

The Paris Independent

Issue #257

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(ROBERT GEORGEFF PHOTO)

Canadian rock band July Talk takes the stage Friday night at Paris Drinks Fest, delivering one of the weekend's most anticipated performances. The band headlined the first night of the two-day festival, which drew nearly 4,000 people to the grounds beside the Syl Apps Community Centre.

Paris Drinks Fest worth the fight

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

After months spent fighting to keep Paris Drinks Fest in Paris, organizers finally got the moment they had been working toward when the gates opened Friday - and nearly 4,000

festivalgoers followed over the course of the weekend.

The seventh annual Paris Drinks Fest wrapped up Saturday following two days of live Canadian music, food and drinks on the grounds beside the Syl Apps Community Centre.

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The countdown to fair time is on

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

For generations, the Paris Fair has been one of those unmistakable signs that summer is winding down.

The midway lights, livestock barns, home-craft exhibits, fair food and grandstand entertainment will return to the Paris Fairgrounds Sept. 3 to 7 as the Paris Agricultural Society presents the 168th edition of the Labour Day weekend tradition.

While much of what draws generations of families back each year remains firmly rooted in tradition and agriculture, organizers say there will be plenty to discover in 2026, including returning attractions, new experiences and a strong entertainment lineup.

"One of the things we're really proud of is that there truly is something for everyone," said Amy Warner, general manager of the Paris Agricultural Society. "Visitors can enjoy live entertainment, agricultural shows and exhibits, competitions, great fair food, and lots of activities for families and kids."

Returning this year is the Ultimutts Stunt Dog Show, while country music will once again take centre stage during the weekend. American country singer Chris Lane will headline Saturday night, while Canadian country stars Brett Kissel and Lindsay Ell return to the Paris Fair stage Sunday.

Kissel will headline the Sept. 6 Sunday Night Country Concert, with Ell opening. Both have

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Paris Drinks Fest celebrates successful return after uncertain road to 2026 festival

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

For Tim Des Islets and the Noisemaker team, the successful weekend carried a little more weight this year.

"We all breathed a sigh of relief when the gates opened on Friday because the process has been such a difficult journey for the team and I," Des Islets told the Paris Independent.

That journey began months earlier after the festival's future at Syl Apps was thrown into question over noise concerns from previous events. County of Brant council initially denied the required noise exemption before reversing that decision in January, allowing Drinks Fest to return to the site for one more year.

Organizers subsequently agreed to changes that included ending amplified music earlier each night and continuing to monitor sound levels during the festival.

After spending considerable time at council meetings advocating for the festival, Des Islets said watching it finally come together was rewarding.

"I never expected I would spend this much time at Council meetings but I will always defend the need for communities like Paris and the County of Brant to welcome and support cultural events that bring people together to celebrate local drinks, food, and music!"

The weather also co-operated for the Aug. 14 and 15 festival, something Des Islets said organizers were particularly grateful for following a challenging season for



(ROBERT GEORGEFF PHOTO)

Toronto singer-songwriter Loviet performs Friday night at Paris Drinks Fest, helping set the tone for a packed weekend of live Canadian music. Festival organizer Tim Des Islets praised Loviet as an "incredibly talented" artist who provided the perfect soundtrack for opening night.

outdoor events.

"There was a magic in the air as soon as the gates opened on Friday," he said.

Almost 4,000 people attended over the two days, while 40 Ontario breweries, wineries, distilleries, restaurants and food trucks participated.

On stage, the festival delivered a lineup headlined by July Talk on Friday and The Strumbellas on Saturday — two acts Des Islets said festivalgoers had been asking organizers to book for years.

The weekend also featured Loviet, Thunder Queens and Gizmo on Friday, followed Saturday by Born In The Eighties, Tanika Charles, Glimmerjean & Goode and Absolute Treat.

Des Islets said the performances were among his highlights, from teenage London rockers Thunder Queens to returning festival favourite Born In The Eighties, making its third appearance at Drinks Fest.

But some of his favourite moments happened away from the stage.

Des Islets said attendees approached him throughout the weekend to share memories of previous festivals, explain why they signed petitions supporting the event and talk about why they believe events like Drinks Fest are important to the region.

