

# Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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## Motion to cut bag tag cost disallowed by Oxford Warden

LEE GRIFFI

*Editor*

In what could be described as somewhat of a procedural mess, a notice of motion read at Oxford County Council two weeks ago that could have reduced bag tag costs was ruled out of order.

Woodstock Mayor Jerry Acchione attempted to introduce the motion, which, if allowed, would have been debated at next week's meeting. If passed, it would have resulted in the cost of a bag of garbage at the curb dropping to \$1 in 2027, down from the current \$3.

Warden Marcus Ryan ruled the motion a request for reconsideration, which could only be introduced by a councillor who had voted in favour of increasing the fee from last year's \$2 rate. Acchione, along with Councillors Deb Tait (Woodstock) and Deb Gilvesy (Tillsonburg) voted against it.

The issue of illegal dumping in Woodstock has worsened this year, something Acchione said is a direct result of the higher price of taking garbage to the curb. He explained his motion was not one of reconsideration, nor was it meant to be.

"County council regularly approves increases in fees and never once has this approval required a reconsideration of the motion to approve the previous fee. There should not be a different set of rules for when a motion comes forward to decrease fees."

Acchione and Coun. Woodstock City/County Councillor Deb Tait challenged the warden's ruling, which put the question to the council as a whole for a vote without any discussion.

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(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

### NORWICH BUS COLLISION

Emergency crews and parents raced to the scene of a ditched school bus in Norwich Township last week. Four students were taken to hospital by ambulance with minor injuries. Story below.

## Norwich Township bus collision leads to minor injuries

LEE GRIFFI

*Editor*

No serious injuries were reported after a school bus carrying 40 elementary school students left a rural roadway and crashed into a ditch last week. The bus was on the way to East Oxford Elementary.

Provincial Police, along with members of Oxford County Fire and Paramedic Services, were called to the single-vehicle collision just before 9 a.m. on Feb. 18 on Old Stage Road in Norwich Township.

Four children were taken to hospital by ambulance, and the driver was not injured. No charges have been laid and the investigation is

continuing.

Norwich Township resident Meagan Landry's son was on the bus and questioned why it was on the road at all.

"What most concerns me is that buses were cancelled the day before because of fog, and they ran the bus with an impending ice storm. I guess the Catholic School board didn't run theirs."

The London District Catholic School Board reported that school buses were cancelled in Oxford County due to hazardous winter road conditions, but schools remained open. Buses were running in the City of London, but in Oxford, Middlesex, Elgin counties and the Red Zone, buses were cancelled that day.

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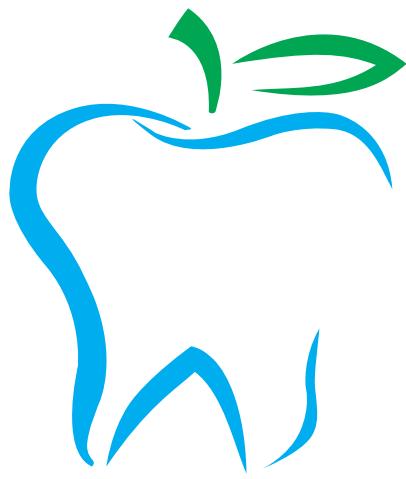
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# Mother questions why buses were running

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Landry said she would like to see more communication from those on the ground, a move which would lead to better decision-making.

“My husband made a point. People are living on Old Stage Road, one of two main routes to that school. Why isn’t someone specifically checking that road on those days? Maybe have a tip line for parents who live on that road to say they just left for work at 6 a.m. and it’s bad.”

The Echo was referred by Langs Bus Lines to Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services (STS), the non-profit body responsible for student transportation for both the London District Catholic School Board and the Thames Valley District School Board.

The Echo contacted STS three times, requesting an interview or a written statement. They did not reply. A video produced by STS did explain the process for school bus cancellations.

“The decision to cancel or delay is a process that involves many factors and many people. Transportation professionals rely on Environment Canada reports and monitor various radar systems to watch out for potential storm activity.”

The video said when a storm is brewing, the company turns to local spotters across the area who report weather and road conditions.

“It is important to remember that the condition of bus routes can vary across our large district

The broader Environment Canada forecast for Oxford County included a risk of freezing drizzle in the morning, with cloudy conditions ahead of heavier wintry precipitation and wind. Reports at the time from the OPP noted that southwestern Ontario, including Oxford, was under a freezing rain warning for the day, and icy roads were a significant concern.

Landry said her son texted her just after 9 a.m. to say the bus was fishtailing and he was worried about an accident occurring. She added the ice was like a skating rink.

“He said it fishtailed a few times, and he kept thinking this is it, and around the next bend they went in. He said when the firefighters arrived, one of them fell to his knees because it was icy. When I drove to the scene, parents were passing me, probably out of panic, and a mother in an SUV wound up in the ditch.”

She added when she was able to pick up her son at the scene, two mothers fell on the ice. Landry also said the same bus wound up in the ditch a few weeks earlier on an area back road before the kids were on it.

“All I got from the Big Yellow Bus is there was a 45-minute delay and I asked my son when he got home what the problem was. He said the driver told the kids she ditched it and I saw it. It’s a known fact

the roads around here are very slippery, but they still took a chance a few weeks later on an impending ice storm day.”

Landry said she does not blame the bus driver and is very proud of her 13-year-old son.

“He is upset and was very scared. He called me four times telling me to go slow on the way to the scene. He has some bruised ribs and a bump on his elbow.”

The Thames Valley District School Board would not make someone available for an interview but did provide a statement.

“The bus was transporting East Oxford Central Public School students. Families of all students who were on board have been contacted directly. A replacement bus was sent by Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services. We appreciate the quick response of the bus operator and emergency services, and we will continue to follow up with the school community as needed.”

It added bus cancellation decisions are made by Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services, not the Thames Valley District School Board.

“The investigation is being led by the OPP in cooperation with the bus company.”

Many people have told stories of how brave the students on the bus were, including Constable Randi Crawford with the Oxford OPP.

“The kids were so brave. They worked together to get each other off the bus. As you said, one person’s son helped open the emergency door. They did everything they were supposed to in a very stressful situation and we are so grateful there weren’t worse injuries.”

Crawford said physical injuries are one thing, but mental injuries also need to be taken into consideration.

“This was a very scary situation for not only the kids but the parents and it is something they are going to have to work through for the next little while.”

She added the investigation has not been completed but she expected road conditions to play a role.

“From what I understand, it is quite likely it is going to be ruled a weather-related incident because of the condition of the icy roads. It is certainly going to be a contributing factor.”

The TVDSB informed parents that the board’s Traumatic Events Response Team (TERT) would attend the school on Friday, two days following the collision.

“We recognize that experiences like this can be emotionally unsettling, and so we thought it appropriate to have TERT members made available to speak with students and offer assistance as requested,” according to an email from Principal Sarah Wright.

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# Woodstock Mayor likely to retable idea to drop garbage bag cost county-wide

CONTINUED FROM FRONT



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTOS)

Sights like these are becoming common around Woodstock as the problem of illegal dumping continues to grow. A notice of motion at a recent county council meeting that could have reduced the cost of a bag tag next year was ruled out of order by Warden Marcus Ryan.

“Unfortunately, our procedural rules prevent discussion or debate on the question. In a recorded vote, council supported the warden’s ruling with Coun. Gilvesy, Councillor Tait, voting against. In my opinion, we witnessed a failure of governance and democracy at county council.”

Acchione said he is working with county staff to produce different wording that would be accepted at the next meeting on Feb. 25.

“The mayor and I both said we would not give up helping residents with this high cost and the high level of dumping of garbage,” added Tait.

Ryan said he stands by his decision 100 per cent. He added the motion came late to the clerk, and he alerted Acchione he would be ruling it out of order because it was a reconsideration.

“At a certain point, you have to say we have planned and we have to move on. As an example, you think we

should buy and plant purple flowers, I think we should buy and plant yellow flowers. We debate, a motion wins, and we plant purple flowers.”

He said at the next meeting, he isn’t allowed to come back and debate the motion again. Once Ryan made his ruling, several minutes of confusion followed over the process that seemed to confuse many elected officials and staff members around the horseshoe at the Oxford County Administrative Building.

“People did not know what they were doing and I think that is not okay. As the warden, I would apologize to residents that council should have known what it was doing. This is our procedural bylaw, not one we inherited from previous councils. This council adopted almost an entirely new one.”

Ryan said his decision had nothing to do with the potential of a garbage tag dropping from \$3 down to \$1.

“I am still one member of council, and I still want

certain issues to turn out in certain ways, but at the same time, I have to ensure there is fairness and equitable access for every member of council to bring forward concerns from their residents.”

He added there are mechanisms in place to ensure the county doesn’t have a rogue or power-hungry head of council who does their own thing, outside of the rules.

“To be clear, there are several mechanisms for (Acchione and Tait) available to bring this forward. The way it was done was not the most efficient way to bring the motion forward. There were other ways available then and other ways now to advance this.”

No word yet if or when Acchione will attempt to present a similar motion at an upcoming meeting. Woodstock city staff were directed at a recent council meeting to prepare a report for council that will look into the increasingly problematic issue of illegal dumping, particularly in the city’s downtown core.

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**Woodstock Ingersoll Echo**

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8. Newspapers should be locally-owned and operated

# Ingersoll Flips the Script for Random Acts of Kindness Week 2026

KYRAH SMITH

*Echo Correspondent*

On Feb. 15, the Town of Ingersoll celebrated Random Acts of Kindness Week (RAK Week), featuring an exclusive social media campaign.

The campaign ran from Feb. 15 to 21 and was posted across both the town's Instagram and Facebook accounts. The goal of RAK Week is to spread positivity and encourage that kindness, no matter how small the act, does make a difference in our lives.

"We usually hear about the municipal staff serving the public, but next week in Ingersoll, the roles are reversing." Explains Ingersoll's Communications Officer, Emily Riepert. For this year's campaign, the town chose to highlight kind moments from members of the community who helped Ingersoll's staff members to smile.

"It's been a moving reminder of the bond between our residents and the people who keep the town running." Riepert adds.

The moments shared via social media remain anonymous and range from in-person gestures and interactions to simply a thoughtful Google review or email.

One post shared on behalf of Ingersoll's Community Services Department said, "A long-time patron

of VPCC (Victoria Park Community Centre) recently surprised our fitness team and class participants with a delicious chocolate-banana-cranberry loaf. We are constantly moved by the generosity of this patron. It's members like you who bring the community to the community centre."

Another post, shared on behalf of an Ingersoll Clerk, Building, Engineering and Planning staff member, read, "Thank you and the people of our town and county...you're the reason why I want to stay living in Ingersoll. I've never had this much of a positive experience with something that is normally stressful."

The campaign finished off with a message from Town Hall.

"Thank you for caring for each other, Ingersoll." This final post shares a moment of staff members witnessing a resident going "above and beyond" by simply helping another fellow resident, no questions asked. They expressed these quiet acts of kindness happen every day and do not go unnoticed.

"Seeing you be kind to each other is what truly makes this community. Thank you for making Ingersoll a place where no one has to go at it alone."

If you'd like to read the remaining posts of RAK Week yourself, you can visit Ingersoll's social media pages @townofingersoll.

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# Echo reporter releases his first novel

JEFF HELSDON

*Echo Contributor*

Echo correspondent Jeff Tribe recently released his first novel, "Accountant with Benefits."

Set in Alberta, the romance novel tells the story of heroine Sherry Strong, who overcame childhood tragedy and poverty by focusing on her accounting career. In part due to her ranching background, she is sent from her firm's high-rise Calgary office to Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, to help Matt Logan transition the family ranching empire into a sustainable future.

"They say write what you know, and Accountant with Benefits has strong, intelligent female characters based on the women in my life, a rural setting, and sensibility combined with visits to my cousin's ranch in Rocky Mountain House," Tribe said.

While some may be surprised by a writer widely known for his sports copy and photographs, Tribe points to when the seed was planted 15 years ago, when he was working with wrestling promoter Jay McDonald on a reality television show pilot he was working on. Tribe was the interviewer and made an impression on lead videographer Aaron Wilcox.

"He said you should be writing Christmas romances, that there's a market and schmaltzier the better," Tribe recounted.

The Beaconsfield writer saw a bunch of romance novels in a second-hand store and thought he might try that someday. Then, when he was laid off from The Tillsonburg News, he began to build on the idea of writing a romance novel. Watching Christmas movies with his wife finally got him motivated, and he started what he called "a bit of a ludicrous but enjoyable challenge."

"After 30-odd years in the newspaper business, one should be able to put a decent sports or feature story to-

gether, but I found this to be a different beast, an unfamiliar style with different rules," he said, explaining he heard this is romance, not literature and a lot of show me, don't tell me.

After a couple of rejections and a break from it, he received the green light from first contact editor Jay Lang at BWL Publishing, a Certified Canadian Publisher based in Sylvan Lake, Alberta. Tribe agreed to tone down the 'spice level' and was passed to veteran editor Nancy Bell, where the real work started.

"With Jay's support and Nancy's guidance, I managed to fit Accountant with Benefits into the genre, included plot twists and turns while keeping the intent of the original storyline," he said.

Elaborating more on the storyline, Tribe said drama, character transformation, and romance ensue between the two lead characters as their relationship grows.

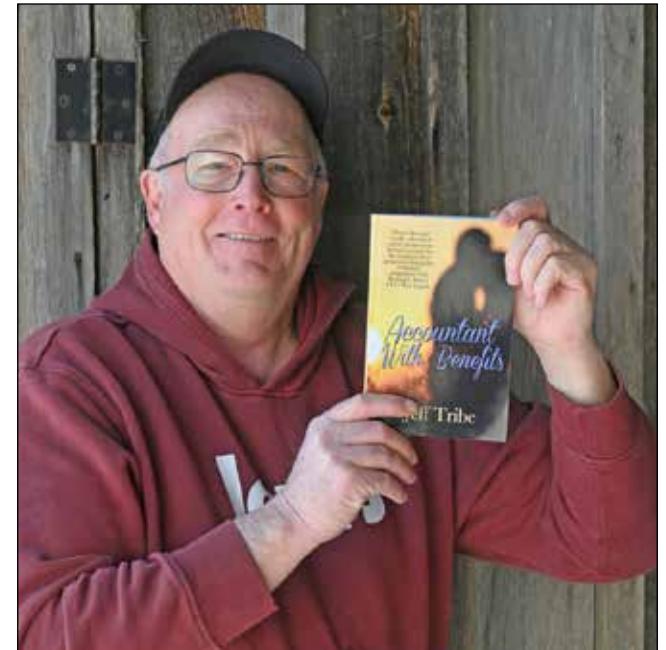
"Rivalling War and Peace was never the goal, but hopefully it's a decent read with characters and a narrative people can engage with," he said. "Whether you're putting together a newspaper story or romance novel, making it readable and enjoyable is always your most important goal."

