

## *Jean-Paul Charlebois* *honored Saturday* **Memories of a different era**

By Richard Mahoney

**ST-BERNARDIN** — Last fall, after 33 years in municipal politics, Jean-Paul Charlebois bowed out of the political arena.

On Saturday, April 25, Charlebois will take a formal bow at a banquet in his honor at the Caledonia community centre in St-Bernardin. The soirée, which begins with cocktails at 6 p.m., is being organized to recognize his 33 years on Caledonia council.

Charlebois, who had been reeve for 23 years, withdrew from last November's race for the ward 1 seat on The Nation Municipality council. At the time, Charlebois criticized the merger of Caledonia, St-Isidore, South Plantagenet and Cambridge which created The Nation. He disagreed with the new ward boundaries and felt amalgamation, which reduced the number of Prescott-Russell municipalities from 18 to eight, was going too far too quickly.

Since then, "I haven't taken any interest in it," says Charlebois. The new municipalities were officially formed in January. "We have to wait a little before we can comment on how it's working," he remarks.

It is fitting that his fête is held in the community centre, which he cites as one of the township's major accomplishments. The

centre was built 20 years ago, when provincial government grants were plentiful, and local politicians routinely rejected any talk of mergers.

"Wintario grants were available for projects then. We built the centre with Wintario grants and volunteer labor. I don't think we will see that again. The money is not there. But I would be surprised to see that kind of volunteer effort again," he comments.

Thanks to volunteers, the community centre has traditionally enjoyed surpluses. "That money was used to improve the park, at no cost to the taxpayers," he says.

Charlebois recalls that as reeve, the township acquired two heavily-subsidized development road projects.

One disappointment is the government's delay in providing Highway 417 access at McCrimmon. "The access is there now but it took too long. During that period, we lost some companies that were interested in building in that area," he relates.

Charlebois recounts that municipal tax rates were reasonable. "The tax rates were always a good average. We didn't want to go too low, because we had to provide services, but we didn't want to put a heavy burden on the taxpayers," he says.



Jean-Paul Charlebois

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## **PCPS and Laggan** **vice-principals transferred** **Gary Barton bows out**

By Andy Gural

**VANKLEEK HILL** — After 14 years as principal of Vankleek Hill Collegiate Institute, Gary Barton is giving up his day job.

Barton, a Vankleek Hill councillor on Champlain Township council and Vankleek Hill's deputy fire chief, is one of many school administrators and teachers to accept retirement.

Barton was appointed VCI principal in 1984 after serving as principal of Plantagenet Public School. His successor is Jane Wright, currently principal of Tagwi Secondary School.

The Upper Canada District School Board also announced last week that Pleasant Corners Public School will have a new vice-principal, Sue Page. PCPS's present vice-

principal Joyce Bellman has been promoted to the principal's post at Plantagenet Public School. She replaces the late Robert Bennett.

Russell Public School will have a new principal, Catherine McVie. Joy Rutherford will be vice-principal.

Other appointments in Prescott-Russell include Andrea Acheson to the vice-principal's post at Rockland District High School.

### **LAGGAN PUBLIC SCHOOL**

Principal Maureen Hart is leaving Laggan Public School. She is being transferred to Viscount Alexander Public School. Replacing her is Gary Palmer.

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