For organizers, that community response has become one of the most meaningful parts of watching the festival grow.

"The fact that the community rose up to support this event and helped to encourage Council to approve our permits so we could proceed with our seventh annual event was the most rewarding feeling we could ask for," Des Islets said. "It reminded us how much people enjoy this event and why it's important to them."

He said Drinks Fest has become part of the summer calendar for many attendees and even some of its neighbours.

"There are a few neighbours beside Syl Apps Community Centre who have a party every Paris Drinks Fest weekend," he said. "They have friends over, their kids have fun, they play amazing music while we build the festival, and on Friday and Saturday they have a lineup of Canadian music in their backyard."

Producing the weekend requires plenty of work behind the scenes. Noisemaker has a core team of eight people working throughout the year on the festival, supported during the event by about 20 volunteers and support staff.

Another roughly 60 people work in security, emergency medical services, production and as paid off-duty OPP officers.

With the 2026 festival now complete, attention is already turning toward 2027, including the unresolved question of where the eighth annual Drinks Fest will take place. Des Islets said organizers would like to remain at Syl Apps and want the surrounding neighbourhood involved in plan-

ning for another festival there.

The festival originally moved to Syl Apps after flooding affected its former location at Lions Park. Des Islets said organizers explored numerous public parks throughout the County before settling on the current site.

He said Syl Apps remains the only location they have identified that offers accessibility options, is centrally located, allows attendees to walk, bike or carpool and meets County safety requirements for an event of its size.

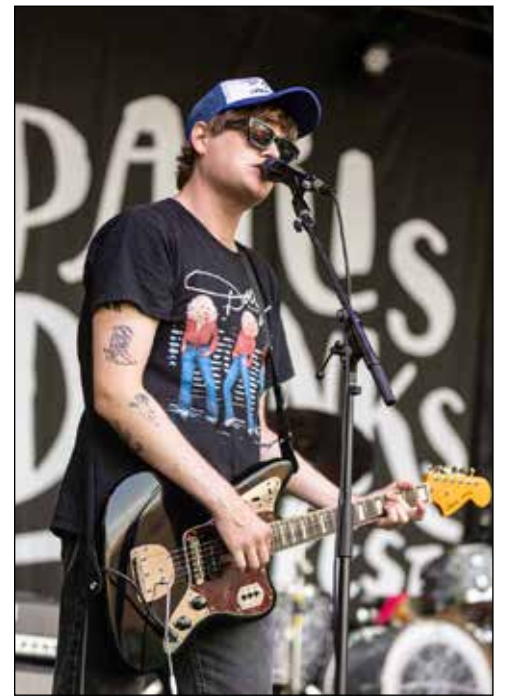
"We would love to be able to continue presenting Paris Drinks Fest at Syl Apps and we want to make sure the neighbourhood is part of that planning process," he said.

"Until new options become available we hope Paris Drinks Fest can remain at Syl Apps."

And while the venue question remains, one thing appears certain: planning for the next Drinks Fest has already started.

"Our team always starts planning the next year's festival while we're working on the current event," Des Islets said. "It's too much fun talking about artists we want to bring to Paris and new experiences we can bring to the event."

After the uncertainty surrounding this year's festival, however, Des Islets said its biggest success was much simpler.



(ROBERT GEORGEFF PHOTO)

P.E.I. indie band Gizmo performs Friday night at Paris Drinks Fest. Noisemaker began managing the emerging group earlier this year, and festival organizer Tim Des Islets said bringing them to the Paris stage was a highlight of the weekend.

"There were so many highlights but the biggest one is Paris Drinks Fest was able to stay in Paris!"



(ROBERT GEORGEFF PHOTO)

London rock trio Thunder Queens takes the stage Friday night at Paris Drinks Fest. The teenage performers, who are still too young to attend the festival as guests, earned high praise from organizer Tim Des Islets for delivering an incredible opening-night performance.

WWW.GRANTHAVEN.COM

Paris Fair blends tradition, agriculture and entertainment for five-day Labour Day weekend celebration

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

performed at the fair previously, with Kissel returning after his packed 2024 appearance. The Sunday concert is included with regular fair admission.