While writing the novel has been an experience in a different type of writing, marketing has meant stepping outside his comfort zone. The book was BWL's leading seller, but he had also had to visit local retailers to inquire if they would stock the book. Tribe put together a 52-second video (JT AWB Promo) on YouTube, was a guest on Dick Bourgeois-Doyle's Dover Writes podcast and is lined up to present at the Port Burwell Writers' Festival on the May 24 weekend.

Victoria Body is hosting a book launch on Saturday, March 7, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the 100th Mile in Norwich, his hometown. It is available in print or digital form on Amazon by searching for Jeff Tribe, Accountant with

Benefits, or via the BWL Publishing Inc. website. Available locally at Commonplace Books in Ingersoll, and the Crafty Corner Tea Room on Dundas in Woodstock or by tracking down the author.

While Tribe would not share any insights into the ending, he did say he left the door open for a sequel via Matt's younger brother, Jeremy. He has another storyline he coined, Queen of Green, inspired by his experience at a Norfolk County cannabis production facility, which would highlight this area's natural beauty.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Jeff Tribe recently had his first novel, Account with Benefits, published. The book is available in select local retailers and online.



## WOODSTOCK HOSPITAL

### JOIN THE WOODSTOCK HOSPITAL BOARD OF TRUST

Woodstock Hospital is recruiting one volunteer board member to join the Board of Trust. Applicants must either live or work in Woodstock or its immediate surrounding area.

The Board serves as the governing body for the Woodstock Hospital and is a skills-based Board. We are seeking Board members that have a technology, finance and/or government background. We strive to provide excellent patient care and promote health and wellness for those we serve.

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mission, vision and values statements by visiting the hospital website at [www.woodstockhospital.ca](http://www.woodstockhospital.ca)

In addition to monthly meetings that occur on the last Tuesday of the month (except July, August and December) at 5:00 p.m., Board members may also be appointed to one or more Standing Committees of the Board.

#### Term of Office

The duration of each term is 3 years. Board members may serve a maximum of 4 terms.

#### How to Apply

Prospective candidates are invited to email their resume to Heather Scherer at [hscherer@woodstockhospital.ca](mailto:hscherer@woodstockhospital.ca) Please include a cover letter detailing why you would be the ideal candidate.

#### Deadline

The deadline for submissions is **Monday, March 16, 2026 at 4:00 pm.**

## POLICE BRIEFS

# WPS briefs – Police warning of two new scams in the city

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

## Scammers impersonating City of Woodstock employees

The Woodstock Police Service is advising residents of reports involving suspicious phone calls from individuals posing as City of Woodstock employees or city contractors.

In these incidents, callers contact residents claiming they need to conduct work in the area, arrange a survey, or state that they require entry into the resident's home as part of city-related work.

Police are issuing this alert as a precautionary measure due to concerns that callers may be attempting to gather personal information or gain unauthorized access to homes under the guise of legitimate city work.

"City of Woodstock employees or con-

tractors will not request entry into a residence through unsolicited phone calls. Legitimate city staff and contractors do not pressure residents for access. Be cautious of callers asking about occupancy, schedules, interior layouts, or access points," said a WPS press release.

Police are advising residents not to allow unexpected individuals into their homes.

"Do not share personal or household information with unsolicited callers. Verify any city-related work directly with the City of Woodstock using official contact information and when in doubt, decline access and contact police," added the release.

Police say if you do receive a call like this or someone attends your home, do not engage or provide access and contact the Woodstock Police Service at 519-537-2323.

## Second scam involves crown attorney's office

Police are also warning residents about an ongoing fraud involving scammers impersonating the Woodstock Crown Attorney's Office.

In this scam, people receive phone calls from someone claiming to be from the Crown's office. The call display may appear to show the legitimate office phone number, 519-537-2611, and scammers may use the names of real Crown Attorneys or claim to be working with the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre.

"The scammers say you are a victim of identity theft, you must urgently verify your identity or protect your funds. You are instructed to make payments using so-called government-approved ATMs, often Bitcoin machines, or to deposit cash into a drop box," said a police press release. "You may be sent QR codes or

documents that appear to be on official letterhead."

Police add members of the Crown Attorney's Office and the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre do not contact people directly asking for payments, withdraw cash, use Bitcoin machines, scan QR codes, or deposit money into drop boxes.

"Once money is deposited into Bitcoin machines, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to recover," added the release. Police say residents need to be cautious of unsolicited calls, texts, or emails and should not trust caller ID alone, as numbers can be spoofed.

"Do not use phone numbers, websites, links, or QR codes provided by the caller. Verify information independently using trusted sources," said police.

If you believe you've been contacted or victimized, contact the Woodstock Police Service at 519-537-2323 and call your financial institution immediately.

# Woodstock Police assist Brant OPP in weapons arrest

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

An incident that began in Burford ended in Woodstock with the arrest of a 33-year-old male.

Brant County Provincial Police said they responded to a report in Burford of a person being struck by a vehicle in the early morning hours of Feb. 12.

"The complainant advised that the driver also displayed a firearm. The weapon was not discharged, and no injuries were

reported," said police.

The suspect was located around 7:30 a.m. at an address on Huron Street in Woodstock. Members of the Woodstock Police Service attended and safely took the individual into custody.

A 33-year-old was transferred to Brant County OPP custody and was charged with assault with a weapon, pointing a firearm, possession of weapons for a dangerous purpose, careless Use of a firearm, dangerous driving, and driving while prohibited.

Police issued a shelter in place for the area around the Huron Street home from about 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. as they assisted in the arrest.

Anyone with information about this in-

cident is asked to contact Brant County OPP at 1-888-310-1122. Anonymous tips can be submitted through Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 or online at [www.ontariocrimestoppers.ca](http://www.ontariocrimestoppers.ca).

# Gems and Java - a fundraiser that changes lives in Ethiopia

HELMY KNOOPS

Echo Contributor

Hearts for Ethiopia is a volunteer-driven organization in Oxford County that raises funds to support projects in Ethiopia for women, children and families living in extreme poverty. Life-changing projects are made possible through the financial support of our community. The organization has no office, no staff, and very few expenses, so your donations are maximized to change lives in Ethiopia. Gems and Java is the major fundraising event for the organization and will take place Saturday, April 18, from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Woodstock.

Tickets go on sale Feb. 14 at [www.heartsforethiopia.com](http://www.heartsforethiopia.com). Early bird tickets are \$60 until March 21. On March 22, tickets are \$65 and tables of 8 are \$460. Tickets can

also be purchased by emailing [hmkinon15@gmail.com](mailto:hmkinon15@gmail.com) or calling 519-535-9535.

A silent auction, Ethiopian Marketplace, Bags and Baubles Boutique (gently used jewelry, purses, and scarves), live jazz band, delicious finger foods and coffee and a presentation about the needs in Ethiopia and the work being done through funds raised make Gems & Java an enjoyable and meaningful event to attend.

**We need your help - gently used costume jewelry and purses.** Please take a few minutes to look through your cupboards and drawers and donate what you are not using to help the women and children living in extreme poverty in Ethiopia. For locations accepting jewelry and purses, or to arrange a pick-up of your donation, please visit our website, send an email to [info@heartsforethiopia.com](mailto:info@heartsforethiopia.com) or call 519-532-2089.



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**SOUTH EASTHOPE MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY**

Notice is hereby given that the 154th Annual General Meeting of South Easthope Mutual Insurance Company will be held at **Grace United Church, 116 Woodstock Street South, Tavistock, Ontario, on Friday March 13, 2026** at 1:30 p.m.

John Taylor, President of the Ontario Mutual Insurance Association, will begin the meeting with a short discussion on the history of Ontario's farm mutuals, past and present, and explain what makes mutual insurance so unique.

The business portion will follow the presentation for the purposes of:

1. Receiving and approving the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Corporation held March 21, 2025.
2. Receiving the Auditor's Report and Financial Statement for the year ended December 31, 2025.
3. Appointing Auditors for the 2026 fiscal year.
4. Electing three directors, each for a term of three years. Elections will be conducted in accordance with procedures adopted by the Board of Directors. A copy of the election procedures may be obtained from the Secretary of the Corporation upon request. The retiring directors – Marianne T. Cook, Linda Drost and Michael J. Munro – are all eligible to stand for re-election. Linda Drost will not seek re-election.

A complete version of the audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2025 are available for viewing on the company website at [www.southeasthope.com](http://www.southeasthope.com). A member may also request a copy by written request at least 14 days before the Annual Meeting.

Rachel N. Stewart  
Corporate Secretary

# Farmers call for certainty as confidence gap widens in Ontario agriculture

Ontario farmers remain confident in their own ability to weather economic challenges but are increasingly concerned about the outlook for the broader agricultural sector, according to the results of the latest annual Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) Farm Business Confidence Survey.

This year's survey reveals a significant "confidence gap" between individual farm outlooks and confidence in the provincial agricultural sector overall. While most respondents expressed resilience on their own farms, confidence in the broader sector trails behind, reflecting mounting cost pressures and market uncertainty.

"This year's results show Ontario farmers are resilient, but they need greater economic certainty," said OFA President Drew Spoelstra. "Farm families are managing risk and rising costs prudently but also need a supportive economic and policy environment for the sector to realize its full economic potential as a key driver of the province's economic engine."

Almost 79% of farmers cited rising input costs as a top concern, followed by volatile commodity prices and the cost of insurance. Rounding out the top five

issues concerning farmers are trade, tariff and access to export markets and tax burdens.

These pressures have led many producers to postpone large capital investments, with machinery investment dropping to its lowest level in three years as farm families opt to repair existing equipment rather than purchase new.

The OFA survey findings reflect broader economic sentiment captured in the Ontario Chamber of Commerce's 10th annual Ontario Economic Report, which shows business confidence in the provincial economy remains low, with just 23 per cent of firms expressing confidence in Ontario's outlook.

The OFA survey also identifies farmers' top policy priorities for 2026, providing a roadmap for advocacy in the year ahead. Reducing farm taxes remains the top priority,

followed by encouraging Ontarians to buy local food and supporting farmers with energy costs, which were both also in the top three last year.

OFA will release the full survey results during a live webinar on February 25 from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m., featuring OFA economist Ben Lefort, who will provide further analysis and context. Registra-



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

tion is available here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/joinMeeting/register/yCn9flabT-GeKfnnOx4S7KA>

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) represents 38,000 farm families across the province and serves as the leading advocate and strongest voice of

Ontario's farmers. As a dynamic farmer-led organization, the OFA represents and champions the interests of Ontario farmers through government relations, farm policy recommendations, research, lobby efforts, community representation, media relations and more.

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# City taxi industry concerned about losing market share to Uber

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

The owner of Woodstock's United Taxi recently presented to city council, highlighting his concerns over the emergence of rideshare companies in the Friendly City.

"I am here to represent the taxi industry as a whole to raise a concern about a competitive entity operating within Woodstock, namely Uber, without regard for regulations under the city bylaw," explained Ryan Raycraft.

He took to social media to inform residents of his delegation, something that drew a considerable response on both sides of the issue.

"There did seem to be a real concern about the importance of competition and choice. My intention here tonight is not to be anti-competition but instead stop the anti-competitiveness from continuing."

Raycraft said an entity undercutting an established, regulated industry, without itself being regulated and held to the same standard, is anti-competitive. He added taxi companies can't compete with the price of Uber because they are bound by a licensing agreement with the city.

The industry has already been downsizing recently, as proven by fewer taxis on the road.

"This year, Kendall reduced its number of

plated taxis from 20 to 15. United removed its second in two years to 13 plated taxis. In total, 28 operating taxis, which is the lowest in more than a decade."

The Echo did some research and an Uber ride in the city can be less than half of the \$12 to \$16 cab ride in town, depending on the distance travelled.

Raycraft said Uber made a substantial price cut in 2024, a move he said appeared to be intentional to gain market share.

"Prior to early 2024, taxi pricing in comparison to Uber was pretty close, within about 10 per cent...since then, Uber rates have dropped substantially, somewhere between 30 and 40 per cent. We have seen a gradual reduction in call volume as a result."

Raycraft put forward three potential outcomes following a review: enforce the current taxi bylaw, which would result in fines being issued by bylaw to rideshare drivers for operating as an unlicensed taxi in the city of Woodstock, regulate rideshare drivers by including them in the taxi bylaw, or deregulate the taxi industry altogether.

He added the playing field is far from level.

"Feb. 15 marked an annual license renewal for the taxi industry. (We) spent thousands to safety vehicles and provide safety certificates to the city, complete criminal record checks for drivers through Woodstock police, and obtained plate and licensing

from the city for vehicles and drivers. Uber did not have to do any of this."

Coun. Deb Tait made a motion to have staff come up with a report to look at the impact of unregulated and unlicensed ride-sharing services. It was approved unanimously with Coun. Mark Schadenberg declaring a conflict of interest as he is a driver with Kendall.

Some Ontario cities have been able to incorporate rideshare companies under their taxi bylaws, including Kingston, where drivers must meet local licensing requirements. Port Hope went the other way, passing a new bylaw that deregulates its taxi industry to allow ride-share options, effectively clearing the way for Uber-style services to operate under more flexible local rules.

## Revised Community Improvement Plan

Council voted to adopt a revised Community Improvement Plan (CIP) for Woodstock. CIPs outline incentive programs the city can offer to promote and encourage renewal and redevelopment, such as loans and grants for façade and building improvements or residential intensification. Following a review of the existing Downtown CIP, staff recommended developing a single plan for the entire city. The revised CIP also ex-

pands the range of potential incentive programs council can consider implementing in the future.

## 2026 Budget Overview

Staff provided Council with an overview of the 2026 operating budget. The proposed tax rate increase for the city's base budget is 2.9 per cent, which represents an increase of \$93.76 on the property tax bill for the average single-family household. If council approves all additional requests being put forward, the tax change would increase to 6.81 per cent or \$220.40 for the homeowner. The base budget is the estimated cost to maintain existing levels of service and programs. Additional requests include costs for improvements, new services and initiatives, staffing and equipment.

## FAIR Program

Council approved a 20 per cent increase to the income cut-off limits for the Fee Assistance in Recreation (F.A.I.R.) program. It helps low-income residents access city recreation and leisure programs and buy transit passes at a reduced price. To be eligible, residents must have an income that falls below the cut-off for their family size. The 20 per cent increase will enable more individuals and families to qualify.

