

LOCAL NEWS

# Holding areas around landfill sites cause concern

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 "Maybe it's affecting more than the people who live within 500 feet."

Cramahe council said it would contact the Ministry of Environment for clarification of policy on holding area designations.

Located on land owned by Cecile Day, the privately-operated dump was apparently closed 25 years ago. The 1987 MOE memo to the township said the site had accepted domestic commercial and solid non-hazardous wastes over a 60 by 100-metre area. There was also scrap metal on the surface of the site.

On November 27, Penryn Road resident Bruce Melnichuk demanded Cramahe Township council pay for all necessary engineering tests to have the holding area cancelled from around the dump site - and to assure there were no environmental pollution concerns. Mr. Melnichuk maintains that because the township issued building permits for seven residences with the holding area, despite the 1987 MOE recommendation, property owners should not pay for the studies required before any further building permits can be issued.

Mr. Melnichuk announced three residential wells in the area were contaminated with E. coli bacteria. Mr. Melnichuk demanded the township undertake the testing of all area residential wells, streams and soils in the area. Cramahe council pointed out, once again, that the former

dump was privately owned and operated, never used or maintained by the municipality. However, concerned about Mr. Melnichuk's claims of E. Coli contamination, council moved to send letters to all residents within any of the five holding areas surrounding all known and identified former private and municipal landfill sites urging well water be tested for safety.

In the meantime, Mr. Melnichuk had contacted Northumberland County waste management department for information.

At the December 11 Cramahe council committee meeting, the response to the Melnichuk enquiries was read.

"Bacterial contamination is typically related to deteriorated or improper well construction, local septic systems or local agricultural practices like manure/fertilizer spreading," Northumberland County Waste Management Manager Tom Murphy outlines in a report to Acting Northumberland County Chief Administrative Officer Bill Pyatt and Cramahe Reeve Jim Williams.

But Mr. Melnichuk continues to demand the municipality carry out tests to indicate if there is a leachate problem from the Penryn Road dumpsite. Cramahe Township continues to remind Mr. Melnichuk the dump was operated privately, is owned privately and was never a municipally-used or maintained operation.

The questions remaining are how, when and why the seven building permits for residences within the 500-

metre "holding" area surrounding the former Penryn Road dumpsite came to be issued in light of the 1987 memorandum from the Ministry of Environment and the 1998 updating of the Cramahe Official Plan.

The 1987 MOE memorandum identifies five landfill sites for which it recommended 500-metre "holding" buffer zones for development. For any development within those areas, the MOE recommends the municipality require gas, leachate and hydrological studies be completed by a qualified engineer.

The five sites identified in 1987 were:

- Penryn Ra, Lot 11, Concession 5, privately owned, no recent activity;
- Lot 18 or 19, Concession 8 (southwest of Morganston), inactive;
- Lot 31, Concession 1, Bowes canning, Colborne;
- the county landfill site on Telephone Road, now inactive; and
- Lot 33, Concession 8 (north of Castleton north of Mount Pleasant Road), inactive.

Cramahe Reeve Jim Williams said he is aware of at least one other inactive former landfill site which was privately operated on Blythe Park Road (and there may be others we don't know about." The council is concerned for public health, Mr. Williams emphasizes, but it is not ultimately responsible for privately-owned properties.