But while the midway and concerts may attract plenty of attention, Warner said agriculture remains at the heart of the fair.

“Agriculture is still very much at the heart of what we do, so people will have opportunities to see livestock, learn more about where their food comes from, and experience that connection between agriculture and our community,” she said.

That agricultural focus will be particularly evident Saturday, Sept. 5, when the Paris Fair welcomes some of the best beef cattle in competition.

The Paris Fair is a Super Qualifier for the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair Masterfeeds Beef Supreme and a qualifier for the Canadian Western Agribition CN Beef Supreme, adding another level of excitement and prestige to Saturday’s livestock competition.

Competition is also a major part of the fair beyond the livestock barns, with homecraft, horticulture and other traditional classes showcasing the talents of local exhibitors.

This year’s Junior Department Homecraft theme is “Around the World,” inviting some of the fair’s youngest exhibitors to explore different countries, cultures and traditions through their entries.

“It’s always exciting to see how they interpret the theme and the imagination they bring to their projects,” Warner said.

The Paris Agricultural Society’s Ambassador Competition will help kick off the fair on Thursday, Sept. 3, continuing another longstanding tradition that gives young people an opportunity to represent the agricultural society and the community.

tinuing another longstanding tradition that gives young people an opportunity to represent the agricultural society and the community.

Fairgoers looking for something a little different can also add afternoon tea to their itinerary. The Homecraft Division is introducing an afternoon tea with live music, featuring scones, finger sandwiches, sweets and tea or punch. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased in advance online or through the fair office.

For Warner, however, part of the appeal of the Paris Fair has always been that visitors don’t necessarily need a carefully planned itinerary.

“And then there’s the atmosphere. You can come for a show, grab your favourite fair food, wander through the exhibits, watch a competition, visit the animals and discover something you weren’t necessarily planning to see,” she said. “That mix of tradition, entertainment and new experiences is really what makes the Paris Fair special. You don’t have to be a midway person to spend an entire day here and have a great time.”

Behind those five days of activity are hundreds of volunteers who spend months preparing the grounds, competitions, entertainment, agricultural programming and special events.

Warner said volunteers work in virtually every area of the fair, including agriculture and Homecraft competitions, entertainment, gates, parking, the Ambassador Program, special events and grounds preparation. Some committees begin planning almost immediately after the previous year’s fair ends.

Many volunteers have been involved for decades, while others volunteer as families or are young people getting their first taste of helping behind the scenes.

“The Paris Fair is truly a community effort. Our volunteers aren’t just helping us put on an event; they’re helping carry forward a tradition that has been part of this community for generations, while continuing to find new ways to make the Fair relevant and exciting for the future,” Warner said. It is that balance between preserving the traditions people associate with Labour Day weekend in Paris and finding something new to bring them back that organizers hope will make this year’s fair worth another visit.

For those who haven’t attended in a while, or have never experienced the fair, Warner said they may be surprised by just how much is packed into five days.

“It’s five days where you can experience a little bit of everything — agriculture, live entertainment, competitions, incredible food, family activities, community displays and, of course, the midway,” she said. “You can come with a plan, but some of the best moments are often the things you discover while walking around the grounds.”

The 168th Paris Fair runs Sept. 3 to 7 at the Paris Fairgrounds.



(MARGARET COLLINS PHOTO)

Paris Agricultural Society Ambassador Grace Aulsebrook-Smith joins Joanne McQuiggan and Homecraft Committee Chair Karen Ilett during a recent society meeting. McQuiggan was presented with a pottery vase recognizing her remarkable 40 years of service with the Paris Fair’s Homecraft Division.



(MARGARET COLLINS PHOTO)

Jean Tucker and Karen Ilett model their handmade fascinators created during a recent workshop in preparation for the Paris Fair’s new afternoon tea experience. Hosted by the Homecraft Division of the Paris Agricultural Society, the tea will feature scones, finger sandwiches, sweets and tea or punch.