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## Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. What countries were banned from the 2026 Winter Olympics?
2. True or False. Hamsters are nocturnal.
3. What is the mascot for Wilfred Laurier University?
4. What mathematician had an apple fall on his head?
5. Who came up with the "Modern Olympics"?
6. What is the longest muscle in the human body?
7. Are sea cucumbers plants or animals?
8. What three things did Jack steal from the giant?
9. When was the last time the USA won Gold in Men's Olympic Hockey?
10. What country invented the saltine cracker?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31



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# Oxford County enhances emergency preparedness with mobile decontamination trailer

## STAFF

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

Oxford County has added a mobile decontamination trailer to strengthen its emergency response capacity and protect residents, first responders, and the environment during hazardous materials incidents.

The trailer was acquired through provincial funding from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry under the Legacy Oil and Gas Wells Action Plan, which helps municipalities prepare for and respond to risks associated with inactive and aging oil and gas wells. Southwestern Ontario has a long history of oil and gas production, and some inactive wells remain in communities across the region. Through this initiative, nine municipalities in southwestern Ontario received funding to enhance emergency preparedness and acquire specialized equipment.

The mobile decontamination unit can be deployed quickly to remove harmful substances from personnel, equipment and members of the public following exposure to hazardous materials. It can support incidents involving legacy oil and gas wells, industrial accidents, fires, wildfires, and other hazardous materials events.

"Keeping residents safe is a responsibility shared by Oxford County and our area municipalities," explained Oxford County CAO Ben Addley. "Through strong local partnerships, and with support from the Province, we are ensuring the right resources are in place so we can respond effectively when emergencies occur."

A county press release said having the specialized equipment available locally improves response times and reduces reliance on resources from outside the county.

"While large-scale decontamination events are uncommon, being prepared helps reduce health risks, limit environmental impacts and support safer emergency operations."

The county's director of paramedic services and emergency management added the trailer strengthens emergency preparedness in our community by ensuring specialized equipment is available when it's needed.

"Having it positioned locally improves our ability to



(OXFORD COUNTY PHOTO)

**Oxford County has added a mobile decontamination trailer to strengthen emergency response capacity and help protect residents, first responders, and the environment during hazardous materials incidents.**

respond safely and effectively, supports mutual aid when needed, and reinforces our role as a dependable part of a broader safety network," said Ryan Hall.

Since 2023, the province has committed nearly \$10 million under the program to support training, equipment, public education and emergency planning across the province.

In December 2025, Ontario announced \$4 million in additional funding under the Legacy Oil and Gas Wells Action Plan to support nine southwestern Ontario municipalities in strengthening emergency preparedness and acquiring

specialized equipment. Prior investments have supported air monitoring equipment, road closure trailers, emergency shelter resources and enhancements to emergency operations planning.

"In addition to being a valuable resource for firefighters in Oxford County as we implement cancer prevention initiatives, this trailer also provides decontamination services to members of the public who could be impacted during emergency incidents," said Woodstock Fire Chief Jeff Slager.

# United Way Oxford Wraps Up Annual Campaign with Celebration

## STAFF

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

United Way Oxford is set to host a Community Celebration to mark the conclusion of its 2025-26 campaign.

The free event, scheduled for Thursday, March 26, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at 330 Lakeview Dr., Woodstock (Sally Creek Community Centre), brings together supporters, donors, volunteers, and partners to reflect on the year's

achievements.

"United Way Oxford's annual campaign highlights what is possible when a caring community comes together and gives generously to help us build a better Oxford for all. Our Community Celebration event allows us to show our sincere appreciation, applaud those who have gone above and beyond, and showcase how the collective impact is positively changing lives," said Kelly Gilson, Executive Director of United Way Oxford.

The evening will feature guest speakers who will share their lived experience and deep community knowledge, community partner highlights, the 2025 Community Impact Awards Presentation, and the announcement of the total amount raised throughout the campaign.

This year's theme focuses on community and belonging.

"As Campaign Co-Chair, I am so incredibly proud of our community. Through this confusing and challenging year, we have worked together, supported each other, and focused on making the County stronger and more connected," said Shauna Pow.

"Without the unwavering support of donors, dedicated volunteers, and community partners, many vital programs would not be possible," said Lisa Wells, Campaign Co-Chair. "I am proud of the strong, meaningful connections that United Way Oxford fosters within our community."

The event is free to attend, but registration is required at <https://uwo2025communitycelebration.eventbrite.ca>. Light snacks and a cash bar will be provided. United Way Oxford would like to thank Toyota Motor Manufacturing Inc. for sponsoring the event again this year.

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# ITOPA's 'Bingo!' filled with lots of nostalgia for the 80s and high school memories

EMILY STEWART

*Echo Correspondent*

There's plenty of 80s nostalgia when walking by the Ingersoll Theatre of Performing Arts (ITOPA) building and passing by the window display. It features elements of 80s fashion and music, a crucial part of ITOPA's latest production, Bingo!

ITOPA's take on Daniel MacIvor's Bingo! will run from March 6 to 15. MacIvor, a Canadian playwright, reunites five friends in their hometown 30 years after graduating high school.

The characters reflect on old times, share what's happening with their lives now, and will reveal more secrets as the reunion progresses and more drinks are poured.

"There's a lot of bickering and a lot of old-time friends that are getting together that don't really hang out all that often, so the energy of the room can be a little awkward or a little sad at times, so the energy and the feeling of the play shifts around a

lot," said director Vix Ledgley. "But it's a lot of fun as well as seeing the characters slowly but surely getting intoxicated, opening up to each other, and figuring out secrets."

Bingo! will mark the first time Ledgley is directing solo after co-directing Inspecting Carol with Rebecca McNall. They said that the solo-directing experience provides learning opportunities behind the scenes, such as putting a poster together.

"One of my biggest learning curves was definitely being confident in how the actors are moving and what the show's going to look like and what it needs for sure, but it's definitely been a lot of fun," Ledgley said of solo-directing. "It's something that I really enjoy and hopefully I can come back to ITOPA and do a few more shows."

They also gave lots of praise for the board, cast and crew of the show for making the process run smoothly.

"They really make the play as exciting and fun as it is, so honestly I would just



(Left to right) Rebecca McNall and Mark Tindall.

(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)



(Left to right) Karen Trick and Richard Klein.

(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

recommend coming and seeing the play just to have fun, have a good time and indulge in maybe a little bit of awkwardness and some 80s nostalgia," Ledgley said.

Evening shows start at 7:30 p.m. and afternoon matinee shows begin at 2 p.m. Tickets can either be purchased by calling 519-485-3070 or online via itopa.ca.

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# Chili and potato fundraiser

Laughter, lively conversation, and the comforting aroma of chili filled St. David's United Church in Woodstock on Saturday, Feb. 21, as the One Act Players Community Theatre presented its Chili and Baked Potato Buffet. The event, supported by the Optimist Club of Oxford County, ran from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. and welcomed guests of all ages. Guests built their own baked potato masterpieces, layering toppings to

their liking before enjoying rich, satisfying bowls of chili. The creative and interactive format delighted families and added a playful touch to the fundraiser. Beyond the food, the buffet served a greater purpose — raising funds and awareness for local community theatre. Organizers reported a strong turnout and expressed appreciation for the community's continued commitment to supporting local initiatives.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Members and friends representing South Gate Senior Centre savoured every bite of their loaded baked potatoes and hearty chilli.



Keeping the pots full and plates ready were Sherry, Ted, Lionel, and Ava in the bustling kitchen.

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## Legion

**Branch 55  
Woodstock**

We are writing this letter to express our sincerest gratitude for everyone's incredible support for our 2025 Poppy Campaign at the Woodstock Royal Canadian Legion Branch 55.

'Thank You' to all of our Volunteers, our Army Cadets, the Navy Club and Navy Cadets, the Woodstock Fire Department. Your willingness to donate your time and energy has made a significant impact on our community.

We would also like to thank Upper Thames Brewing, Sobey's, Foodland, Dee-Lights Bakery, Pizza Depot, and the Community for your donations this past year. Your generosity and dedication do not go unnoticed.

**We were able to raise 35,348.43 for our Veteran's and their families.**

We are truly proud to work alongside wonderful people in this community and hope to keep this support going for years to come. We cannot thank you enough for your commitment to making a difference in our Veteran's lives.

Sincerely,  
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# SWOX Councillor Valerie Durston not seeking re-election in October 2026

DEBBIE KASMAN

*Echo Contributor*

On the heels of South West Oxford Township (SWOX) Mayor David Mayberry's and Coun. Jim Pickard's retirement announcements, Coun. Valerie Durston has confirmed she will not be seeking re-election.

Durston represents the Salford area (Ward 3) and is chair of the township's Engage and Inform Committee and serves on the Salford Community Hall Board, Hilltop Park Mount Elgin, the Environment and Energy Innovation Committee, and the Tillsonburg Regional Airport Advisory Committee.

Durston is also presently the area director for Toastmasters for the Woodstock, Tillsonburg, and St. Thomas areas and spent most of her career as a developmental service worker and a criminal justice worker.

Durston has served two terms in office.

The township approved new ward boundaries last July, which will impact the municipal election. These boundaries changes will take effect on the day the new council is organized after voting day on Oct. 26.

Council is holding two candidate information sessions to assist with the 2026 municipal election. These sessions will cover key topics such as eligibility require-

ments, the nomination process, important dates and deadlines, as well as the roles and responsibilities of elected officials.

These sessions will also provide staff, Mayberry, Pickard, and Durston with an opportunity to engage with members of the public who are interested in running for office and to offer insight into what is involved with serving as an elected official at the municipal level.

The sessions will be held on Wednesday, March 4 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Brownsville Fire Station and Monday, March 9 at the Beachville Fire Station. The

nomination period opens on May 1 and closes on Aug. 21.



Valerie Durston.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

# Paper Bag Princess Day celebrations at Ingersoll book store

EMILY STEWART

*Echo Correspondent*

Commonplace Books in Ingersoll will be celebrating the beloved children's classic *The Paper Bag Princess*, by Robert Munsch.

In partnership with Annick Press, the independent book store will be hosting a Paper Bag Princess Day event on March 7, which will feature a variety of activities such as fortune-teller making, crown decorating, dress-up, and readings of the story by local authors. Deb Campbell will read the classic story at 10:30 a.m. and Matt Colby will read it at 2:30 p.m.

The Paper Bag Princess was originally

published in 1980 and has been loved by readers over multiple generations.

"It's the original feminist fairy tale, I think. This kind of reversal of the prince saving the princess. No, she saves herself and I think that's universally beloved and probably gets better year after year," said Shannon McKechnie, owner of Commonplace Books. "Somehow, this story still maintains its relevance and it's great also for parents to pass on to their kids too."

Commonplace Books is also giving away a Munsch prize pack in honour of Paper Bag Princess Day and will be stocked with lots of copies of the renowned Canadian children's author's classic books and newer works.

In addition to the event, the store will host Saturday Storytimes either featuring local children's authors reading their own works or independent authors and publishers.

"As an independent bookstore, it's important to support independent authors as well and that's what you'll see at Commonplace with our local author section and including local authors in events like this, so it's a chance for them to promote

their own work but also promote classic Canadian authors and engage with kids too," McKechnie said. "If you're writing children's books, you're typically into engaging with kids through the arts in that way and promoting local artists is always going to be central to our mission."

More information about upcoming events can be found online by either visiting the Commonplace Books Facebook page or [www.commonplaceingersoll.ca](http://www.commonplaceingersoll.ca).

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# Shrove Tuesday celebration



Madeline and Betty kept plates moving steadily as they served pancakes and sausages to the hungry attendees at Old St. Paul's Anglican Church.



Joanne, John, Stanley, Heather and Bill kept the griddles busy, ensuring stacks of fresh pancakes and sizzling sausages were ready for guests gathered at Old St. Paul's Anglican Church.

Laughter, conversation, and the aroma of freshly flipped pancakes filled the hall at Old St. Paul's Anglican Church on Tuesday evening as the church hosted its annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. From 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., guests arrived at 723 Dundas Street in Woodstock to take part in the beloved Pancake Day tradition. The supper featured stacks of pancakes topped

with syrup, savoury sausages, refreshing fruit salad, and beverages for all ages. The event brought together members of the congregation and the broader Woodstock community in a welcoming and festive atmosphere. The supper was offered by donation, allowing individuals and families to contribute what they were able.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



The Dejager family enjoyed every bite of their pancakes and sausages as they took part in the annual Pancake Supper.

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# Woodstock Ingersoll Echo **SPORTS**

## Woodstock's Jordan Tiegs loving role as Texas Rangers MLB pitching coach

JEFF TRIBE

*Echo Correspondent*

Jordan Tiegs has been too focused on his job to take it all in.

But Friday, April 3, lining up with his Texas Rangers and the opposing Cincinnati Reds at Globe Life Field in Arlington for the 2026 season-opener, a kid who grew up playing Wranglers baseball in Woodstock's Brompton, Kintree and Tip O'Neill parks might be forgiven for pausing to reflect on his first start as a Major League Baseball pitching coach.

"It will definitely sink in. Until then, I've got a job to do."

Tiegs grew up in The Friendly City with parents Cliff and Irene and sisters Stephanie and Elysia. Work took him to the Lone Star state, but Jordan still considers Woodstock home, looking forward to walking into the same house he grew up in at Christmas.

"And now, when we go to Toronto to play the Jays."

He attended Huron Park Secondary School and played basketball, volleyball and tennis. Tiegs also suited up as a hockey centre in the Woodstock minor system but found his truest passion on the baseball diamond. Enjoying the game in general, the right-handed batter/thrower struggled to hit off a pitching machine as a youngster. He was cut from the travel team his buddies made as a result.

"That one hurt," laughed Tiegs, who quickly found his spot on the mound and, with rep teams, as live pitching replaced machines in advancing age divisions. He transitioned from former green and yellow uniforms to Wranglers blue and black, a great minor baseball experience highlighted by a 1999 Ontario Baseball Association provincial title. Tiegs started the championship game, a mercy-rule victory over Mississauga, playing alongside lifelong teammates, including Jamie Nutt, coached by his dad Cliff and Jamie's dad Byrle.

"It was more than just a team winning," said Jordan. "It was your childhood friends and parents together."

He joined the London Badgers for his Grade 10, 11 and 12 seasons. Tiegs also participated in Don Martin's winter baseball school, accessing the additional reps and exposure it offered. He was spotted there by Sauk Valley Community College coach Al Ready, a London native, in what would prove a crucial nexus point in Tiegs' career.

