

2001 will not soon be forgotten

by Kate McNamee
Weekend Edition



The oranges look great and the future looks bright for people in West Niagara. Vineland IGA owner Cindy Cameron was one of a number of people we asked to comment on the past year, in terms of local and other issues.

Photo by Kate Stark

Terrorism, infrastructure and community growth are a few of the images that spring to mind as many of West Niagara's political and community leaders take a reflective look on the past year, and the most significant events in each of their communities and world wide.

In the Town of Grimsby the new Welcome Centre made the list as the most significant local event for both Mayor Nick Andreychuk and 2nd Vice President of the Grimsby Chamber of Commerce Wendy Watt.

"The Opening of the Welcome Centre...is going to provide a lot of opportunities in the Niagara West area, while helping to provide opportunities in the tourism and economic aspects," said Mrs. Watt. "In the past three months we've already had a lot of people express interest in moving into our community, opening businesses and joining the Chamber."

Rev. Robert Docherty of St. John's Church in Grimsby, also noted that local residents have increased their community spirit and social awareness through the development of many local outreach programs. In his home church, Rev. Docherty cited his congregation's "Dinner On Us" program, as an example, which provides a free meal and community gathering to any resident on the last Wednesday of every month.

"In the beginning of the year we started out with approximately 50 people attending," he explained. "By the end of December we had 175 people in attendance."

Reaching out to others was a common theme of reflection for all the Grimsby leaders as they recalled the most significant international event in the past year. Recognizing the September 11, terrorist attacks in the United States, Rev. Docherty and Mrs. Watt suggested that the events have imposed a natural desire for many citizens to re-evaluate their own lives and list of priorities in the realization that life is indeed fragile.

"There's no doubt that the September 11 catastrophe effected Grimsby like everyone else in Canada," agreed Mayor Andreychuk. "From the human side you saw people in Grimsby responding like everyone else in Ontario...and honestly, that was the kind of reaction I would expect from people living in Grimsby. They are generally kind and compassionate and are willing to help others whenever possible."

In the Town of Lincoln, Mayor Ray Konkle and Chamber President Eric Gilbert also cited the September 11 attacks as the most significant event in world history in 2001.

"The stupidity of September 11, and I call it stupidity because the willful destruction without the declaration of war is unthinkable and incomprehensible," said Mayor Konkle. "I mean, even in the Greek times or Roman times or any other time you could always see the army coming. You could actually watch the soldiers advance over the hills and prepare yourself before they attacked your home or village or laid siege to your castle if you will."

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