



THE BEACON

of St. Clair Township

Issue 4

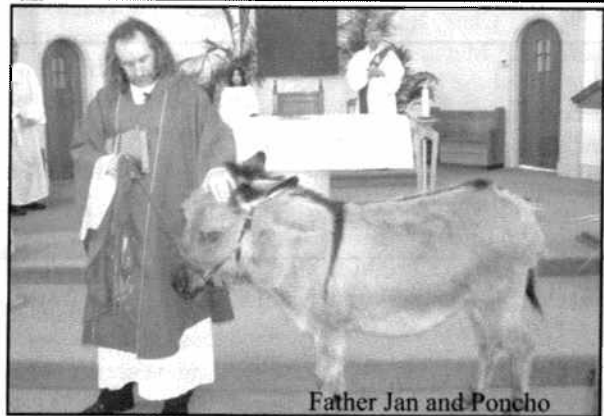
Volume 2

April 2008

Palm Sunday visitor delights Corunna church congregation

This year's Palm Sunday service at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Corunna featured a very special guest. Poncho, the miniature donkey, was on hand to help Father Jan Pochwala illustrate the Easter story, specifically, the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. Little Poncho accompanied Father Jan in the procession from the parish hall to the church and right up to the altar. Poncho is owned by Paul and Jan Smith of Oil Springs Line in St. Clair Township.

One of the features that sets Poncho's breed apart from other breeds is the naturally-occurring cross that marks his back. This cross has found its own place in Easter lore. It is said that, when Jesus was condemned to be crucified, the little donkey he'd been riding wanted to



Father Jan and Poncho

help him carry the cross. When he was pushed away by Roman soldiers, he remained at the scene of the crucifixion until everyone had left. As he turned to leave, the shadow of the cross fell upon his back and remained there as a tribute to his loyalty.

Fire chief stresses importance of smoke alarms

The importance of smoke alarms was vividly demonstrated recently when five people, including three young children, died in a house fire in Hamilton, Ontario. It has been confirmed by the Office of the Fire Marshal investigators that there were no working smoke alarms in the victims' home.

"How many more fire deaths have to needlessly occur before people get the message," said Roy Dewhirst, Fire Chief of St. Clair Township. "This young family would probably still be alive today if there had been working smoke alarms in their home."

So far this year, 32 people have died in fires across Ontario, and many of these have been children. Some of these investigations are still ongoing, but the

St. Clair Township Fire Department is urging everyone to test their smoke alarms.

In order to survive a fire, you need to be provided with an early warning and know what to do when the smoke alarm sounds. In Ontario, the law states that a working smoke alarm must be located on every storey of a residence and outside all sleeping areas. For added protection, it is recommended that smoke alarms be installed inside all bedrooms.

"Smoke alarms can give you and your family the precious time needed to get out safely," said Deputy Fire Chief Tom Boon. "A few minutes spent testing your smoke alarms and practicing a home fire

Continued on page 3

INSIDE

Council Notes.....	2
Council Diary	4
Hazardous Waste Disposal.....	4
Community Policing.....	5
Speak Your Mind.....	6
Around the Township.....	8

TO CONTACT US

Individuals, schools or organizations that wish to publicize a non-profit event or suggest feature story subjects or topics can do so free of charge by e-mailing:

beacon@twp.stclair.on.ca

or writing to: The Beacon, c/o St. Clair Civic Centre, 1155 Emily Street, Mooretown, Ont., N0N 1M0.

The deadline for submissions is the third Monday of each month.



COUNCIL NOTES

Trail completion and funding discussed

Trail funding discussed

St. Clair River Trail co-chairs Jane Marsh and Peter Cas-sel attended the March 17 meeting of council to ask that proposed funding changes regarding the trail be reconsidered.

The change would have seen the current funding match ratio of 2:1 with a cap of \$100,000 reduced to a funding match ratio of 1:1 with a cap of \$50,000. Jane Marsh noted that the change would drastically affect the work of the volunteer committee and its goal of completing the trail's unfinished portions, about seven to eight kilometres in length. The estimated cost of completion is \$750,000, not counting the link to Kent County.

She said 2008 will be a rebuilding and planning year in order to begin construction of the 1.92 kilometre trail section from Sombra to Hold Line at an estimated cost of \$211,000. Marsh added this will happen when sufficient funds have been raised since, at the end of 2007, the committee had no funds left for trail construction.