"He recruited me from that point on."

Tiegs joined Sauk in Dixon, Illinois, for the 2006 and 2007 seasons. Drafted by the Cincinnati Reds in the 46th round of the 2006 MLB draft, he elected to stay in school. He pitched with College Charleston, a top 25 Division I program in 2008, before rejoining Ready for his senior year

following the latter's promotion to coach at the University of Indianapolis.

Tiegs pitched with the Frontier League's Evansville (Indiana) Otters in 2009. The following season would prove both challenging and life-changing, spent in rehab and recovery following an injury in spring training. Tiegs was forced to take a sales job to pay the bills but also spent a transformative week with Ron Wolforth's Texas Baseball Ranch in Houston.

That seven-day period would completely change his way of pitching and thinking, said Tiegs, who had always been told he had great mechanics and delivery.

"And yet, here I was getting hurt."

From that point on, Tiegs became a highly motivated and intensely focused student of pitching, building on his own experience and what he had learned at Wolforth's ranch. With some persistence and Ready's support, Tiegs was hired by Gary Vaught as a graduate assistant at U of Indy for the 2012 season, advancing into the position of pitching coach/recruiting coordinator when that person took another job.

"I immediately fell in love with it," he said, his passion for being a little part of seeing his players' success solidified with a trip to the College World Series.

He accepted a position at Indiana State for the 2015-2019 seasons, joining the Rangers organization in July 2019 as pitching coach for the Arizona League Rangers.

From rookie ball, Tiegs advanced to A ball with the Hickory (North Carolina) Crawdads in 2021. He was promoted to Rangers' minor league pitching coordinator, working in that role from 2022 to 2024, before becoming the team's MLB bullpen coach in 2024. He was hired for his current position by Skip Schumaker, who joined the organization as an advisor in 2025, taking over as manager in 2026.

Often, managers bring in their own coaches, friends and teammates from earlier stages in their careers. Tiegs says Schumaker may not have known him as well as he would have liked to, but beyond a series of conversations in 2025, he sought feedback from both players and management.

"Very fortunately, they didn't stomp me down," Tiegs laughed.

More seriously, an article from a Texas-based sportswriter indicated interest in his services from other teams, combined with positive reviews throughout the Rangers' organization, were factors in Tiegs' hiring.

"Having those two worlds (Rangers players and management) meet was definitely a blessing."

Philosophically, Tiegs' approach begins with an individualized commitment to giving each player what they need to be



(EMILEE CHINN/GETTY IMAGES PHOTO)

**Woodstock native Jordan Tiegs.**

the best versions of themselves.

"First and foremost, you are there to serve the player."

Serving each player translates into a well-researched, highly prepared and personalized strategy based on unique experience, strengths and challenges, incorporating technological advances while respecting the role personal connection and relationship play in success.

"A lot of it is just work ethic and preparation."

Secondly, Tiegs strives for a calm consistency, down to a self-described 'Mr. Monotone' persona ('Mr. Boring' in his wife Chelsea's words, he laughed), avoiding getting too high with the highs or low with the lows. In essence, the same guy each time out.

"I give them a very consistent delivery and approach they can expect every day."

Finally, Tiegs does not see his role as a destination where "all is good," but as one of constant growth and a continued commitment to improvement.

"I try to learn as much as I can, never stop learning."

Progressing up baseball's ranks from college through minor pro to the MLB level represents changes beyond rising levels of talent, ability and competition. With the Rangers last year, Tiegs coached players pitching at a far higher level than he ever reached, two of them older than his 38 years, all of them making MLB money.

"There are definitely elements you won't experience anywhere else."

A range of players come with a range of needs, some more independent, some more open to advice. However, Tiegs' experience is if players know a coach is

committed, cares about their success and can earn their respect as a person who can help them, they are open to support regardless of being at the college or MLB level.

"At the end of the day, the majority of them still want to be coached. They're just more talented and obviously, the repercussions are much more noticeable at this level."

His own ascension to the MLB was met with a flurry of congratulatory texts, calls, emails and messages from family, friends, players and coaches. It was extremely gratifying said a grateful Tiegs, pleased with both the promotion and response.

He feels he has worked hard, had a lot of enjoyable experiences and collected a pile of funny stories along the way, been lucky at times and importantly, turned down opportunities which might have led to a different path.

"And fortunately, have made the right decisions to this point."

Tiegs is deeply grateful to his family's support, the time, money and effort spent in putting him in a position where he could be successful.

"I definitely don't take that for granted. It wouldn't have been possible without them."

He also credits Chelsea, who he met as a senior at Indiana, for being the number one person in his corner through the circus of raising their two children, as his progression kept them on the move, putting her own career as an extremely talented photographer on hold to allow him to see it through.

"You'd better have one heck of a special partner, or it's not going to happen."

Tiegs also thanked Woodstock Minor Baseball for providing him a platform to build off of, noting former compatriots, including President Nathan Webster, Mitch Latimer, Director Wranglers Committee and coach of the U13 national entry at this year's Canadians in Woodstock, and Jerry Kleiner, Director, Player Experience, are still active in the organization.

"Woodstock Minor Baseball is in good hands with these guys," said Tiegs, hoping it will continue to both provide opportunities for everyone to enjoy the game and 'players better than me' to advance.

In conclusion, there are still times he feels he has to pinch himself when realizing where his Woodstock minor baseball roots have taken him. Offsetting those moments is the understanding that, along with higher profile and rewards, comes higher pressure, in his words, a much more fireable reality, emphasizing the necessity to buckle down and bear down.

"It's a very cool opportunity, but at the same time, I don't take it for granted."

# Warriors' Parker Finbow brings chill, stoicism to hockey outcomes

JEFF TRIBE

*Echo Correspondent*

Surviving the unavoidable contrast between victory and defeat is endemic to the Finbow family's divided athletic house.

Woodstock St. Mary's Warrior hockey forward Parker's dad, Tim, hails from Rhode Island and, along with his clan, represents a cadre of staunch Boston Bruins supporters. It can be a direct and sometimes painful counterpoint to his mom, Angie and her family's lifetime allegiance to the Toronto Maple Leafs.

"Always a feud going on," said Parker. "Half Boston, other half Leafs fans."

Tim got to his son while still young and impressionable, turning him to the Bruins' black and gold.

"Took the better half, I guess," Parker smiled, unable to avoid a chirp toward his blue-and-white-blooded relations.

There is, however, a line in the ice. Parker centred on the red-and-white of Canada's maple leaf internationally, alignment with Angie emphasized during the 2026 Winter Olympics. Tim may have been happy with the Canadian hockey women's 2-1 overtime loss in the gold medal game, but Parker was firmly in Angie's nation of birth's camp. Disappointed perhaps, but also respecting the effort Marie Philip-Poulin and company put in.

"Hopefully we win with the men's, right?"

Which is to say, Parker had an early and ongoing introduction to the reality games will not always turn out the way one hopes. He is reminded each time the Bruins face off against the Leafs, at times when Team Canada suits up against Team USA, and Friday, February 20th as his own Warriors dropped a third and deciding Thames Valley

Regional Athletics (TVRA) Southeast quarter-final boys hockey playoff game to the visiting St. Thomas St. Joe's Rams.

"Six-oh isn't the result you want," he said. "But we played a good series, gave them our all I thought."

The Warriors had opened the best-of-three set with a 4-3 win on Friday, Feb. 13, dropping a narrow 3-2 decision the following Wednesday. The third and deciding match would not play out as closely as the visiting Rams took a 3-0 lead out of the first period on goals by Luke VanVelzer, Kaje Thorogood and Quinn Wilson.

What arguably was the Warriors final chance at cutting into that lead came toward the end of the second period, a penalty shot denied.

"He did the right thing," said St. Mary's coach Joe Burgess, crediting Rams' goalie Liam Rouse for a quality save. "No point in dwelling on one moment in a 45-minute game."

Hunter van den Acker said the Warriors hadn't come out strongly enough against a strong, physical St. Joe's team.

"We didn't get enough pucks to the net, not strong enough on the puck."

The result hadn't been what the Warriors had in mind, agreed Burgess.

"But proud of the boys and the effort they put in this year."

Finbow had certainly enjoyed the season, fun with coaches and "the boys in the locker room" the best parts. Taking after his mom's 'chill' genetics, he pointed out he'd 'wake up tomorrow' regardless of his or any other game's outcome. His hopes for another North American final were answered as the Canadian men's team battled back from a 2-0 deficit to tie the game at two as the Warriors and Rams filed off the ice. Finbow joined 50-odd players, coaches, parents



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

St. Mary's Warrior Evan Lockhart (left) battles for the puck with St. Joe's Ram Quinn Wilson.

and randoms watching a live feed in the Woodstock Community Complex lobby, breaking into cheers as Nathan MacKinnon buried the game-winner.

"Something to cheer about today," smiled St. Mary's assistant coach Denys Reid.

The Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers remain in the TVRA Southeast playoff picture. Tied at one with the Lord Dorchester Beavers, the deciding game of their quarter-final series was delayed by inclement weather to Monday, Feb. 23, in Ingersoll. The winner will advance to a best-of-three semi-final against Tillsonburg Glendale, scheduled to open Tuesday, Feb. 24. St. Joe's advanced to face St. Thomas Parkside in the other Southeast semi.

The TVRA Southeast girls' hockey playoff picture has also come into fo-

cus. The Woodstock CI Red Devils and IDCI Blue Bombers were scheduled to open their best-of-three final Monday, Feb. 23, continuing Wednesday and concluding the following Monday (March 2) if necessary. The Red Devils swept St. Thomas St. Joe's 1-0 and 4-1, while the Bombers skated past Aylmer East Elgin by scores of 7-3 and 5-2.

The Bombers and Red Devils have already qualified for the Western Ontario Secondary Schools Athletic Association AA finals on Tuesday, March 10, in London.

The Woodstock Huron Park Huskies and St. Mary's Warriors are scheduled to face off in a B Pool semi-final on Thursday, Feb. 26, at the Woodstock Community Complex. The winner will face the winner between Parkside and Lord Dorchester.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

St. Mary's Warrior Hunter van den Acker (centre) drives to the net against Rams defender Linkin Kellington (left) and goalie Liam Rouse.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

St. Mary's Warrior Calan Pepper (right) recovers from the impact of a hit with St. Joe's Ram Johnny Circelli.

# CASS junior hoops Knights run out the clock on St. Joe's Rams

JEFF TRIBE

*Echo Correspondent*

The Woodstock College Avenue (CASS) Knights ran out the clock on the St. Thomas St. Joe's Rams in a Thames Valley Regional Athletics (TVRA) Southeast AA junior boys basketball semi-final 'game of runs' Tuesday, February 17 in Woodstock.

"We knew it was going to be a challenge for sure," said CASS forward Greyson Padfield following a hard-fought 76-68 victory. "Back and forth all game."

The Rams opened with an 18-15 advantage through the first quarter, the homecourt team answering with a 24-14 response in the second, taking a 39-32 lead into halftime. St. Joe's pushed back in the third frame, outscoring College Avenue by a 19-12 margin to square the game.

An extended, intense series of offensive punches and counterpunches was finally decided in the game's final two minutes as the Knights' Lukas Mickevicius knocked down a corner three from the left wing, giving CASS a 72-65 advantage. The Rams' next offensive possession ended on a lengthy three-point attempt air-balled and was recovered by the Knights. Tyler VanMarrum finished off a press break with a lay-in, extending

the gap to nine.

The Rams' Q. Herbert was fouled on a shooting attempt beyond the arc with 41.2 seconds left, but managed to sink only one free throw, the teams trading baskets through the final seconds of an eight-point CASS victory.

"We knew they were coming for us," said Padfield, crediting a quality St. Joe's team with the ability to mix up defences, hit from beyond the three-point line, and from the inside.

Mickevicius led all scorers with 23 points, including nine in the pivotal fourth quarter. He called energy the difference in the game, the Knights admittedly struggling through the opening five minutes of the first quarter.

"The last three minutes ramped up and for the rest of the game it was there."

Padfield added 19 for the Knights, VanMarrum 16, Kameron Roos 10, Easton Freeman four and Dylan Hircsu one field goal. L. Collins had 17 in a losing cause, Herbert added 15 for the Rams, E. Howick 15 and M. Thomas 10.

The Knights will meet the St. Thomas Parkside Colts in the TVRA Southeast final.

"Play team ball," said VanMarrum. "And we need to clean up our passing a bit. Wasn't the best in the first quarter."

"Should be a good one," added Knights' coach Scott Awde.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Knights Greyson Padfield (centre) and Easton Freeman (right) look to tie up the ball with St. Joe's L. Collins.

Parkside qualified with a 76-67 homecourt win over the Woodstock St. Mary's Warriors. Both TVRA Southeast finalists also qualified for Western Ontario Secondary Schools Athletic Association (WOSSAA) AA semi-finals on Wednesday, Feb. 25 at Stratford St. Mike's.

The Woodstock CI senior Red Devils also punched their ticket to their WOSSAA AA championship on Wednesday, Feb. 25, at Listowel District Secondary School with a comparatively comfortable 70-40 homecourt TVRA semi-final win over Lord Dorchester on Tuesday, Feb. 17.

"Big deal," agreed WCI's Jack Carnegie. "Job's not done though."

The Red Devils led 21-10 after eight minutes, 33-17 at the half and broke the game open with a 25-11 run through the third quarter. Will Halward paced a balanced attack with 13 points, Zack Molinaro and Derek Gravel added 12

apiece, on two and four three-point field goals respectively, Carnegie and Oscar Berkeley had eight each, Diangelo Sanfilippo six, Preston Hilderley four, Kael Wettlaufer three and Preston Dopf and Angus Jaques a field goal apiece. W. Downing had 14 to lead Dorchester offensively.

WCI was scheduled to travel to St. Thomas St. Joe's on Monday, Feb. 23, to decide the TVRA Southeast AA title, before heading to WOSSAA two days later, proving the Red Devils have made a successful transition from A to AA competition.

"I mean, it's more games," said Carnegie. "Not just in, we've got to earn it, and we're up for the challenge."

"Steeper hill, same goal," added Hilderley, noting WCI has been playing AA and AAA teams during tournaments throughout the season. "Whatever comes, we're ready."

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# Junior Blue Bombers earn TVRA Southeast girls volleyball title

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

The Ingersoll DCI junior Blue Bombers are headed into the Western Ontario Secondary Schools Athletics Association AA girls volleyball championships as the top Thames Valley Regional Athletics Southeast seed.