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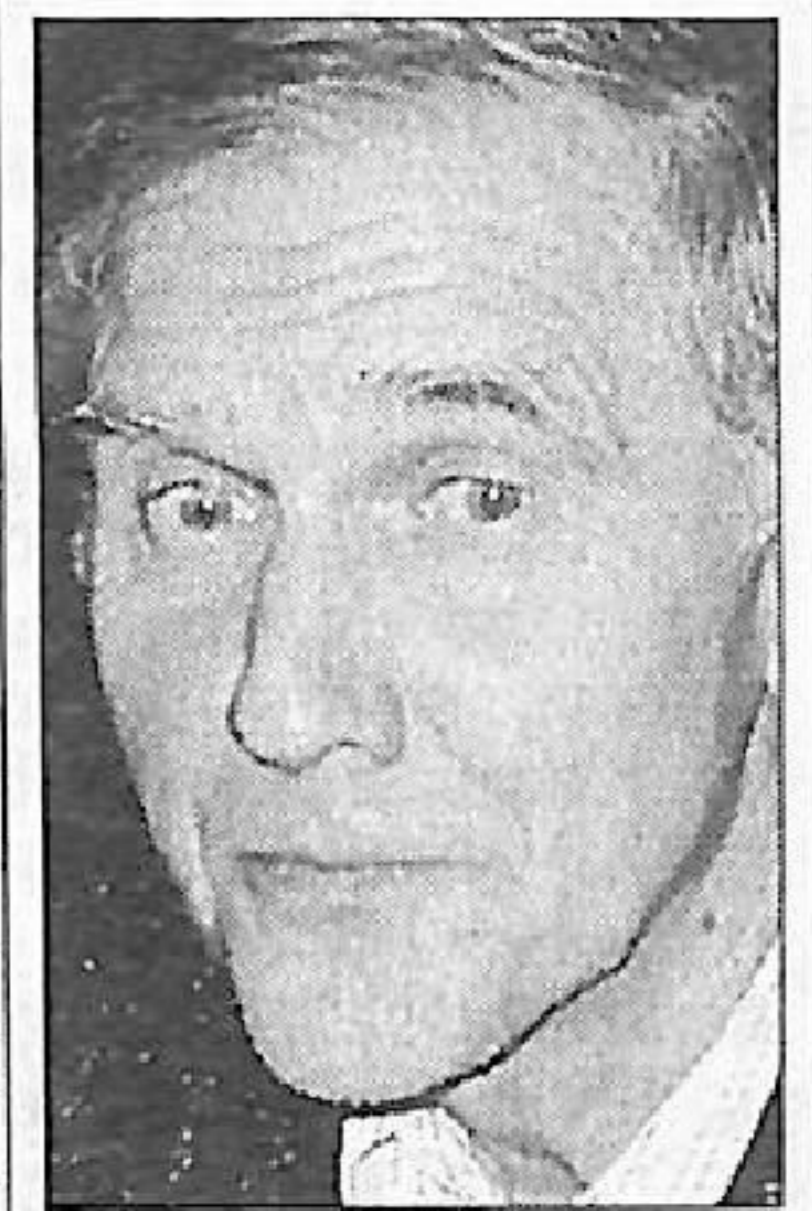
EDITORIAL

## Persons of the year

Year-end is a time of reflection and assessment. What went on? What was achieved? What people stood out in the news in the year 2001?

This year, we're nominating two people as People of the Year. It's not that either individual garnered the most headlines or necessarily caused the greatest stir. Rather, these two individuals have provided inspiration, reassurance and enormous public contributions.

At the county level, we salute Dr. Alex Hukowich, the Medical Officer of Health for the Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit. He's the person accountable for public health and safety for the counties listed - which is a daunting responsibility, if you take it seriously. Dr. Hukowich does.



Dr. Alex Hukowich

Dr. Hukowich has been a reasoned and responsible advocate for public health spending and programs, which has landed him in the political hot seat more than once this past year. It takes guts to stand your ground on water quality administration concerns when your annual budget relies heavily on provincial government dollars. It takes guts to urge increased or continued funding for infant and toddler health programs.

Dr. Hukowich has made himself available at innumerable public meetings all over his huge Health Unit area this past year to speak plainly on "hot" issues like biosolids, cormorant guano, well testing, flu immunization, etc. etc. His is the voice of reason - not always a popular message in the heat of public passion.

Thank heavens he's *our* MoH.



Jacalyn Baker-Smith

At the local level, no contest for Person of the Year. It's Jacalyn Baker-Smith, the intrepid gardener who maintains the municipal gardens in Colborne.

A so-called part-time contract employee, this woman is out at all hours of the day and night ensuring the gardens will bloom this year and for years to come. There's always a smile of welcome, a cheerful greeting or welcome for residents and visitors.

Despite the marauding vandals that hit her handiwork several times this past season, Jacalyn grieved a few hours then launched into energetic restoration work.

Thank heaven's she's *our* landscape gardener.