Marsh says the committee is concerned that if the current funding policy is changed, it will take about twice as long to complete the rest of the trail.

A motion was made to amend the proposed change so that a 2:1 ratio would apply to money made through committee fundraising and a 1:1 ratio would apply to funds garnered through grants to a limit of \$100,000.

In passing this motion, council noted that the efforts of the trail committee are appreciated and that the trail is a valuable resource for the residents of St. Clair Township.

Off-leash dog park proposed

Resident Maria Beauchamp attended the March 17 meeting of council to suggest the creation of an off-leash dog park in the Corunna area. She told council that in speaking with residents adjacent to Duggan Field, she has received 100 per cent favourable response to the idea.

Mayor Steve Arnold asked that a signed petition be tendered, indicating residents in favour of such a park. Beauchamp responded that such a petition exists and that she will continue to circulate it.

Some concern was raised as to who would be responsible for keeping the park clean. It was noted that some dog owners are irresponsible when it comes to cleaning up after their pet and the park's upkeep could result in some cost to the municipality.

In the meantime, it was pointed out that there has been a request to restore Duggan Field to its former use as a baseball diamond, even though it has not been used for this purpose in recent years. The matter will be turned over to the municipal parks board and will also be discussed with the municipality's insurance underwriters.

Sewer extension set

A court of revision was held to discuss the sanitary sewer extension along the St. Clair Parkway south of Courtright. About three residents were on hand for the proceedings. Clerk John DeMars noted that no written appeals had been received concerning the individual property assessments. He added that assessments could only be challenged due to "gross and manifest errors."

In response to a question from one of the residents, Clerk DeMars stated that the initial down payment on the assessment can vary, but the balance must be repaid over a 10-year period to comply with provincial financing requirements.

Report on proposed dirt bike track reviewed

In response to concerns expressed to council over the construction of a dirt bike track near Corunna, council reviewed the clerk's report. The report states that the municipality's existing noise by-law may have an effect if the track proves a disturbance to adjacent neighbours. Council voted to receive the report for information purposes.

Continued on page 3

St. Clair Township council holds regular meetings on the first and third Monday of each month at 7 p.m. Anyone wishing to Address council should call the municipal office at 519-867-2021.

This month's meetings are slated for April 7 and April 21.

The Beacon is edited by Bonni Stevenson and published monthly by St. Clair Township as a public service to residents of the municipality.

MORE COUNCIL NOTES

Splash pad proposed for Sombra

From page 2

Sportsman's club to host regional event

Ed Allin of the Lambton Sportsman Club went before council on March 3 to request financial support to help sponsor the 2008 Cowboy Action Shoot set for July 12 and 13. This event is part of the Southwestern Ontario Regional Shoot. Mr. Allin explained that this competition will attract participants from as far away as New York and Quebec, as well as Michigan and Ontario. The club expects there will be over 125 participants at the event, which will be held at the club's facility on Bickford Line. The club requires funds to help pay for the cost of renting a tent, seating for 200 and portable washrooms to accommodate those who attend. Council approved a grant of \$500 and waived the building permit fee for the tents.

Splash pad for Sombra Park

The council chamber was filled to capacity when Sombra residents and their children visited on March 3. The group appeared in support of a new splash pad project proposed for Sombra Park.

Todd Sharpless, spokesman for the Sombra Sports and Recreation Committee Todd Sharpless outlined the community's involvement and support for the new splash pad, and made a pres-

entation as to the scope of the project. He advised that the proposed equipment is computer-controlled and timed, and would occupy a surface area of approximately 117 square metres. He also reviewed the committee's past accomplishments and noted that these accomplishments had been facilitated through successful fundraising activities.

The current project calls for the construction of the splash pad at a cost of about \$109,000 with a requested contribution from the municipality of \$54,600. Also, the proposal contained a repayment schedule. The repayment of the requested loan from the municipality would run from 2008 to 2012 inclusive.

The splash pad is seen as a desirable alternative to a wading pool, since it does not require the addition of strong chemicals and will not promote bacterial growth. This is important, since some of the children who will be using the facility are medically fragile.

Council accepted the proposal set forward by the committee. The township will provide an initial loan and an estimated grant of \$54,645 for the establishment of a splash pad. This will be financed through the municipality's Education and Environment Fund.