The Blue Bombers, who finished regular season play with a 6-2 won-lost record, defeated the 5-3 St. Thomas Parkside Colts in the championship final on Wednesday, Feb. 18 at St. Thomas Parkside. IDCI had eliminated the Woodstock College Avenue Knights in semi-final play earlier that day. The sixth-seeded 4-4 Knights reached that point by upsetting the 6-2 Woodstock St. Mary's Warriors by two points in a fifth and deciding set in quarter-final action Thursday, Feb. 12 at St. Mary's.

The Colts, taking advantage of home

court provided by their senior counterparts' first-place finish and resultant right to host TVRA Southeast finals, upset the Woodstock CI Red Devils in the other semi.

Despite finishing 8-0 in the regular season, WCI was chasing the entire match, according to WCI coach Jeff Melanson. Typically, the Red Devils took advantage of the other team's errors, but were not in synch on this day.

"The scores were close, we were never out of it, but we were never in the driver's seat."

The Blue Bombers were scheduled to open WOSSAA AA semi-final playdowns on Wednesday, Feb. 25, against the London South Collegiate Institute Lions at 9:30 a.m. Parkside was scheduled to open against the winner from Huron-Perth.

WOSSAA AA Senior Familiarity with the St. Thomas Parkside Stampeders has bred respect, rather than contempt, among the Woodstock CI Red Devils.

"They're a lovely team," credited coach Pauline Schubert following a loss in the Thames Valley Regional Athletics (TVRA) Southeast senior girls volleyball championship Wednesday, Feb. 18 at Parkside. "It's an enjoyable game, regardless of who wins."

Schubert's generosity was in part due to the quality competition against a strong team they enjoy playing with. But the fact both finalists had already qualified for Western Ontario Secondary School Athletics Association AA championships on Wednesday, Feb. 25, back at Parkside might also have been a factor.

"They are so excited," said Schubert. The Red Devils effectively qualified for WOSSAA with a five-set comeback from the brink of elimination earlier that day against the Lord Dorchester Beavers. Working through a tall and powerful middle hitter, the Beavers took set one by a 25-10 margin, getting within a set of victory with a 26-24 win in the second set. Although on the wrong end of a tough two-point decision, Schubert called the set the match's turning point, an indication that in-game adjustments were working.

"We needed to keep the ball away from her. I know we lost, but it just showed what we had to do was working. We just had to be cleaner about it."

WCI took the third set by a 25-15 margin, the fourth 25-18 and gutted out a 15-11 win in the fifth and deciding finale.

The Red Devils began the TVRA Southeast playoffs at home to the Woodstock College Avenue Knights on Thursday, Feb. 12. The Knights opened strongly, pushing WCI through a tight 25-21 win, before the Red Devils wrapped up the match victory with subsequent 25-15 and 25-13 decisions.

"Overall, our passing was great," said CASS's Emily Pye of their first set. "Last time it was in the ceiling every time."

"Today was a good game," added Knight libero Morgan Ferreira, crediting WCI for keeping going.

Although disappointed with the end of their season, both agreed it had been a



CASS libero Morgan Ferreira makes a solid first pass.

(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

good one, enjoyed by a 'really good group of girls to play with' and a victory in the Glendale tournament.

"Definitely did enjoy that part," said Ferreira.

The Knights had started strongly agreed WCI's MJ Rabe.

"We definitely settled down in the second set," said setter Ava Bickell. "It was a lot better."

The Red Devils will open their WOSSAA

AA draw against the Huron-Perth winner, anticipated to be Stratford St. Mike's.

"They are a good team, we'll have to bring our A game for sure," said Schubert.

Parkside, which defeated Tillsonburg Glendale and the Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers to advance to WOSSAA, opens against London South.

"We may get another crack at Parkside at WOSSAA, which would be awesome," Schubert concluded.



Red Devil Lily Melanson gets down to dig up a Knights shot.

(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

| TVRA SOUTHEAST JUNIOR GIRLS VOLLEYBALL PLAYOFFS |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| <b>CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL</b>                       |                    |
| INGERSOLL DCI                                   | 15, 25, 25, 25     |
| PARKSIDE  | 25, 20, 11, 15     |
| <b>SEMI-FINALS</b>                              |                    |
| INGERSOLL DCI                                   | 25, 25, 25         |
| COLLEGE AVENUE                                  | 15, 19, 14         |
| PARKSIDE  | 25, 25, 25         |
| WOODSTOCK CI                                    | 20, 23, 20         |
| <b>QUARTERFINALS</b>                            |                    |
| INGERSOLL DCI                                   | 25, 25, 25         |
| AYLMER EAST ELGIN                               | 14, 11, 21         |
| WOODSTOCK CI                                    | 25, 25, 25         |
| WOODSTOCK HURON PARK                            | 19, 16, 23         |
| COLLEGE AVENUE                                  | 25, 25, 20, 22, 15 |
| ST. MARY'S                                      | 22, 22, 25, 25, 13 |
| PARKSIDE  | 25, 25, 18, 25     |
| GLENDALE  | 18, 8, 25, 18      |
| <b>PRELIMINARY ROUND</b>                        |                    |
| HURON PARK                                      | 25, 26, 25         |
| ST. THOMAS ST. JOE'S                            | 19, 24, 8          |
| COLLEGE AVENUE                                  | 25, 25, 25         |
| ST. THOMAS CENTRAL ELGIN                        | 20, 18, 20         |
| AYLMER EAST ELGIN                               | 25, 25, 25         |
| LORD DORCHESTER                                 | 13, 20, 14         |

# Locked in Blue Bombers looking to win TVRA Southeast in six-seven ends

JEFF TRIBE

*Echo Correspondent*

Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers curling coach Mike Bryson does hear his share of teenage slang. But he doesn't employ it, at least not seriously.

"Only ironically to get pity laughs and scoffs from my students," he explained.

Bryson did take a rare opportunity to hold forth while looking to his female curling team's chances at the Thames Valley Regional Athletics Southeast championships on Wednesday, Feb. 25, in Ingersoll.

"As the youth might say, the girls are locked in," he laughed. "We'd like to win in six...seven ends."

The Blue Bombers head into the competition with a 5-1 regular season record, backed up with a solid 12-7 win over the St. Thomas Parkside Stampede's on their Wednesday, Feb. 18 one versus two semi-final.

With the loss, the Stampede's will face Tillsonburg Glendale Gemini in an 11 a.m. semi-final. The Gemini downed the Woodstock St. Mary's Warriors 6-4 in a seesaw three versus four quarter-final on Monday, Feb. 23 in Woodstock.

St. Mary's had opened scoring with a single point in the first end, recovering with two after giving up three in the second. The Warriors took a 4-3 lead in the fourth, but Tillsonburg tied things up with a singlet in the fifth, locking up a narrow win with steals in the sixth and seventh ends.

"It's been a big learning experience," said Warriors second Dani Breen, who enjoyed the tight contest as a good way to wrap up the season, despite the outcome. "Most games, you can tell which way it's swinging, them or us. Very different today."

St. Mary's had finished the regular sea-

son in a three-way tie for the fourth and final playoff spot with St. Thomas Central Elgin Titans and St. Joe's Rams. Coach Richard Murphy elevated Leyah Anthony into the skip position, from where she led the Warriors to back-to-back victories over the Titans and Rams, respectively.

"She has been amazing and confident," said Murphy. "That doubled our win total for the year and allowed us to play a game we had a chance to win."

St. Mary's saved its best curling for the end of the season, he credited in his closing message to the girls.

"I'm really, really proud of how much you improved."

The Warriors boys team was also eliminated in quarter-final action, dropping a 6-3 decision to the Blue Bombers on Wednesday, Feb. 18. St. Mary's qualified for the game with a 9-7 three versus four quarter-final win over Parkside the week earlier.

"They kept it close and gave themselves a chance to win in the end," said Murphy.

The Bombers opened page playoff one versus two quarterfinals on Wednesday, Feb. 11, on the wrong end of a 9-3 decision to Woodstock CI, which had also finished the regular season with a 5-1 record. IDCI won its way back to a finals rematch with the win over St. Mary's, joining their female counterparts in their respective TVRA Southeast finals.

"It was our goal at the beginning of the year," said Bryson. "Our fate is in our hands."

Both Blue Bomber teams have improved both their skills and strategy he said, looking forward to the opportunity to advance to Western Ontario Secondary Schools Athletic Association playdowns with victories. The task will not be easy, given the quality of the opposition.

"It just comes down to who makes the right shots at the right time on the day."



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

St. Mary's Warrior second Dani Breen (right) checks progress while sweeping a rock toward the house along with vice Victoria Whetham (left).



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

IDCI vice Jaelynn MacLeod (right) calls directions to sweeper Marley Papais.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

IDCI vice Ben Timleck (left) sneaks a peak at the house during a 'team sweep' event including skip Carson Zylstra (right).

# Navy Vets celebrate individual honours and lead first-round series

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Woodstock is in the driver's seat in its Provincial Junior Hockey League first-round series, leading Dorchester three games to none. Game four is scheduled for Friday night at home.

The Navy Vets have outscored the Dolphins 17-5, including a 7-2 road victory on Monday night. Owen Ireton and Cooper Vickerman led the offence with 2 goals and 2 assists each, while Charley Barnes added a single marker and two helpers.

Woodstock won the first two games by scores of 3-1 and 7-2. The Navy Vets' big guns have produced so far in the post-season, with Vickerman leading the way with 8 points, followed by Barnes and Ireton with 7 each.

The Navy Vets won their second Doherty Division regular season title in the last five seasons. Five individual awards were also presented to Woodstock players as voted on by teams in the division.

## 2025-26 PJHL Doherty Division Rookie of the Year – Kobe Nadalin

The 16-year-old netminder from Woodstock starred in his first junior season, leading the Doherty with a 2.04 Goals Against Average and the entire PJHL with a .945 save. Nadalin is the second Navy Vet to win the rookie award in the last four seasons and just the second Navy Vet goalie to win the rookie award following his father Ron, who won it in 1996.

## 2025-26 PJHL Doherty Division Top

## Goalie Award – Tyler Bouck

The veteran overage goalie from Tillsonburg led the Doherty Division with 17 wins and 5 shutouts with a 2.49 goals against average and .928 Save Percentage. He is the first Navy Vets goalie to win the award since Mike Matika in 2000.

## 2025-26 PJHL Doherty Division Team Best Goaltending Award – Tyler Bouck and Kobe Nadalin

The duo combined to allow the fewest goals against in the division, with only 102 goals allowed in 42 games for a 2.43 goals against average.

## 2025-26 PJHL Doherty Division Top Defenceman Award – Charley Barnes

The overager from London led all Doherty Division defencemen in scoring with 22 goals and 36 assists for 58 points, finishing fifth overall. Barnes also won the award last season.

## 2025-26 PJHL Doherty Division Top Scorer and Most Valuable Player – Owen Ireton

The overager from Cambridge led the division in scoring with 36 goals and 39 assists for 75 points, becoming the third Navy Vet to lead the division in scoring in the past five seasons (Davin Gray in 2024 and Kyle Baker in 2022). He is also the first Woodstock player to hit the 30-goal mark since Mike Stevenson in 1999. He was the only Navy Vet to play in all 42 regular season games.



(BILL POLZIN PHOTO)

Four Woodstock Navy Vets earned Doherty Division hardware after the 2025-26 regular season. From left to right are Owen Ireton, Charley Barnes, PJHL South Conference Manager Steve Sumka, Kobe Nadalin and Tyler Bouck.

## WOSSAA SWIMMING RESULTS LONDON CANADA GAMES AQUATIC CENTRE - OXFORD COUNTY TOP 10 RESULTS

| OPEN BOYS   |         | OPEN GIRLS   |         |
|---|---------|--|---------|
| <b>200 METRE FREESTYLE</b>  |         | <b>100 METRE BREASTSTROKE</b>                                      |         |
| 2. PARDY AUSTIN, INGERSOLL DCI  | 2:03.19 | 7. GABRIELLA BERKELEY, WCI   | 1:06.65 |
| <b>100 FREE</b>   |         | <b>GIRLS 15-AND-OVER</b>   |         |
| PARDY, IDCI   | 55.79   | <b>50 METRE BREASTSTROKE</b>                                       |         |
| <b>100 METRE IM</b>   |         | 4. KATHLEEN MCCREERY, WOODSTOCK CI                                 |         |
| 1. ALEX JONES, GLENDALE   | 35.29   | <b>50 METRE BACKSTROKE</b>   |         |
| <b>100 METRE IM</b>   |         | 1. ALEX JONES, GLENDALE  |         |
| 9. PARDY, IDCI  | 1:08.55 | 35.29  |         |
| <b>50 FREE</b>  |         | <b>100 METRE IM</b>  |         |
| 8. JACOB FOWLER, HPSS   | 27.51   | 8. ALAYNA EGAN, IDCI   |         |
| <b>100 BUTTERFLY</b>  |         | 1:24.86  |         |
| 5. FOWLER, HPSS   | 1:05.57 | <b>200 FREE RELAY</b>  |         |
| <b>BOYS 15-AND-OVER</b>   |         | 8. HPSS: KYRA MCINTYRE, RYERSYN READ, KATHRYN BAAN, LOGAN MICHALAK |         |
| <b>50 METRE BREASTSTROKE</b>  |         | 2:25.79  |         |
| 9. KYLE VERHOEVEN, IDCI   | 38.49   | <b>GIRLS 14-AND-UNDER</b>  |         |
| <b>50 METRE BACKSTROKE</b>  |         | <b>100 METRE INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY</b>                                 |         |
| 5. JACK SCHREITER, WOODSTOCK HURON PARK SS, 37.02; 8. DEAN HUNTER, HPSS | 37.61   | 6. JILLIAN TREPANIER, WCI  |         |
| <b>100 METRE FREE</b>   |         | 1:29.14  |         |
| 3. NOAH CANN, IDCI, 1:04.54; HUNTER, HPSS                               | 1:07.59 | <b>50 METRE FREE</b>   |         |
| <b>100 METRE IM</b>   |         | 5. TREPANIER, WCI  |         |
| 4. CANN, IDCI, 1:15.06; 6. VERHOEVEN, IDCI                              | 1:19.65 | 33.11  |         |
| <b>50 FLY</b>   |         | <b>50 BUTTERFLY</b>  |         |
| CANN, IDCI  | 31.82   | 3. TREPANIER   |         |
| <b>BOYS 14-AND-UNDER</b>  |         | 36.70  |         |
| <b>50 METRE BREASTSTROKE</b>  |         | <b>MIXED PARA</b>  |         |
| 8. COLTON PRICE, IDCI   | 42.68   | <b>50 BREASTSTROKE</b>   |         |
|   |         | 2. SAMUEL SCHREITER, HPSS  |         |
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|   |         | 44.15  |         |

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# Woodstock Wolverines ramping up for the 2026 football season

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Football may not seem to be as popular as hockey or soccer in the city, but one look at the Wolverines social media channels paints a picture of a growing association.

