and people are fairly competitive so that nice, fun competition that’s in aid of a charity is always a good thing to go to.

[Quiz question asked]

(Grignon) You mentioned the competition. What did you notice [inaudible] the people?

(Doyle) It was really wonderful to see the answers that we weren’t sure of, like, the questions we weren’t sure of, that they would get, they were, like, yes they got it because the difference in the age ranges, we weren’t sure if it would play against everybody, but it really did and the teams are varied so people were just having a great time just competing even amongst themselves to know who got the answer, not even against other teams.

[Quiz interlude]

(Unknown) Okay, here’s the big one.

(Grignon) Here’s the big one. This is on me. I gotta get this.

(Unknown) No pressure.

(Grignon) No pressure.

(Quiz announcer) Number 19: The First music video played on MTV – Video [cutoff]

(Grignon) YES!

(Cheering)

[End interlude]

(Grignon) Well, I’m going to bask in the glory of knowing what The Buggles song was.

(Doyle) Team Advocate’s always great.

(Grignon) The Video killed—

(Doyle) Oh yeah, yeah

(Grignon) I’m going to bask in that. Okay, you’re obviously a seasoned pro when it comes to these, you have some experience, so what does it take, in your opinion, to excel at this as a competitor?

(Doyle) To excel at trivia? Uhm, basically just letting your brain wander to everything you ever learned or knew or random fact. It’s – you never know just what the questions are going to be and what you might have perking around in your…

[Quiz question asked]

(Grignon) How do deal with the stress ‘cause I noticed just playing this that I’m—

(Doyle) Are you stressed?

(Grignon) Well, yeah! If I was just sitting around a coffee table, I’d know these answers, a lot of them like that, but the giving environment, I was more stressed so how do you deal with that?

(Doyle) I think it’s just meant to be a fun time. So frankly a little beer from the Pie Eyed Monk helps a lotta people and uh, no, it’s just meant to be a fun time because there’s no real prize other than glory, um, people don’t have a lotta money, it’s only two dollars to play, it’s in support of charity so I think people come out and there’s nothing to be lost. So it’s just all for fun.

[Quiz question answered]

(Grignon) My thanks to Barbara Doyle of the Victoria County Historical Society and, uh, the quiz master. The Olde Gaol Museum’s next trivia night is February 27 – oh right, you’re probably wondering how Team Advocate did. Well, let me answer that in the form of a question.

What Kawartha Lakes-based magazine, and now podcast, tied for first in its debut as a trivia team? Yeah, you know the answer to that one.

# 11:36 – Interlude

[Music]

# 11:41 – Sponsor

(Grignon) Hey thanks for checking us out – for free! You wanna know why you’re able to listen to the Advocate podcast on our website or download it for free? It’s thanks to our official sponsor Wards Lawyers in Lindsay. Jason and Carissa Ward and their team offer a wide range of legal services. Learn more at wardlegal.ca

# 12:00 – Well-Defined with Kawartha Lakes Public Library

(Grignon) And in this very first episode, we bring you a semi-regular feature wherein we introduce you to what is quite probably a new or unfamiliar word, but a word – noun, verb, adjective, heck maybe even an adverb – that is especially timely and pertinent to the people in Kawartha Lakes. We do this with some help from the folks with Kawartha Lakes Public Library. We call this feature…

(Computer voice) Well-Defined. What does that mean anyway?

(Grignon) Okay, I’m at the library now on Kent Street with Lyndsay Bowen. She is the library specialist for outreach and community engagement for the Kawartha Lakes Public Library. Thank you so much for being with us, Lyndsay.

(Lyndsay Bowen) Thank you very much for having me. I’m really excited to be on here.

(Grignon) Okay, well before we uh, we uh, introduce our listeners to the very first well-defined entry, which you’re gonna provide, um, we have – what do you have going on at the library these days?