Council also commended the committee and Sombra residents for their ability to further improvements in their community through enthusiastic fundraising activities.

Smoke alarms mandatory



St. Clair Township Fire Chief Roy Dewhirst says smoke alarms are mandatory.

From page 1

escape plan could make the difference between life and death."

It is recommended that batteries in all smoke alarms should be changed at least once per year. Boon says the easy way to remember this is to do it at the same time each year, for instance, when you turn the clocks forward or back. It is also necessary to keep these alarms clear of cobwebs, dust and other debris that might interfere with the delicate sensors. This can be done very

easily by vacuuming the case. And since smoke alarms have a finite lifespan, it is also necessary to change them after about 10 years. Be sure to consult the manufacturer's instructions that accompany each alarm to be sure it is installed and set up properly.

Tampering with or removing the batteries from a smoke alarm is also against the law. Failure to comply with the Fire Code smoke alarm requirements can result in a ticket of \$235 or a fine of up to \$50,000 and/or a year in jail.

COUNCIL DIARY

Projects benefit residents and environment

Councillor Darrell Randell is the author of this month's council column. Watch for this column each month for insights directly from your municipal council.

The most pleasant thing about being on council is seeing projects completed that are very much needed. There is satisfaction in seeing the development of recreational projects like the St. Clair River Trail or the splash pad about to be constructed at the Sombra Park. These are softer service-type things that involve very dedicated volunteers making a difference in their community. They're great projects and are a justifiable source of pride for many.

And I find even greater satisfaction in the harder service projects. The quality of water in the St. Clair River is improved because of sanitary sewer extension projects like the one most recently completed for the Frog Point residents. The only built-up areas in the township still not currently serviced are Froomfield and Wilkesport. Plans are in the works to rectify this situation and it will be a happy day when all the work has been completed.

Having our residents' homes safe from flooding because of street reconstruction projects that include larger storm water drains is a great relief for both council and homeowners. Destructive things like resi-

dential flooding should not happen.

Thinking back a few years, the extension of potable water lines into the rural areas must have been greatly needed because we never anticipated it would be achieved as quickly as it was. There are, of course, still waterline projects to be completed, but these are mainly to loop and back up the system and maintain pressure.

Projects do not always proceed in a straightforward way. Our plans to fix the shoreline in Guthrie Park have hit a large snag. We knew the adjacent river bottom contained contaminated sediments, but tests have shown contaminant levels are still very high. Our plans are currently under revision, but our MP, Pat Davidson, has announced \$3.3 million of Environment Canada funds to address this issue in the St. Clair River. This is not the only area needing work, but the township will cooperate with numerous government agencies to remediate it.

What I take the greatest pride in are the projects we do that can provide security and peace of mind, and make St. Clair Township more sustainable and liveable.

2008 Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Schedule

When you use hazardous products, you use them carefully. When you no longer need them, you should dispose of them just as carefully. That's what Household Hazardous Waste Day is all about. It's an opportunity to clear potentially dangerous waste out of your home and to protect your environment at the same time.

Hazardous materials that are thrown into the regular garbage can injure sanitation workers and cause long-term environmental problems. Be a friend to the environment. Use this free service and keep the future green.

Lambton County residents are urged to take advantage of five up-coming hazardous waste disposal opportunities this year. The permanent household hazardous waste depot at CleanHarbors on Telfer Road at Petrolia Line in St. Clair Township will be receiving a wide

range of waste materials on the last Saturday of the month from April to October: April 26, May 31, June 28, September 27, October 25.

The following is a list of materials that will be accepted on these days:

*Corrosive materials, including batteries, drain cleaners and oven cleaners.

*Toxic materials, including pesticides, rat poison, pharmaceuticals and cleaning fluids.

*Reactive materials, including pool chemicals, ammonia, bleach and aerosols.

*Flammable materials, including gasoline, paint, barbecue starter, oils, solvents and propane cylinders.

*Sharps (hypodermic needles).

The following materials will not be accepted: PCBs, commercially-generated, infectious or radioactive wastes, and tires.

**COMMUNITY
POLICING****Incidence of impaired driving still a concern**

Impaired driving is still keeping local law enforcement personnel busy.

A 39-year-old Corunna man was recently charged with being over the legal limit when he was stopped on Cameron Street. An OPP officer allegedly stopped the man's vehicle and, upon speaking to the man, determined he had been drinking. Following the man's arrest, breath tests showed that he was three times the legal blood alcohol limit. He is set to appear in Sarnia court on April 28 to answer to the charge.