The club has announced a plethora of coaching appointments and new programs as the 2026 season kicks off.

Jason Congdon as head coach of the U18 team, someone executive director Joe Brown played high school football with in St. Thomas, after former coach Dan Fitzgerald decided to focus on a career in firefighting.

“Congdon played in the CFL for a few years, so I called him and asked if he was interested in coaching. I need someone to mentor a young coaching staff and he agreed. I wanted to keep the majority of coaches from last year because they are young and eager to learn.”

Congdon spent four seasons at the University of Western Ontario and four years in the CFL as a linebacker with Winnipeg, Montreal and Hamilton.

“Having someone with Jason’s CFL experience leading our U18 program is a huge win for our

athletes,” said Brown. “He understands the standards, preparation, and mindset required to succeed at the next level, and he knows how to translate that into meaningful development for young players.”

He added the program is growing in terms of the number of players and teams, something aided by a developmental league.

“We ran a house league for the ages of 7 to 14. All of the kids who aged out of that program, each of their parents reached out to us to say hey, our kids are playing high school football this year and it’s not great. Why don’t you have a U16 travel team this year?”

A town hall meeting yielded about 60 families and the ball started rolling from there.

“They were given the local businesses we thought could help out financially, because we need to order all new helmets, shoulder pads and everything else, so there is a big price tag. We’re doing that with the U18 guys as well because last year we borrowed from the high schools.”

Brown said the goal is to have the association have its own, high-quality gear and roughly 120 sets of equipment are need-



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Woodstock Wolverines are gearing up for the 2026 season, and their development program recently held an event with members of the Woodstock Police Service. The officers talked about the importance of teamwork and making good choices. It’s more than just football.

ed.

“People in the community have really stepped up, and we did a big NFL VIP fundraiser last year, which raised quite a bit of money. We’ve done car washes, 50-50 draws, a cookie drive before Christmas, you name it, we’ve tried it.”

Brown said as the club’s momentum has been building, more people have reached out to participate on and off the field.

“It’s been outstanding. Tra-

ditionally, we’ve always been a baseball and hockey town. When we announced the U18 last year, we had all of these local football fans reaching out and asking how they could get involved. Some said they used to coach or their son wanted to play, and it has been an amazing response.”

Since the Wolverines restarted the program following the pandemic, its development program has grown from 60 participants to nearly 150 this year.

“We’re growing pretty quickly. For me, in my role with the organization, my role is to get the funding sorted out, get facilities booked, order shirts and equipment, it’s been non-stop.”

Brown said he is always looking for new sponsors but highlighted two in particular who have stepped up – Canadian Tire and the Foundation Brothers.

More information is available at [www.woodstockwolverines.ca](http://www.woodstockwolverines.ca).



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## ROUTE TO THE PAST

## HISTORY

# Fighting for the Politics of Oxford County

SCOTT GILLIES

*Echo Contributor*

On Friday the 13th in April of 1934, the Right Honourable William Lyon Mackenzie King was stumping across parts of Oxford County in an all-out by-election campaign for the former riding of South Oxford.

Brought about by the sudden death of the riding MP Thomas Cayley from Norwich the previous year, King was in the area trying to drum up support for the new Liberal nominee Almon Rennie.

Thomas Merritt Cayley, a son of East Oxford Township, had grown up to be an insurance agent, teacher and principal of the Norwich Continuation School before being elected as the Liberal representative of South Oxford in 1926 and again in 1930. In both elections he defeated the Conservative nominee and WW 1 war hero Dr. Donald Matheson Sutherland.

Cayley's nominated successor was Almon Secord Rennie, a businessman who had been elected mayor of Tillsonburg in 1922 and in 1924 was voted Deputy Reeve of Oxford County. In 1934 he was the choice of Liberal supporters for the by-election to replace the fallen Cayley. Eleven months after the death of their MP, the voters of South Oxford were finally going to the polls.

The incumbent Liberals appear to have been bringing in the big guns. The Liberal MP for Elgin County and leader of the provincial Liberal Party in Ontario, Mitchell Hepburn, was hitting the campaign trail, along with the leader of the Official Opposition in Ottawa, the former Prime Minister, Mackenzie King.

By this time in his life, King had been Deputy Minister of Labour in the Laurier Government, had been first elected as a sitting member of parliament in 1908 (only to lose his seat in 1911 and again in 1917). In spite of these setbacks, King had continued to be an effective civil servant, negotiator, and loyal party hack. In 1919, he was chosen as the new leader of the Liberal Party replacing the late Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

In the 1921 federal election campaign, he refused to take a stand on any issue or define his policy, believing that it would give the opposition "targets to shoot at". His efforts paid off. The Liberals won the election, and King became Canadian Prime Minister.

King served in that capacity until 1930 and during his second term in office he introduced Old Age Pension. In 1930, he had the political good fortune to lose to R.B. Bennett's Conservative Party; the full weight of the Great Depression fell upon that new administration.

In April of 1934, King was back on the election trail, arguing for the amalgamation of both Oxford North and Oxford South into one riding. That did not happen until the following federal election of 1935.

Described as a "brisk, cheerful, twinkling man, ... short, corpulent and bald with a single wisp of damp hair plastered across his forehead", and "with hands like a physician - delicate and soft", it seems that he might have been out of place among the hale and hardy farmers of Oxford County.

Known for his windy whistling academic speeches, he nevertheless drew an enthusiastic crowd to the auditorium of the former Ingersoll Town Hall. The



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

William Lyon Mackenzie King.

London Advertiser newspaper reported that more than one thousand people eagerly crammed into the room and corridors and stairwell to catch a glimpse of the man and to hear what he had to say. His campaign speech that night was also broadcast over the airwaves of CFPL Radio.

For a man who began his political career sensing the hand of God upon his shoulders, King ended up seeking counsel from the dead - in particular his dead mother and professional mediums during seances held at his Ottawa and Gatineau residences.

King, it has since been revealed, paid close attention to time, choosing to do certain things based on the hands of the

clock, or the date on the calendar. The fact that he was campaigning in Oxford County on Friday the 13th most certainly had an influence upon his efforts. Likewise, he was scheduled to give his public speech in Ingersoll on April 14th, at 9:00pm but this was delayed a few minutes due to other last-minute gatherings and party huddles.

His diary reveals that he had enjoyed giving speeches in both Norwich and Tillsonburg on the 11th of the month but had travelled back to Toronto and the Royal York Hotel for the night, where he had read tea leaves in his cup. The residue in the bottom of three teacups showed a soaring bird, and a dead duck, to which he attributed future success in the coming by-election.

King's diary entry for April 14 indicates that he had visited the artist Homer Watson in Doon before motoring to Ingersoll where he dined with Dr. Rogers prior to going to the Town Hall. It was here that he realized a gaff he had made earlier in the week, accusing Dr. Sutherland of a statement made by someone else. King had to spend 40 minutes with delegates trying to rectify and resolve the issue. He made note as well of the three overflow rooms in addition to the full auditorium, but the "conditions were not good". He blamed the cold weather and eating too much for his lackluster performance on the stage.

Whether or not the tea leaves properly predicted the outcome, the Liberals against Dr. Sutherland, once again came out ahead. King's Liberals would once again return to power in the 1935 election when Oxford County became one riding.

*Route2thepast@gmail.com*

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*followed by Coffee Hour*  
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*will be offering Communion.*

# Oxford municipalities hosting candidate information meeting

## STAFF

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

Interested in running for office in the 2026 municipal election? You may want to mark March 26 down on your calendar.

Oxford County's eight area municipalities are partnering to host a candidate information session ahead of the 2026 municipal and school board elections.

The session will take place on Thursday, March 26, at 6 p.m., virtually and in person in the Council Chambers at the Oxford County Administration Building located at 21 Reeve St. in Woodstock.

New, returning or interested candidates and members of the public are invited to learn more about the roles and responsibilities of council, who is eligible to run, the nomination process, and campaign finance and advertising rules.

The session will include presentations from the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and municipal solicitor Nigel Bellchamber. Attendees are encour-

aged to send questions in advance to their municipal clerk. Those wishing to participate in the session virtually can register by emailing [election@cityofwoodstock.ca](mailto:election@cityofwoodstock.ca).

"Serving on council is a significant commitment. Elected officials are responsible for making decisions that directly affect the lives of residents in our communities," explained Jeff Bunn, Manager of Legislative Services, Deputy City Clerk and Returning Officer for the City of Woodstock.

"This session is an opportunity for potential candidates to learn about the process, ask questions and receive guidance so that they can make an informed decision about running for office," he added.

Oxford County's municipalities include the Township of Norwich, Township of Zorra, Township of South-West Oxford, Township of East Zorra-Tavistock, Township of Blandford-Blenheim, Town of Ingersoll, Town of Tillsonburg and the City of Woodstock.

The nomination period for candidates will be open from May 1 to Aug. 21, 2026.



Election Day will take place on Monday, Oct. 26, 2026. Advance polling will also be available in each municipality.

For more information about the election in your community, visit your local municipality's website.

# Rotary club launches dinner events



The inaugural event brought together the Rotary's leadership team—Immediate Past President Mike Katsidakis, President Dr. Grace Vincent, President Elect Deepak Rai, Treasurer John Narcisian, and Assistant to the District Governor John Lohuis—who joined Mayor Jerry Acchione in marking the launch of the new series.

The Woodstock Oxford Rotary kicked off its new monthly evening series, Dining and Dialogue, with an inaugural event held on Wednesday, Feb. 11, at Chartwell Oxford Gardens Retirement Residence.

Community members, business leaders, and local professionals gathered for an intimate dinner and conversation with Mayor Jerry Acchione, who headlined the Premiere Edition, An Evening with the Mayor.

Guests enjoyed a warm meal while escaping the February chill, setting the stage for an engaging and forward-looking discussion. Mayor Acchione shared early insights into the ambitious Oxford Food Recycle Hub, outlining its potential to reshape sustainability efforts across the region. Rather than a formal presentation,

the evening unfolded as an open dialogue, with attendees asking questions, offering perspectives, and exploring the future of waste reduction in Woodstock.

"We wanted this series to bring people together in a meaningful way," said organizers from the Woodstock Oxford Rotary. "Last night proved that our community is eager for spaces where ideas can be exchanged openly and constructively."

The event also provided a relaxed networking environment, allowing guests to connect with civic leaders, neighbours, and fellow professionals. With the first edition now complete, the Rotary looks forward to hosting future Dining and Dialogue evenings, each designed to spark conversation, build community, and spotlight important local initiatives.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)

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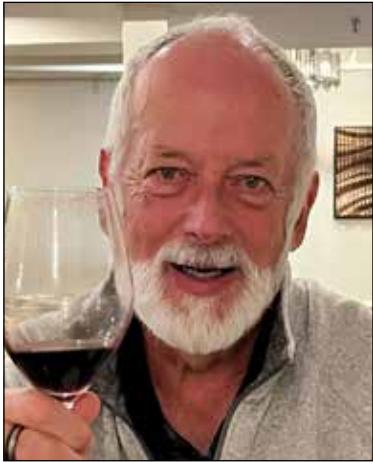


Remember when **Google** provided free pizza to your child's soccer team when they won the championship?

## OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO!

## TRAVEL

# Art and imagination on display at the Clay and Glass Gallery



PAUL KNOWLES

Echo Contributor

Let's be honest: you may have never heard of the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery. Or, if you have, you probably have never visited the place.

Well, I am here to suggest that you rectify that situation, immediately. Because there are a large number of special things about the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery that truly make it worth a visit.

First, it's unique. Located near Uptown Waterloo, it is the only art gallery in the country that is exclusively dedicated to exhibiting and collecting contemporary Canadian glass, ceramic, enamel and stained glass works of art.

Second, the folks at the Gallery are brilliant at staging exhibitions. If you are a museum-goer who is just a bit tired of crammed display cases and claustrophobic exhibition rooms, you are going to love the Clay and Glass. The building, which opened in 1993, is the very definition of spacious. More about this later.

Third, the exhibitions are always fresh. Clay and Glass PR director William Hlowatzki told us that the exhibitions are changed up, every season. Right now there are four

exhibitions that will be on display for the next few months, only.

Fourth, the gift shop offers a spectacular array of hand-crafted glass and clay jewelry and other giftware, made by Canadian artisans, many of them local to the southern Ontario region.

Fifth – and this may seem too good to be true – admission is free. Yes, anyone can enjoy the unique works in the Clay and Glass any time it is open – and it's open six days a week, closed only on Mondays.

I asked William how free admission could be possible, since clearly this is a professionally-managed institution with staff, acquisition budgets and operating costs. He pointed to the list of donors – private people, corporations, foundations and government bodies – that keep this amazing institution afloat and moving ahead.

According to the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery's website, the museum owes its existence to Canadian ceramic artist Ruth Gowdy McKinley, a founding member of "Ceramics Canada." When she died in 1981, her colleagues in that organization began to envision an art gallery, honouring her memory, that would focus on works created in clay, glass and enamel. The plan quickly moved forward; ground was broken in 1989, and the new Gallery opened in 1993. The building was designed by Patricia Patkau of Patkau Architects of Vancouver, and was honoured with a Governor General's Award for design. What makes that an even more significant accomplishment is, as William told us, the Clay and Glass was Patkau's first public building.

In parallel with the construction of the physical building was an endowment campaign, led by the late Winifred Shantz and former board

chair Ann Roberts, herself a ceramic artist of note, and a professor in the University of Waterloo Fine Arts Department.

Right now, there are four exhibitions on display at the Clay and Glass. The most extensive is the utterly captivating "Fabled Clay," featuring the work of four artists: Janet MacPherson of Hamilton, Lindsay Montgomery of Toronto, Amélie Proulx of Lévis, Québec, and Annette ten Cate, of Grey County. The shared focus of these wildly diverse works is "story-telling". Visitors will be enthralled by the stories inherent in the works – and will also be drawn into creating their own stories as they contemplate ornate teapots embraced by demons; a bear in bunny slippers; or a beer-swilling, naked "Shepherdess".