(Bowen) Uh, so we have a new book club called Pages and Pints, and uh, we actually host it at the Pie Eyed Monk Brewery right across the street. So we meet the third Thursday of every month and uh, talk about different topics so, for example, coming up we’ve got, uh, marginalized voices, uh, so that’s always a really great program. If people want more information, there’s a Facebook group called Pages and Pints Kawartha Lakes.

Another one I’m bringing you is from Kinmount, just making sure we’re getting out to, uh, other library locations as well – we do have fourteen in the City of Kawartha Lakes – um, they have started a Doc and Talk program. So essentially you, uh, watch a documentary and get to sorta discuss that after. The first one coming up is also the third Thursday of the month and they are showing The Land Between which I think is a very, uh, locally originated.

(Grignon) Great, okay, well I’m, we’re looking forward to that. Okay so set up what our, uh, our first entry is for this special feature. What word did you come up with?

(Bowen) Okay, are you ready for it?

(Grignon) I’m ready.

(Bowen) Alright, consanguineous is our word.

(Grignon) Consanguineous.

(Bowen) That’s correct, yes.

(Grignon) Okay.

(Bowen) So that means ‘of the same blood or origin.’ So I thought about this in terms of Family Day that’s coming up, um, so I can use it in an example. So people do not need to be consanguineous to be considered family.

(Grigion) So it is a noun then.

(Bowen) It is.

(Grignon) Got it. Consanguineous.

(Bowen) Consanguineous.

(Grignon) Okay, did I pronounce that properly?

(Bowen) I think so as long as I did too.

(Grignon) Well, if you look at the dictionary, I think they have the little hats on the words so we know what they—

(Bowen) I wrote that down too to practice it.

(Grignon) Con-sin-guineous.

(Bowen) That’s right.

(Grignon) Okay. Hey, consanguineous is now part of our lexicon. Thank you so much Lyndsay.

(Bowen) Thank you very much for having me.

# 14:33 – Interlude

[Music]

# 14:34 – Sponsor

(Linda Williams) My name is Linda Williams from Wards Lawyers in Lindsay, your official sponsor of the Advocate Podcast: Stories from Kawartha Lakes.

# 14:44 – Community Care Ride-Along with Mike Puffer

(Grignon) Consanguine- Consanguineous, I’m not even going to try to spell that one. You’re listening to episode one of the Advocate Podcast: Stories from Kawartha Lakes. Hey Mike!

(Mike) How you doing?

(Grignon) Alright, I’m taggin’ along. Thanks for letting me tag along man.

(Mike) No problem at all.

(Grignon) It’s appreciated.

(Mike) So, to show you what I’ve been doing to it already.

(Grignon) So there’s are your, uh, your destination sheets?

(Mike) That’s right. So I get this the day before.

(Grignon) Okay.

(Mike) And then I call the client and tell them…

(Grignon) That’s Mike, as in Mike Puffer, just one of the many drivers for Community Care, who shuttle people in need, those who are elderly or with special needs, to and from their appointments. Anything from medical visits and treatments to community services and social gatherings. Now the drivers do get their mileage covered, but this is really a volunteer gig, and its something that Mike, who used to have a full-time paid position with Community Care, has really embraced since retirement.

(Puffer) I’ve already—I was up at, uh, the hospital at quarter to seven this morning, to this man to dialysis, and we’re going to pick up him up, uh, shortly after eleven. So now we’re going to pick up a lady and take her to, uh, the eye—uh, optometrist and then we’re going to pick up our fellow at dialysis, take him home, go back and get the lady at the eye doctor.

(Grignon) This is not a leisurely drive is it? I mean, you have checkpoints, you gotta make this schedule.

(Puffer) See what I did?

(Grignon) Oh, you’ve written it down here?

(Puffer) I actually wrote out, by list, the you know, there you are, 10:45 Denis comes, 11 AM from 11:15. Yeah, it’s busy.

(Grignon) Okay. Alright, well, I’m happy to tag along if you’ll have me.

(Puffer) Absolutely. Come on, well, let’s go.

(Grignon) Alright, car’s already warm.