A 25-year-old Corunna man has been charged with impaired driving and being over the legal limit after the vehicle he was driving left the roadway and struck a hydro pole along the St. Clair Parkway north of Corunna. The man's vehicle sustained extensive damage in the crash. The attending OPP officer determined the man had been drinking and subsequent breath testing showed that he was two times over the legal limit. He was set to appear in Sarnia court at the end of March to answer to charges.

A 38-year-old man faces charges of impaired driving, being over the legal limit and resisting arrest. It is alleged that an OPP officer observed a speeding Honda on Lyndoch Street in Corunna and followed to investigate. The vehicle stopped along Curran Street where the officer approached the driver. It was found that the man's ability to operate a motor vehicle was impaired by alcohol consumption and the officer attempted to arrest the man, who allegedly resisted the officer, threw his keys and ordered the officer from his property. He then wrestled free of the officer and ran into the rear yard where he released a dog from a kennel. Police say the dog did not come to the aid of his master and the officer was able to restrain the man until other officers arrived on the scene. The arresting officer was not injured. Subsequent breath tests showed the man was over two times the legal limit. He will appear in court in early April to answer to the charges.

**Scammer takes three years
to dupe victim**

Lambton OPP are investigating a scam which saw the thief take as long as three years to dupe his victim. In addition, the thief showed up at the victim's door to collect a portion of the money.

It is alleged that approximately three years ago, a 55-year-old Brigden woman responded to what appeared to be a personal 'pop-up' on her computer. The man, who identified himself as Joby Williams, sent several e-mails over the next three years to gain the confidence of the victim. Personal information, including addresses, marital status, employment information, etc. was shared. The scammer indicated that he lived in Montreal and had since moved to California. He also indicated his employer in Montreal sent a final pay cheque for Williams, but that it was in Canadian funds and Williams could not cash it. The victim agreed to help Williams cash the cheque.

A cheque for over \$5,000 was sent to the victim. It is alleged that she deposited it, cashed it, and sent a portion of it via Western Union to Williams. In January, following more e-mails, a man showed up at the woman's door in Brigden and collected the balance of \$3,000. The bank has since determined that the cheque had been altered and was, therefore, fraudulent.

As if that wasn't enough, a man who identified himself as a private investigator has now contacted the victim via e-mail offering to locate Williams and get her money back at a cost of \$700.

Each scammer who contacted the victim requested that she not contact the police.

Lambton OPP Cst. John Reurink says these crimes are extremely difficult to investigate. A victim may think the communications are from genuine, honest people. The benefit to the scammers is that a computer allows them to remain completely anonymous and to say whatever the victim wants to hear.

The key to avoiding this kind of victimization is to be educated about online fraud. One of the ways residents of St. Clair Township can do this is to attend the CyberSmart presentation being held Tuesday, April 8 at 7 p.m. at Sir John Moore Community School in Corunna. This presentation is for the whole family.

**Motorists urged to watch for
kids with Spring fever**

As the milder weather invites children to play outdoors, they may forget to watch out for on-coming vehicles. Motorists are urged to be vigilant when driving on urban streets where children may be playing, bicycling or skateboarding.

Closing churches donate to new Courtright United Church

When fire claimed the Courtright United Church, it took with it cherished, irreplaceable sanctuary furnishings. Elsewhere in Ontario, two churches faced the unfortunate prospect of having to close their doors, leaving their beloved furnishings without a home.

In a serendipitous turn of events, the new Courtright United Church, currently under construction on Main Street, is to be the new home of many of the orphaned furnishings. Several pieces will be transported from the Calvary United Church on Kimball Road, which will be closing its doors for good in June. Pews will be shipped from the Courtright Presbyterian Church in Guelph.

Debra McGill, pastor of the Courtright-6th Line Pastoral Charge, says this is just one example of the tremendous support the new church is receiving from the community. Donations of cash and in-kind services have also been received and are still being welcomed. Pastor McGill says she hopes those who have been holding off making a donation to the church will do so now. The new church will have no mortgage because the project has remained within the budget that was initially set for it. However, there are many items required for the interior of the building.

Since the fire, the church's congregation has continued to worship together at St.



The new Courtright United Church is currently under construction at the corner of Fourth and Main Street.