Nicely displayed in a smaller gallery room is the exhibition, "Frogs' Return" by Melanie Barnett of Treaty 7 Territory in Medicine Hat, Alberta – a series of complex, whimsical ceramic creations involving said amphibians.

"Weathered Rock", a multi-faceted, multi-media work by D'Andrea Bowie of Whitchurch-Highlands, Ontario, occupies another exhibition area. All three of these exhibitions will continue through mid-May. The fourth current exhibit is "Material Syntax: 3D Printed Masonry Façade Systems", a display by University of Waterloo Architecture students. It closed March 27.

The latter is just one example of how the Gallery interacts with the community. In 2025, the Gallery hosted 478 workshop sessions, attended by 14,514 people. That is twice the number that attended workshops in 2024. Through community outreach programs, the Gallery also staged 65 workshop sessions through the Region of Wa-



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

"Hibernation Mode", 2025, by Annette ten Cate. ten Catt is one of four artists whose works form the "Fabled Clay" exhibition. The work facing the camera in the background is "Goat and cohort" by the same artist.

terloo, reaching 3,000 participants.

I'm writing this feature because we quickly realized that the Clay and Glass Gallery offers a variety of day-trip options. Would-be visitors can investigate workshops, offered at a reasonable fee (see the website for details); or they can simply visit the Gallery, at no charge, and spend as much time as they would like exploring the imaginations of these creative artists.

And some added good news: the Gallery, located at 25 Caroline Street North in Waterloo, is on the edge of Waterloo Park, a perfect place for strolling and picnicking (in warmer weather, of course),

and is also a block away from Uptown Waterloo. If good food is part of your day trip agenda, high-end restaurants like Solé and Proof; good pubs like Beertown and McCabe's Irish Pub; and many other dining options are minutes away.

So, after a highly entertaining visit, I happily recommend the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery as a centrepiece for an intriguing day out.

Paul Knowles is an author and travel writer, and Past-President of the Travel Media Association of Canada. To contact Paul about travel, his books, or speaking engagements, email [pknowles@gold-en.net](mailto:pknowles@gold-en.net).



The fantastical work, "Demon Teapot", by Lindsay Montgomery.

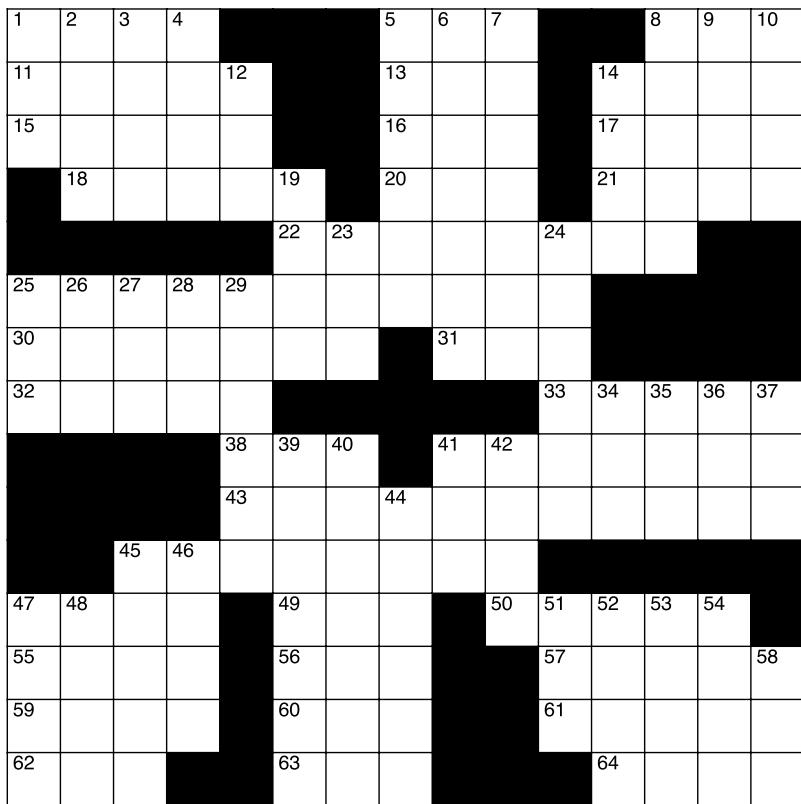
(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

A view of the very spacious and welcoming exhibition area. In the foreground, "Fish Monk", 2025, by Janet MacPherson.

# CROSSWORD



### CLUES ACROSS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Greek mythological figure             | 32. Fights                                    |
| 5. Small amount                          | 33. Comedienne Tyler                          |
| 8. Play a role                           | 38. Standing operating procedure              |
| 11. River in Georgia and Alabama         | 41. Locks                                     |
| 13. Water in the solid state             | 43. Old                                       |
| 14. Ancient Greek sophist                | 45. Song sung to one's lover                  |
| 15. Having a strong sharp smell or taste | 47. Whale ship captain                        |
| 16. Fleece                               | 49. Moved quickly on foot                     |
| 17. Writer/actress Dunham                | 50. Volcanic craters                          |
| 18. Behave in a way that belittles       | 55. Large musical instrument                  |
| 20. Comedienne Gasteyer                  | 56. Liquefied natural gas                     |
| 21. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire     | 57. Ethiopian town                            |
| 22. Conceits                             | 59. Not closed                                |
| 25. Slowed down                          | 60. A team's best pitcher                     |
| 30. Nourishment                          | 61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation |
| 31. Midway between east and southeast    | 62. Disfigure                                 |
|  | 63. Prefix denoting "in a"                    |
|  | 64. Sleep                                     |

### CLUES DOWN

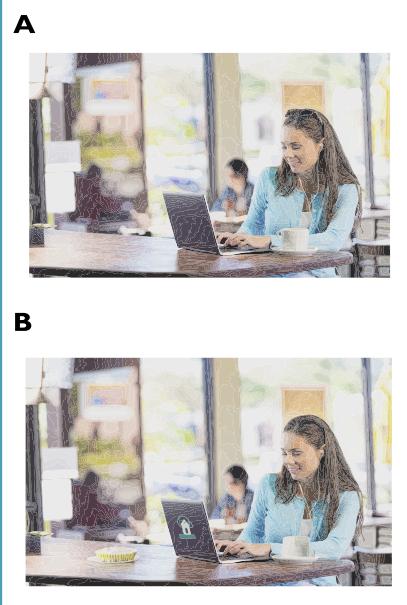
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. S. American plant                    | 29. Owner                                |
| 2. Soul and calypso song                | 34. I (German)                           |
| 3. Fruit of the service tree            | 35. Chinese conception of poetry         |
| 4. Continent                            | 36. The world of the dead                |
| 5. Albania's capital                    | 37. Sign language                        |
| 6. Poisonous plant                      | 39. Coincide                             |
| 7. Argues                               | 40. Religious observance                 |
| 8. Assists                              | 41. Confined condition (abbr.)           |
| 9. Town in Galilee                      | 42. Polite interruption sound            |
| 10. Russian leader                      | 44. Texas ballplayer                     |
| 12. Promotional materials               | 45. Type of sword                        |
| 14. Wings                               | 46. Abba __, Israeli politician          |
| 19. Not odd                             | 47. Basic unit of a chemical element     |
| 23. Expression of creativity            | 48. Native American people in California |
| 24. Conceptualize                       | 51. Swiss river                          |
| 25. A digital tape recording of sound   | 52. Hebrew calendar month                |
| 26. Peyton's little brother             | 53. Easily swindled person               |
| 27. Cost, insurance and freight (abbr.) | 54. One point south of southwest         |
| 28. Difference in potential             | 58. Small island (British)               |

Answers found on Page 31



### What's the Difference?

Find the four differences between the two pictures.



Answers: 1. Logo on laptop 2. Pastry on table 3. Cup upside down 4. Missing sunglasses

### People FACT:

Approximately 73 per cent of the world's population uses this.

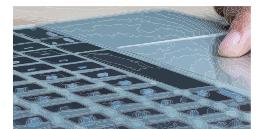
Answer: The internet

### How they say that in...

- English:** Clutter
- Spanish:** Desorden
- Italian:** Disordine
- French:** Désordre
- German:** Unordnung



### Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Laptop

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# COMING EVENTS

**JUNE 28 / 9 AM - 3 PM**

**OXFORD COUNTY ANNUAL COIN SHOW**  
**Woodstock Coin Club and the Ingersoll Coin Club**

Woodstock Agricultural Society Fairgrounds,  
 875 Nellis Street, Woodstock, ON, N4S 4C6

Admission: \$4.00. Buy, Sell, Trade & Evaluate!

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Contact: John Tryhub, (519) 608-8446

john@woodstockgoldsilver.ca

## MARCH

**MARCH 3, 17, & 31 | 1 PM**

**SACRED HEART PARISH EUCHRE**

Henderson Hall, 133 John Street, Ingersoll

We invite everyone to join us for a Euchre afternoon.  
 Refreshments provided.

**MARCH 7 | 5 PM**

**GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN, DIGGING DEEP INTO THOROUGHLY DOCUMENTING CEMETERIES**

Oxford Branch of Ontario Ancestors - Virtual Zoom Meeting

Presented by Lori Carter. Lori Carter is a dedicated, self-trained Cemetery Genealogist hobbyist. She founded the Facebook group "Cemetery Enthusiasts of Huron County Ontario" to unite individuals with a shared goal. This community strives to create memorials on FindaGrave.com for as many people as possible buried in Huron County. They not only establish basic information but also seek out obituaries and connect individuals to their parents and spouses, regardless of geographic location. This initiative enriches our shared heritage by building family connections within and beyond the county. Lori is always eager to share her knowledge and encourages everyone to get involved. Visit our website at <https://oxford.ogs.on.ca> to access the link to join this free presentation on zoom. Everyone is welcome.

**MARCH 9 | 7 PM**

**MURDER MYSTERY DINNER THEATRE**

South Gate Centre, 191 Old Wellington St. S.  
 Woodstock, 519-539-9817

Murder on the High Seas when a pirate ship collides with a cruise ship. 5 PM Show starts with appetizers | 6 PM Buffet Dinner. Members \$50 | Non-Members \$55

**MARCH 11 | 7 - 8 PM**

**INGERSOLL DISTRICT NATURE CLUB**  
**Ingersoll Public Library**

Sponsors: DESTINATION ANTARCTICA by Richard Skevington. A free presentation by a local life-long naturalist on his recent travels to Antarctica.

**MARCH 14 | 9 AM**

**PANCAKE BREAKFAST AND WALK**

Ingersoll Municipal Parking Lot behind the arena  
 INGERSOLL DISTRICT NATURE CLUB invites you to carpool for an outing to Springwater Conservation Area for a pancake breakfast followed by a visit and walk in the nearby Archie Coulter Conservation Area near Aylmer.

**MARCH 14 | 11 AM - 3 PM**

**BEST U HEALTH EXPO 2026**

South Gate Centre, 191 Old Wellington St. S.  
 Woodstock, 519-539-9817

Exhibitors, vendors, presentations on Health, Wellness and Safety. FREE ADMISSION. Thank you to the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario and the Province of Ontario for supporting this health fair.

**MARCH 21 | 9:30 AM - 4 PM**

**OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY OXPEX & OTEX 2026 STAMP SHOW**

St. Mary's Catholic High School, 431 Juliana Drive, Woodstock, ON, N4V 1E8

Free admission and parking. Framed and Judged exhibits, Stamp dealers, youth gift bags, Sales Circuit, draw prizes.  
 Contact: dhfe@silomail.com

Web: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>

**MARCH 21 | 9 - 11 AM**

**MEN'S BREAKFAST**

Huron Park Baptist Church, 99 Berwick St,  
 Woodstock, ON

Please call 519-421-4722 for more information.

**MARCH 24 | 2 - 4 PM**

**WOODSTOCK HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY'S 190<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS**  
**SPRING TEA AND BAKE SALE WITH SEASONAL MUSICAL INTERLUDES**

St. John's Church, 685860 Hwy#2, Eastwood, ON  
 519-458-4282

Wear your Easter bonnet!

**MARCH 24 | 7 PM**

**"LIFE WORTH LIVING"**

Woodstock Polish Hall, 878 Dufferin Street,  
 Woodstock

The one-hour film was produced by Woodstock native, Alex Schadenberg, Executive Director of Euthanasia Prevention Coalition and will be followed by a Q & A session with Alex. Admission is free. For more information, please email [info@oxfordcountyrighttolife.com](mailto:info@oxfordcountyrighttolife.com)

**MARCH 25 | 6:30 PM**

**OXFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY WINTER 2026 SPEAKER SERIES: LITTLE ENGINES CAN DO BIG THINGS**

Chartwell Oxford Gardens, 423 Devonshire Ave.  
 Woodstock

Special Guest Speaker - Colin Currie, Director OxHS - join Colin as he takes us through Oxford County's rich railroad history and historical infrastructure that helped shape and connect cities like Woodstock and Ingersoll (CN/CP) and towns like Tillsonburg, Hickson and Beachville (CASO/ GWR), now featuring numerous surviving heritage train stations and active train-watching spots. Free Admission, Donations Welcome! For more information, please email us at [info@oxhs.ca](mailto:info@oxhs.ca)

**MARCH 26 | 12 PM**

**SENIORS LUNCH**

Huron Park Baptist Church, 99 Berwick St,  
 Woodstock, ON

Please call 519-421-4722 for more information.

**MARCH 28 | 10 AM - 2 PM**

**EXPERIENCE FANSHAWE AT OPEN HOUSE**  
**All locations are open. Explore our campuses at London, Woodstock, Simcoe, St. Thomas, Clinton and Tiverton**

Meet faculty and current students from all areas of Fanshawe. Drop-in and ask about your program interests, career options and becoming a Fanshawe student. Hear from college experts on student life, admissions, financial aid, and more!

## APRIL

**APRIL 3 | 8 PM**

**"COME, TOUCH THE ROBE" AND OTHER SELECTED WORKS**

Sacred Heart Church, Ingersoll

Join the Ingersoll Choral Society on Good Friday evening in a stirring performance of Pepper Choplin's cantata, "Come, Touch the Robe" and other selected works. With orchestral accompaniment. Free will offering will be received. [www.ingersollchoralsociety.ca](http://www.ingersollchoralsociety.ca) or visit us on FB.

**APRIL 18 | 1:30 - 4:30 PM**

**GEMS & JAVA - FUNDRAISER FOR ETHIOPIA**

Hearts for Ethiopia is hosting Gems & Java, a fundraiser that changes lives in Ethiopia. Tickets available at [www.heartsforethiopia.com](http://www.heartsforethiopia.com). Until March 21st tickets are \$60. March 22nd tickets are \$65. Tables of 8 are \$460.00. For cash purchases, contact Heather [hmckinnon15@gmail.com](mailto:hmckinnon15@gmail.com) or (519) 535-9535. Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, 735 Frontenac Cres., Woodstock.