[Car door opening.]

(Grignon) You really are more than just doing the job, though, of driving.

(Puffer) Well, I find that as you go along, you know, you exchange pleasant chit-chat and, uh, people like to open up and sometimes maybe they tell you more than they really should.

(Grignon) How do you deal with that?

(Puffer) Well it’s, you know, you just, you respect their privacy, just nod and, uh, emphasize with their situation. I think people like to just talk and, uh, have someone listen.

(Grignon) Describe that first day to me when you were behind the wheel.

(Puffer) Well, you know what made it, what eased those butterflies is the very first trip was to take a lady to the community health centre, uh, the building where I used to work. So, uh, she asked me if I knew where I was going and I assured her I could get her there.

(Grignon) Okay so this is pickup number two today right?

(Puffer) This is pickup number four today.

(Grignon) Four?

(Puffer) Yeah. Yeah. Irene, this is Denis Grignon.

(Irene) Hi. I’m good, I think.

[Laughter]

(Grignon) So what’s this like for you, Irene, getting to where you have to get versus taking a cab, knowing this familiar face and this familiar voice?

(Irene) Well, I like to take Community Care because I know that they have a police check so I know that they’re okay. And the cars are usually much cleaner than let’s say if you’re taking a cab. And I have more confidence in the drivers and actually I’ve always had a very pleasant driver, and a very careful driver, so we’ll see what, uh, what Mike is like.

[Laughter]

(Grignon) Oh so is this your first drive with Mike?

(Irene) With Mike? Yes, yes, this is an experience so you better drive carefully or I’ll report you.

(Mike) Okay.

(Grignon) Well, we’re into it now for about 40 seconds or so, how’s he doing?

(Irene) He’s doing very well. He was very pleasant. He came all the way up to the door to get me. I thought he wanted to come inside. Okay well I think I may be about an hour.

(Puffer) Okay, well that’s fine.

(Irene) Okay.

(Puffer) I’ll give you my phone number, but we’ll plan on an hour, and if it’s earlier, you can call me.

(Irene) And most of the drivers I’ve had so far, they’re very patient, like waiting. Because sometimes, you know, you tell them you’ll be ready in an hour and it’s an hour five minutes, ten minutes or—and you’re sitting on pins and needles “oh the driver’s gonna leave me!”

[Puffer laughs.]

(Puffer) We won’t leave ya.

(Irene) Okay, that’s fine.

(Grignon) What do you do for that hour or, as Irene said, that hour and a half case possibly where you have to kill time? What do you do, Mike?

(Puffer) Well something! I bring a magazine or a book with me, um, uh, one day I had a dialysis patient in Peterborough so that’s four hours. So I went to the Peterborough Library, found a nice, comfortable corner and read my book.

(Grignon) Can you see yourself ever doing this role Irene?

(Irene) No, no, no, not at all.

(Grignon) Why not?

(Irene) Not at all, no, I, um, I don’t think I’d be as pleasant as some of the drivers I have.

(Grignon) Tell me about that pleasant personality. Why is that important?

(Irene) Well, it makes the ride easier and it, uh, calms you down a little bit because I think when you’re going for a doctor’s appointment or something, people are edgy, like I’d say I’m edgy, so if you have a nice driver that’s gonna talk to you all the way to, you know, where you’re going for your appointment, it kinda calms you down.

(Puffer) If, uh, the clients want to chat, uh, just offering a kind ear, uhm, euh, you don’t want to get into too many, uh, personal, uh, things about them unless they offer that.

(Grignon) And what do you do?

(Puffer) Oh you just nod and uh, and emphasize with them and, uh, smile politely. There’s opinions and there’s people of all walks out there and, uh, so maybe in a way it’s good to, uh, to, uh, be reminded of that. Okay, I’ll get Irene in.

(Irene) That’s okay, I can make it in.

(Puffer) Are you sure? Well, I’ve got my phone number here.

(Irene) Okay, will you give it to me please? Well, it was a pleasure meeting you.

