

## CULTURAL MOMENT FOR MAY 5, 2025 CELEBRATES THE HISTORY OF NEWSPAPERS IN ARTHUR

The original area newspaper, known as the *Arthur Enterprise*, was founded in 1862. It was founded by Mr. Luke, who would sell the paper to Mr. W.F. Johnson, who operated the paper for several years before selling to Dr. Decoursie.

E.J. O'Callaghan was next, operating the Enterprise News for nearly a decade. At that time, the business operated on the property now occupied by the Royal Bank.

O'Callaghan sold the Enterprise to Harry E. Dewar, who was publishing in 1889.

In 1894 M.C. O'Donnell purchased the Enterprise. He held the position for several years. In a 1915 interview he lamented that he enjoyed the business, but that it had one major drawback. "It was not a money making proposition." It was O'Donnell that moved the Enterprise to 222 George St. It operated from that location for about 100 years.



*Front page of the January 30, 1896 issue of the Arthur Enterprise*

Arthur businessman David Brocklebank established a rival paper, the *Wellington News*, in 1895. Short on both subscribers and advertising, he sold out to the *Enterprise* a year or so later.

The *Enterprise News* would see ownership change hands in 1902 when Rev. R. Thryne purchased the paper. Two years later, H.E. Bywater would purchase the paper. In 1906, S.T. Haggard was listed as publisher, but by 1908 Bywater had returned.

In 1908, Rixon Rafter purchased the amalgamated *Enterprise News*. Rafter possessed a keen interest in deciphering and reporting the news of the times. His visual impairment – he lost his eyesight as a boy – did not interfere with his respected position in the community and his dedication to providing newsworthy stories. He piloted the

paper for the next 45 years. In 2020, he was inducted into the Ontario Community Newspapers Association's Hall of Fame.

In 1953, Rafter sold the *Enterprise News* to Clive Williams Sr. Williams had been the superintendent of a daily newspaper in Cornwall, so he brought with him a wealth of experience in the business.

The *Arthur Enterprise News* soon became a family affair. There were many jobs to be done, from searching out the news to folding and addressing the newspapers for circulation.

Clive Williams' son, Clive B. Williams, became an integral part of the news team over the years and in 1979, he bought out the business from his father.

Clive B. Williams continued to produce a quality weekly newspaper, once recognized as the best small newspaper in Canada. Clive B. Williams also served many years as a member of Arthur village council, as a councillor, deputy-reeve and reeve.

Effective June 6, 2000, the *Arthur Enterprise News* and its sister newspaper the *Harriston Review* were purchased by Metroland Media.

The *Enterprise News* joined the Eedy Division of Metroland, which at that time owned and operated several community newspapers in southwestern Ontario, including the *Mount Forest Confederate*.

In the summer of 2019, Metroland Media sold the *Arthur Enterprise News* and other local papers to a new company called Midwestern Newspapers Corp. The final issue of the *Enterprise News* was replaced by the *Independent Plus* without advance notice in September 2019, ending its 157-year history without any fanfare or celebration. In January 2020, the *Wellington Advertiser* purchased a 50% stake in Midwestern Newspapers and replaced the *Independent Plus* with the *North Wellington Community News*, a regional paper which serves Mapleton, Minto and Wellington North.

*Submitted by the Wellington North Cultural Roundtable, with gratitude to Jeff McKee of the Arthur Historical Society for his contributions.*

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