## ONGOING CLASSES, CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

**EVERY OTHER FRIDAY | 1 - 4 PM**

**IN 2026 IT'S YOUR FIX! INGERSOLL COUNTRY MUSIC JAMBOREE**

Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St. S., Ingersoll

Join us, walk ins welcome. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Perform, listen, dance & enjoy! March 6 & 20, April 10 & 17, May 1, 15 & 29, June 5 & 19.

**EVERY FRIDAY | 1 PM**

**TILLSONBURG DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB**  
 Tillsonburg Senior Centre, 45 Hardy Ave,  
 Tillsonburg

Don't have a partner? Come anyway and we will match you up with someone. For more information, visit their Facebook page: TburgBridge.

**2<sup>ND</sup> TUES. OF MONTH (SEPT. TO MAY) | 2 - 4 PM**

**4<sup>TH</sup> TUES. OF MONTH (SEPT. TO MAY) | 7 - 9 PM**

**OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY**

Church of the Epiphany, 560 Dundas Street,  
 Woodstock Ontario N4S 1C7

If you have never belonged to a stamp club, now's the time. Meet new friends, grow your knowledge and collection. Contact: Don Eaton [dhfe@silomail.com](mailto:dhfe@silomail.com).  
 Website: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>



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# COMING EVENTS

**LAST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH | 10 AM - 12 PM**  
**MONTHLY VON BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC**  
 Ingersoll Pharmasave, 19 King St. E., Ingersoll  
 Last Tuesday of every Month.

**3<sup>RD</sup> WED. OF MONTH**

## COLOURING THROUGH GRIEF

**Caring Hearts Support Network: St. David's United Church, 190 Springbank Ave., Woodstock ON**

One time fee of \$15. Registration is required.  
 Call 519-536-3370. Check out website  
[www.caringheartssupportnetwork.com](http://www.caringheartssupportnetwork.com)

**3<sup>RD</sup> WED. OF MONTH | 6:30 - 8:30 PM**

## PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

**21 Wellington St., Woodstock (Virtual options available)**

PCMH is a peer support program providing support to parents and caregivers across Ontario with lived experience raising children and youth with mental health challenges. For more information, please visit [family.cmho.org](http://family.cmho.org) or [oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca](mailto:oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca). We are also on Facebook: Parents for Children's Mental Health ~ Oxford County

## VON OXFORD GRIEF CARE:

### FREE MONTHLY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Register at: [oxford.griefsupport@von.ca](mailto:oxford.griefsupport@von.ca) or 519-539-1231 Ext 6299 or 6296

## TILLSONBURG

**WHEN:** 2nd Tuesday of every month

**WHERE:** VON Oxford Office 24 Brock St. W., Tillsonburg

**TIME:** 6:30PM-8:00PM

## INGERSOLL

**WHEN:** 4th Tuesday of every month

**WHERE:** Ingersoll Public Library 130 Oxford St., Ingersoll

**TIME:** 10:30AM - 12:00Noon

## WOODSTOCK

**WHEN:** 3rd Saturday of every month

**WHERE:** Sakura House Hospice 715180 Oxford Rd.4, Woodstock

**TIME:** 10:30AM-12:00 Noon

**4<sup>TH</sup> WED. OF MONTH | 1 - 2:30 PM**

## GRIEF SUPPORT FOR MAID RELATED LOSS

**Thamesford Library, 165 Dundas St., Thamesford**

This monthly in-person grief support group for loss related to Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) offers a compassionate, safe space to explore this unique loss. The group is free of charge and pre-registration is requested. To register or inquire about an evening group, contact 519-866-3016 or email [faye@compassionategriefsupport.ca](mailto:faye@compassionategriefsupport.ca).

## OXFORD COUNTY DIABETES EDUCATION PROGRAM

Are you looking for support with your Diabetes? Our Team of Registered Nurses, Registered Dietitians and a Social Worker is here to support YOUR goals. We can help with medication adjustments, lifestyle and diet changes, stress management, weight reduction strategies and more. Appointments are available at Alexandra Hospital Ingersoll and Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital and by phone. **SELF REFERRALS ARE WELCOME.** Please call 519-485-9611 to book an appointment. Let's work together!

## THE OPTIMIST CLUB OF OXFORD COUNTY

The Optimists bring out the best in Youth, Community, and Themselves. If anyone is interested in coming out to meet us and learn more about us please email

[brenda7621@outlook.com](mailto:brenda7621@outlook.com)

## THE LIONS CLUB OF WOODSTOCK

The Lions Club of Woodstock has been serving the community and Oxford County with kindness and generosity since 1931. The Lions always place the needs of neighbours and communities first. Through the dedication and hard work of our volunteer members, we are serving those in need together. If you are interested in becoming a member or simply wish to learn more by attending one of our monthly meetings, please email Steve Iorio at [steveiorio4@gmail.com](mailto:steveiorio4@gmail.com) for more information.

## OXFORD COUNTY BRANCH OF ONTARIO ANCESTORS

Are you looking to start a summer pastime? Are you interested in your family history? Oxford Branch has an extensive collection of family history and genealogical resources that can help you.

**Come visit our Resource Centre at 82 Light Street, Courthouse Square, Woodstock. We are open Tuesdays to Thursdays 10:00 am to 4:00 pm**

Volunteers are ready to help you get started or help you research for missing information. You can also connect with us on the web at <https://oxford.ogs.on.ca>. We are dedicated to supporting and promoting genealogical research in Oxford County. Hope to see you through the summer!

## FREEZER MEALS PROVIDED BY ST. PAUL'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

We know life is busy for many families today, and it can be so nice to have things in the freezer to allow us to eat well, and quickly. St. Paul's Church in Ingersoll has been busy making different items you can simply pull out of the freezer! We have frozen ham & pea soup, cabbage rolls and cabbage roll casseroles, as well as individual turkey pies. We also have some lovely frozen apple and blueberry fruit pies ready for your oven! We'd love to make life easier for you this winter. For more details on what we have, and the prices, please call our church office at 519-485-3390 or by email: [stpauls@execulink.com](mailto:stpauls@execulink.com).

## BEACHVILLE LEGION EVENTS: 434852 ZorraLine, Beachville

**FEBRUARY 28 | 7 - 11 PM**  
**KARAOKE**

**THURSDAYS | 7 PM**  
**EUCHRE**

**SATURDAYS | 1 - 4 PM**  
**THAMES VALLEY BLUEGRASS AND OLD TIME COUNTRY PICKERS**

Open Mic(acoustic only). Come enjoy the music.

**MARCH 4 | 4:30 - 6 PM**  
**OX ON THE RUN LIBRARY BOOK MOBILE**

**MARCH 6 | DOORS OPEN 6 PM, PLAY BEGINS 7 PM**  
**WOODSTOCK KITTEN RESCUE AND NURSERY BINGO**

**THURSDAYS, STARTING MARCH 12 | 7 - 8 PM**  
**LINE DANCING**

**THURSDAYS, STARTING MARCH 12 | 8:15 - 9:15 PM**  
**RUMBA AND BACHATA DANCING**  
 No partner required.

**MARCH 13 | 5:30 PM**  
**ROAST BEEF DINNER**

**MARCH 13 | DOORS OPEN 6 PM, PLAY BEGINS 7 PM**  
**WOODSTOCK KITTEN RESCUE AND NURSERY BINGO**

**MARCH 18 | 4:30 - 6 PM**  
**OX ON THE RUN LIBRARY BOOK MOBILE**

## ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 55 EVENTS: 642 Dundas St, Woodstock, ON

**THURSDAYS | 1:30 PM**  
**SHUFFLEBOARD**

**MONDAY EVENINGS**  
**CADETS**

**TUESDAY - FRIDAY EVENINGS**  
**DART LEAGUE**

**MARCH 3 | 7 PM**  
**EXECUTIVE MEETING**

**MARCH 5 | 11:30 AM - 12:45 PM**  
**SOUP N SANDWICH**

**MARCH 7 | 3 PM**  
**MEAT DRAW**

**MARCH 10 | 7:30 PM**  
**GENERAL MEETING**  
 Nomination Night.

**MARCH 15 | 5 - 6 PM**  
**FISH N CHIPS**  
 Pre-Order & Pay No later March 10th, Dessert is extra, Call the Office for details 519-537-3112.

**MARCH 22 | 5 - 6 PM**  
**CORN BEEF & CABBAGE**  
 Pre-Order & Pay No later March 17th, Dessert is extra, Call the Office for details 519-537-3112

**MARCH 28 | 4:30 - 6 PM**  
**WING NIGHT**  
 Wings w/Fries, Pre-Order & Pay No later March 24th. Call the Office for details.

**APRIL 12**  
**SMOTHERED CHICKEN**

**APRIL 14-21**  
**RUMMAGE SALE**

**APRIL 19**  
**FISH N CHIPS**

**APRIL 25**  
**WING NIGHT**

## SATURDAY EVENING ENTERTAINMENT:

**MARCH 7 | 6 PM - 1 PM**  
**PRIVATE FUNCTION**  
 Canteen still open.

**MARCH 14 | 7 PM - 11 PM**  
**MIKE THROPE**

**MARCH 21 | 7 PM - 11 PM**  
**50-60 BROS**

**MARCH 28 | 7 PM - 11 PM**  
**DJ KELLY**

# Riddles

There is a rooster sitting on top of a barn. If it laid an egg, which way would it roll?  
*Roosters don't lay eggs.*

I jump when I walk and sit when I stand. What am I?  
*A kangaroo.*

What's a frog's favorite game?  
*Leapfrog.*

What animal is it the hardest to have a staring contest with?  
*A fish.*

Which animal has more lives than a cat?  
*A frog. It croaks every night.*

Which animal has no wings, but will fly?  
*A caterpillar after it becomes a butterfly.*

What do you call a bear with no teeth?  
*A gummy bear.*

How can you tell the difference between dogs and trees?  
*By their bark.*

What do you call a pig that does karate?  
*A pork chop.*

What type of music do rabbits listen to?  
*Hip hop.*

My name sounds like something you might use on your hair or eat for dessert. What am I?  
*A moose.*

What is as big as an elephant but weighs nothing?  
*An elephant's shadow.*

What is a bird, a fruit and a person?  
*Kiwi.*

# Sudoku

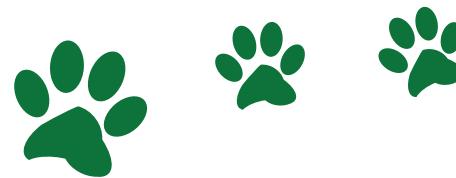
by PeterS 2025

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|  | 8 | 9 |   |   | 7 | 1 | 6 |  |
|  | 5 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |  |
|  | 1 | 7 |   |   | 8 |   |   |  |
|  |   |   |   |   | 5 |   |   |  |
|  |   |   |   | 9 | 6 | 2 | 5 |  |
|  |   |   |   | 4 | 3 | 7 | 1 |  |
|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |

Solutions on page 31

Basic

## Featured Pet



### PIPER

This is Piper. She is an Blue Merle Australian Shepherd. She is 8 years old. Piper lives in Mount Elgin. She loves going for walks, car rides, bike rides and sleeping.



Nominate your pet to be a Featured Pet by emailing [info@theecho.ca](mailto:info@theecho.ca)

# Word Search

## FEBRUARY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
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- SEATTLE SEAHAWKS
- BAD BUNNY
- NANCY GUTHRIE
- GORDIE HOWE
- BRIDGE
- TUMBLER RIDGE
- WINTER OLYMPICS
- LINDSEY VONN
- CRASH
- CURLING
- CONTROVERSY
- MIKAEL KINGSBURY
- MEGAN OLDHAM
- WOMENS SPEED SKATING
- STEVEN DUBOIS
- MENS CURLING
- USA HOCKEY GOLDS
- EL MENCHO
- PUERTO VALLARTA

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## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Russia & Belarus
2. True
3. Golden Hawk
4. Sir Isaac Newton
5. Baron Pierre de Coubertin
6. The sartorius muscle
7. Animals
8. A bag of money, hen that lays golden eggs, & a magical harp
9. 1980
10. United States

## SUDOKU

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## CROSSWORD

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|   |   |   | S | O | P |   | L | A | T | C | H | E | S |   |
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| O | P | E | N |   | A | C | E |   |   | R | A | B | B | I |
| M | A | R |   |   | P | E | R |   |   |   | R | E | S | T |



**Contribute to your local community newspaper! Send articles, sports or event recaps, and photos to [info@theecho.ca](mailto:info@theecho.ca)**

## CLASSIFIEDS

### TREES

Shade trees, Fruit trees, Apple, Pears, Peaches, Plums, Sweet and Sour Cherries, Apricot, Nectarines, Blueberry, Haskopp, Black Chokeberry, Grapes etc. Lots of Spruce, Pine, Cedars for windbreaks and privacy hedges, Sizes 1 to 6+. Flowering shrubs and much more. Come check us out Mon-Sat 7:00am - 6:00pm. Martin's Nursery, 42661 Orangehill Road, Wroxeter (1 concession north of Wroxeter on Belmore Line)

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\*Limited time finance offer provided through Kia Motors Finance on select new 2026 **Seltos** models through participating dealers to qualified retail customers, on approved credit, who take delivery from February 3, 2026 to March 2, 2026. Representative finance example based on a new and previously unregistered 2026 **Seltos**. Selling Price is \$26,095. 4.99% finance APR for 84 months, with a \$0 down payment or equivalent trade-in, equals 84 monthly finance payments of \$473 - which includes: \$2,100 delivery and destination fees; \$100 A/C charge (where applicable); regional fees of up to \$22, \$599 dealer administration fee, lien registration fees (up to \$150, including lien registering agent fee); and all other applicable fees and levies (all of which may vary by region and dealer). Cost of borrowing is \$3,510.88 for a total obligation of \$37,036.80. Excludes licensing, registration, insurance and applicable sales taxes. Dealer may sell for less. Dealer order/trade may be required (but may not be available in all cases). Offer ends March 2, 2026 and is subject to change and extension without notice. While supplies last. See your participating Kia dealer or visit [www.kia.ca](http://www.kia.ca) for details. Information in this advertisement is believed to be accurate at the time of printing. International models and features shown. Kia is a trademark of Kia Corporation. X-Line model shown.