

MUNICIPAL ELECTION: Safe community, taxation, open government highlights of campaigns

Hopefuls reveal platforms

ELAINE DELLA-MATTIA
The Sault Star

Sault Ste. Marie's mayoral candidates have begun pounding the pavement, each highlighting a different aspect of their platform to garner support for the upcoming municipal election.

James Caicco calls a safe community a key aspect to a

strong, vibrant community.

His plan involves creating a crime advisory committee that would include various stakeholders from social agencies to address issues at the grassroots level.

Caicco said similar advisory committees have worked well in the London and Waterloo areas by working with council on strategies that make those

communities safer and healthier places to live.

"We could have used an advisory committee for some of the issues we faced this council term and the committee can also apply for funding that can be used to solve some of these problems," he said.

Challenger Julie Hryniewicz, a former police officer and worker with young offenders,

said last week she released a blog and video on the issue of crime.

Hryniewicz said she doesn't believe Caicco is stealing her idea, but it does show the candidates are on the same page and that it is an issue in the community, she said.

Hryniewicz is embarking on the Walk and Talk With Julie campaign, a chance for area

voters to walk the Hub Trail on 12 different occasions and talk about various community issues.

"You get to know each other and share ideas," she said.

Debbie Amaroso has been spending her time on the campaign trail visiting different neighbourhoods.

See CANDIDATES | A2

HEALTH CARE: Board gets bleak picture of conditions

Overcrowding continues to play havoc at SAH

FRANK DOBROVNIK
The Sault Star

Sault Area Hospital's board of directors got a frank picture of hallways crowded with patients, fire code violations and cancelled surgeries at Tuesday's regular monthly meeting, and also reason to hope chronic overcrowding is on the verge of turning around.

"It's a very difficult situation for our staff, but really for our patients, because they don't have the privacy they deserve in the hallways," said Marie Paluzzi, interim vice-president and chief operating officer.

Paluzzi reported 109 patients have been designated alternate level of care, no longer requiring acute care — more than one-third of admitted patients — and 73 of those were waiting placement in long-term care.

The facility has 31 overflow beds in rooms and 10 hallway and sunroom spots, all filled. Paluzzi said the fire inspector indicates SAH is in violation of fire code regulations.

"He really does not appreciate having beds in hallways."

ALC levels have consistently been in the 30 to 40% range for the last 10 months, leading to longer throughput times in the emergency department and deteriorating quality of patient care.

Most recently, she said some elective surgeries have had to be cancelled because of a lack of in-patient beds.

President and CEO Ron Gagnon said the solution isn't just more beds, in hospital or long-term care homes. Gagnon said the community has to cooperate to find the right mix of long-term care, retirement home and assisted living beds, as well as supportive housing to allow people to stay in their own homes — and is co-operating.

Earlier this year, the Health Ministry and North East Local Health Integration Network approved Sault Ste. Marie for a new 256-bed long-term care facility, although those represent upgrades of existing beds and the actual numbers in the community will stay the same.

A recent meeting with Health Minister Deb Matthews left Gagnon with the message, "Don't look for more long-term care beds as the solution. My impression from her was that that was the last place they'd look at."

A recent experiment to ease some of the pressure in the hallways demonstrated how insatiable the demand is. Last month, officials reopened six beds in oncology/palliative care for ALC patients. "My hope was that we could close the hallway beds, but unfortunately it didn't work out that way," Paluzzi said. More patients filled the vacated hallway spots "within days."

"We are working on solutions, but there are no quick and easy solutions."

See SAH | A2

COURT: 'Johns' take advantage of diversion program

Donations made to non-profit groups

LINDA RICHARDSON
The Sault Star

Four local non-profit organizations are the beneficiaries of a diversion program devised by the Crown to deal with 20 "johns" charged in a recent police crackdown on prostitution.

Each of the organizations, which deal with crime or women's issues, will receive \$1,000 in donations under the program.

The men were offered an opportunity to make a \$200 donation to an organization selected by the Crown and, if this was done, their charges were withdrawn.

On Monday, 15 of the accused provided receipts to the court, and as a result they no longer face counts of communicating for the purpose of procuring.

Five of the men had their cases put over to other dates to give them time to make the donations.

Crime Stoppers, the Sexual Assault Care Centre, Phoenix Rising Women's Centre and Women in Crisis are the recipients of the money.

Crown attorney Bill Johnson said the diversion is a short-term response to deal with charges that resulted from a

police undercover sting operation in August.

The crackdown followed complaints from area residents about streetwalkers on Albert Street East near Gore Street.

"We're going to see whether or not this is an ongoing issue," Johnson said. "If charges are happening on a regular basis we'll have to look at a more formalized diversion."

Other jurisdictions, such as Sudbury, with ongoing problems, deal with prostitution through diversion programs for both johns and sex trade workers.

Establishing such John and Jane schools "is a huge investment in time and resources if it's not an ongoing problem," Johnson said.

"We'll have to wait to see if there are more charges."

In John school, men learn about the risks, such as drug addiction, associated violence, communicable diseases, traffic congestion and other effects on neighbourhoods, surrounding prostitution.

The Jane school diversion utilizes social agencies to help sex-trade workers fight drug addictions, find suitable housing or sign up for social assistance in an effort to get the women off the streets.

IN THE LOUPE



RACHELE LABRECQUE Sault Star
Boris Shreyberg, co-manager of Great Canadian Road Show, examines a piece of gold under a high powered loupe Tuesday. To the right are some of the collectables that have been purchased in the Sault this week. The show will run until Friday at the Water Tower Inn. The public is welcome to bring in silver and gold coins, gold jewelry, sterling silver and collectables to be examined or to sell. For video log on to: www.saultstar.com



WATCH THE VIDEO
[saultstar.com](http://www.saultstar.com)

WAR: At least 110 from this area have signed on

Group tracks Saultites in Afghanistan

DAN BELLEROSE
The Sault Star

More than 100 Algoma District residents, the majority from Sault Ste. Marie, including Armed Forces personnel, reservists and civilians, have committed themselves to the volatile Afghanistan mission in the past four years.

"We're tracking as best we can through the resources available to us," said May Adshead, spokesperson for the

Sault Military Family Support Group.

The main tracking device available, according to Adshead, is an optional military family resource centre consent form which outbound personnel sign prior to deployment so their families can access such services.

Adshead, whose group formed more than three years ago, in May 2007, has been tracking local deployment numbers into Afghanistan since 2006, five years after

Canada first entered the country, but the same year the 49th Field Regiment, one of two local reserve units, made a significant commitment to the mission.

"Our numbers are not official, it's definitely not everyone who has gone overseas, but we believe it represents the vast majority," said Adshead, who claims to have nearly 150 area families on her e-mail support list.

See AFGHANISTAN | A2



ONLINE

Check out the photos in our online gallery at saultstar.com

VIDEOS

View the latest Sault Star videos at saultstar.com

BREAKING NEWS

Get the latest news updates all day, every day at saultstar.com

INSIDE



GUN BATTLE

Liberals latch on to CBC report that NRA is influencing long-gun registry. **Page A7**



VIOLENCE CONTINUES

Protesters battle with police in anti-India and Qu'ran demonstrations in Kashmir. **Page B8**



READY FOR KICKOFF?

St. Basil, St. Mary's, Superior Heights set to begin possible title runs. **Page B1**



No big air

Elephants are the only mammals that can't jump.

WEATHER

Cloudy with showers
High 14° Low 8°
Page A4