Stephen's Anglican Church, and Pastor McGill says this has been much appreciated. "We appreciate their kindness and they have our deepest gratitude."

This is an exciting time for the Courtright United Church congregation, yet it is also a time of uncertainty. Pastor McGill, who has been with the charge for the past 10 years, will be ordained during the London Conference annual meeting in Aylmer this May. Along with her ordination, she will receive a posting to a new charge, which has yet to be determined. Having established many friendships with members of her current congregation, Pastor McGill says it will be difficult to say goodbye. "I'm going to miss them," she said. "They're a delightful group of people." She added that she hopes to be on hand for the dedication of the new church if at all possible.

SPEAK YOUR MIND

New residents applaud friendly community

We are new residents of Corunna and moved here December 21. So far, it has been really great. The atmosphere of this town is what brought us here; the friendly people, the small town feel.

We have family that live out here and each time we were out to visit, you could drive down the street and each person outside would not hesitate to wave or say hello.

This past week, we were even more amazed. We are new home owners and are getting used to the perks and downfalls of owning your own home. We came home from work one night and could not believe that someone mysterious to us had taken the time to plow out our driveway.

We were shocked and so entirely grateful, and we want to say thank you.

We feel welcomed to our new neighbourhood and appreciate what was done for us. So we say thank you and we are happy to be a part of this community.

Ashley and Jamie Mayer
Corunna, Ontario

What's on your mind? Let us know by e-mailing:

beacon@twp.stclair.on.ca

or snail mailing to:

The Beacon, c/o St. Clair Civic Centre,
1155 Emily St., Mooretown, Ont., N0N 1M0

Presentation aimed at making Internet users CyberSmart

Are you Cyber Smart? Do you know how to surf the Internet safely? You may think you do, but to be sure, why not attend a free CyberSmart presentation. This informative presentation will be held in the community room at Sir John Moore Community School on Tuesday, April 8 at 7 p.m.

This presentation will be made by a qualified OPP officer and it is intended for all family members. It is sponsored by the Corunna Community Policing Committee and the St. Clair office of the OPP.

Topics to be covered will include keeping personal information secret. Children will receive helpful tips on how to be safe online.

Over the past few years, there have been an ever-increasing number of tragedies stemming from sexual predators using the Internet to establish contact with vulnerable children. And the incidence of fraud and identity theft is also growing at an alarming rate.

Don't become a victim. Don't let your children be victimized. Get smart - CyberSmart!

St. Clair Parkway Golf Course opening for season

Time to polish up those golf clubs and get ready for golf season.

The staff at the St. Clair Parkway Golf Course is gearing up for the new season and hope to have the course open on April 11, weather permitting. Gary Hackett, director of community services for St. Clair Township, says there's a new general manager in charge. "I am pleased to welcome general manager Matthew Lafontaine. Matthew comes to us from the Erie Shores Golf and Country Club in Leamington, having acted as general manager there for the past eight years. Previous to this, Matthew acted as club manager at the Lakewood Golf and Country Club at St. Clair Beach, where his major role was managing the

food and beverage aspects of the club." Hackett adds that Lafontaine was educated at the University of Windsor, obtaining a degree in business administration with a major in marketing.

Hackett says Lafontaine's background will be a tremendous asset. "Matt brings the required experience, determination and ambition to make the Parkway the best course in the area."

Golfers will notice some great new renovations in the clubhouse and, through the season, improvements on the course will also be on-going. Hackett reminds everyone, "Be sure to introduce yourself when you arrive at the club."

For more information about the club, call 519-867-2160 or toll-free 1-877-362-3344.

MORE AROUND THE TOWNSHIP

From page 8

The popular annual **Victorian Tea** is slated for Sunday, May 18 from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Delicious home-baked scones and refreshments will be offered, and the museum site will be open. The cost is \$6 per adult, \$2.50 for children and \$1.50 for preschoolers.

New for 2008 is the **Heritage Festival**, set for the afternoon of Sunday, June 15. This event will feature glimpses of pioneer life through demonstrations and enjoyable hands-on activities everyone can enjoy.

For more information about these events, call the Moore Museum at 519-867-2020.

Girl Guide cookies now available

Those delectable boxes of chocolate and vanilla Girl Guide cookies are once again available for purchase in St. Clair Township. For the gourmet with the sweet tooth, chocolate mint cookies are also avail-

able by special order. To order, call 519-867-5467 or 519-862-4683.