(Grignon) Same to you, Irene. You know, just so you’ll know how small a town this is, you may bump into my wife in there. She was getting her eyes checked this morning.

(Irene) Oh really? What’s her name?

(Grignon) Nancy Payne.

(Irene) Nancy Payne? Okay.

(Puffer) You know what I always say is, uh, that means you have to be careful what you’re doing ‘cause somebody knows you everywhere you go.

(Grignon) What do you prefer more? The talkative client or the one who’s very reserved and just get me from here to there?

(Puffer) Oh, um, definitely someone who’s at least able to, uh, you know, exchange conversation about weather or whatever. Um, yeah if they’re quiet and really are, uh, and they might be for a good reason, you know, if it’s a medical appointment, they might not be, you know, that well. Um, that’s okay too, I certainly respect that.

(Grignon) Straight up, Mike: Is there ever a client you’re going ‘Okay, gotta brace myself a little bit for this one’?

(Puffer) Oh for sure. Um, you know they may be high maintenance or uh—

(Grignon) What’s high maintenance?

(Puffer) Oh, uhm, just, uh, you know, uh, I had a, uh, a mother with her young child who had some learning challenges and he was, uh, nice little kid but just, um, all over the place. And I was left with the sense of uh, ‘boy that mum, she must be beat by the end of the day’.

[Car door shuts. Door alert sound rings.]

(Puffer) This guy’s name is Dale. There we go.

(Dale) Thank you.

(Puffer) I’ll take the wheelchair back.

(Dale) Thanks. Yeah, uh, I tell ya, thank God for these drivers. I’d have nowhere to get around without Community Care.

(Grignon) I’m looking at Mike, you know, buckle you in and he’s just kinda gentle soul. What’s it like for you to know that you’ve got this regular person that’s using a regular vehicle—

(Dale) Oh, it’s awesome.

(Grignon) Yeah?

(Dale) Yeah.

(Grignon) What makes it awesome?

(Dale) Oh, just everything. Um, all the help I get, the care the drivers have, oh a great guy. [Dale laughs.] Oh they’re all great guys. They do this outta their heart.

(Puffer) Not too slippery here.

(Dale) No, that should be okay.

(Puffer) Dry pavement actually.

(Dale) See ya.

(Grignon) See ya later. Thanks for letting me hang out with you.

[Car door shuts]

(Puffer) Well, there you go. I mean, he just, uh, wished me all the best and have a good day and, uh, he really appreciates it and uh, hopes that we’ll do it again.

(Grignon) What have you learned about yourself as a person and as a driver doing this?

(Puffer) That I like people, like the variety in that every week it’s a different mix, and um, that um, there’s a bit of a sense of satisfaction at the end of the day, that uh, I helped somebody get to an appointment even though they didn’t drive anymore, that didn’t mean that things had to come to an end.

# 23:48 – Interlude

[Music]

# 23:54 – Close

(Grignon) My morning with Mike. Community Care is always looking for volunteer drivers like Mike Puffer. You can contact them by going to their website, ccckl.ca.

Well, you’ve just listened to the very first episode of the Advocate Podcast: Stories from Kawartha Lakes. Original music for the program was written and performed by Gerald Van Halteren, someone you should really think about if you’re looking to take music lessons. And a big, big thank you to our official sponsor Wards Lawyers in Lindsay for making this show possible. Check them out at wardlegal.ca.

Hey, we’d love to hear your thoughts on the programme. You can contact us through our parent print and online publication The Lindsay Advocate. We already know you got an internet machine because you used it to find us on iTunes, Spotify, Facebook or through our website, lindsayadvocate.ca.

A new Advocate podcast drops every two weeks. You see? We’ve got this interweb language down – drops every two—the next one is February 29. My name is Denis Grignon. To contact me and find out more about my other gig, you can go to cleancomedian.ca

Okay, Gerald, or can I call you GVH? I guess I just did. Alright GVH, take us out.

# 25:08 – Ending

[Music]