Sombra Volleyball League registration

The Sombra Sports and Rec Association Volleyball League season begins on May 26 and runs until July 28. Games are played at Sombra Park (Middle Street) from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The cost of registration is \$150 per team with a limit of eight teams. Registration deadline is May 1. For more information call Ken O'Neil at 519-892-6933 or Robin Parsons at 519-892-3043.

CCPC meets monthly

The Corunna Community Policing Committee meets the first Thursday of each month. For more information, go online to www.corunnapolicing.ca.

AROUND THE TOWNSHIP

Autism support group meets

The Autism Spectrum Disorder Parental Support group meets on the first Tuesday of every month (excluding July and August) from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. On-site specialized child care is provided on request at no cost when pre-arranged. The meetings are held at Pathway's Children's Health Centre, 1240 Murphy Road in Sarnia. For more information call Cheryl Dart at 519-332-3222 or e-mail cdart@sarniaautism.com.

WaterCan benefit dance set

A charity dance to benefit WaterCan is set for Saturday, April 5 from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Courtright Community Hall. The dance will feature live entertainment by 3RD Wave and a silent auction. Tickets are \$7 per person (children 8 and under are free) and are available at Libro Financial in Sarnia, Agris Co-op — Brigden postal outlet, or by calling event organizers at 519-864-1161.

For those who are unable to attend this event, donations can still be made to the *Clean Water for Schools* account at Libro Financial in Sarnia.

Ham dinner in Corunna

A ham and scalloped potato dinner is set for the Corunna United Church, 198 Hill Street in Corunna on Sunday, April 6 at 5 p.m. The dinner will also feature baked beans, vegetable, beverage and homemade pie. The cost is: adults, \$13; children six to 12, \$7; children under six, no charge. For tickets call Elaine Pitel at 519-862-3372 or Fran Holmes at the church office at 519-862-1052. Everyone is welcome.

Be CyberSmart!

Surfing the Internet can be a lot of fun and it can be informative, but it can also be dangerous. It pays to be CyberSmart. A presentation addressing this issue will take place on Tuesday, April 8 at 7 p.m. at Sir John Moore Community School in the community room. A qualified OPP officer will be conducting this presentation, which is intended for all family members. This informative evening is sponsored by the Corunna Community Policing Committee and the St. Clair Township OPP office.

Black Gold fashion show

2008 marks the 150th anniversary of the first commercial oil well in North America, which can still be seen at the Oil Museum of Canada in Oil Springs. Among the many activities planned for this celebration year is the Black Gold Extravaganza fashion

show set for the exhibition hall at the Brigden Fairgrounds on Saturday, April 19 at 1:30 p.m. The show will feature vintage fashions dating from 1850 to 1940, and will be accompanied by commentary on the clothing as well as tidbits of historical trivia. Music, song and dance will also offer a glimpse at life in days gone by. Tickets are \$20 per person and are available at the Oil Museum of Canada or the Oil Springs municipal office. For more information call 519-834-2840.

Wilkesport Community Centre board to meet

The Wilkesport Community Centre board will hold its annual meeting on Tuesday, April 22 at 7 p.m. at the centre. On the agenda is the election of directors for a two-year term, the receipt of financial statements for the past year, and a discussion of other business of concern to the community centre. Everyone is welcome to attend. Those who cannot attend the meeting but want further information can call 519-864-4221.

4-H Club "Pitches In"

The St. Clair 4-H Club will be participating in "Pitch-In Canada" Week activities. Members will be cleaning up Cathcart Park on Saturday, April 26 beginning at 9:30 p.m. Anyone interested in helping out can contact Debbie at 519-864-1161.

Shred those unnecessary confidential documents

The next Community Shred will take place on Saturday, May 10 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot of the St. Clair Township OPP office at the south end of Lyndoch Street in Corunna. Bring your unwanted personal confidential material to be processed by the SHRED-IT mobile truck. This service is free and there will be personnel on-site to offer tips on how to protect yourself against identity theft. This service is presented by the Corunna Community Policing Committee and SHRED-IT Document Destruction. Identity theft is the fastest growing form of consumer fraud in North America. Protect yourself against it by disposing of confidential documents the right way!

Moore Museum spring events

Here's a chance to mark your calendars with two great upcoming events being held at the Moore Museum.

Continued on page 7