(MICHELLE MALVASO PHOTO)

Fairgoers soar above the midway during the 2025 Paris Fair. The sights, sounds and thrills of the midway will return to the Paris Fairgrounds Sept. 3 to 7 as the longstanding Labour Day weekend tradition marks its 168th year.

Guiding Principles

1. Everyone has a story
2. The news should be free for all to enjoy
3. Good news beats bad news
4. A Newspaper should be a community effort (contribute to your local paper!)
5. Newspapers document history
6. Newspapers strengthen communities
7. Advertisers, big or small, should profit from their ads (meaning sensible ad rates)
8. Newspapers should be locally-owned and operated

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Paris Legion finishes Poppy Project assembly

KIMBERLY DE JONG

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Royal Canadian Legion, Paris Branch #29, announced that they finished assembling 11,500 handmade poppies into display blankets on Thursday, August 13, 2026.

The work is part of the Legion's ongoing Poppy Project, launched as part of its 100th anniversary celebrations.

Cheryl Humphrey, who sits on the 100th anniversary committee, recently told County of Brant Councillors that the Paris Legion has been hosting various workshop events throughout the year, and had collected over 11,000 hand-crocheted and knitted poppies since last fall.

"We went to the community, and this has become a very social and inclusive event," she said. "Mary Maxim, Telfer Place, Queensview, Brant Seniors, the Women's Institute, Probus, the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, the Paris Agricultural Society and the general public, have come together to crochet or knit these poppies. Most of the people donated their time, effort and money to do that, and now we have collected 11,000 poppies."

Humphrey went on to say that the aim was to create large blankets that can be draped and displayed across monuments and landmarks in Paris for Remembrance Day.

"We're going to put them on netting and the goal is to get as many done as we can,

but if not, we still have next year to work on that project," she said. "We'd like to put them in places that really show the respect, remembrance and reverence that we would like to send out to our veterans. We're going to try to get them at the cenotaph, and we'll also put them on our Smokehouse, which is the name for our Legion building, and if there are other areas in the community then we'll definitely do that. We will also share some of these with Telfer Place and Queensview because they were so helpful in getting this project going."

Humphrey said that, when the time comes, the poppy displays can go up on the last Friday of October and remain in place through Remembrance Day.

The Legion will then need to secure a place to dry and store the poppies to be used for next year and into the future.

"These poppies will be used year after year. It's not a one-time deal just for our 100th anniversary," said Humphrey. "We will put them out on display in the community, and I think that the people who have been very much a part of this will be very grateful to see them up there. We have a huge amount of veterans in our area, and this is just one way for us to help celebrate that and to remember them by."

She then asked councillors and members of the public to join in on one of the Legion's upcoming Netting Bee events, and help attach each of the many handmade poppies to netting.

While the Legion was due to host two



(COUNCILLOR STEVE HOWES PHOTO)

County of Brant Councillor Lukas Oakley help volunteers attach poppies to netting for the Royal Canadian Legion, Paris Branch #29's ongoing Poppy Project on Wednesday, July 29, 2026.

more events on Wednesday, August 19, and Wednesday, August 26, it was announced that the events were cancelled after they managed to finish the blankets with the help of volunteers on August 12.

The Legion is now inviting the community to an upcoming open house that will from September 28 to October 2, and will feature the exhibit "Stitches, Steel and Strength: Holding the Line at Home - Women and WWII."

Local schools, community organizations, members, families and the public are all

welcome to attend and the open house will continue on Sunday, October 4.

Similar projects have either already been established or are being worked on in communities like Brantford, Burford, Blandford-Blenheim, Cambridge, Strathroy-Carleton and many others.

Kimberly De Jong's reporting is funded by the Canadian government through its Local Journalism Initiative. The funding allows her to report rural and agricultural stories from Blandford-Blenheim and Brant County.



RE-ELECT JOHN BELL IN WARD 3



I was first elected as Councillor for Ward 3 in 2018 (re-elected in 2022) and seek re-election once again in October.

For those of you who do not know me the County has been home to my wife, Audrey, and I since 2009. We have lived in Wards 1, 2 and 3 and have family in Ward 4- we know the County well. I am an engineer by training and education and have extensive experience in project management and business planning (from 30+ years in private industry).

I have served as Chair and Vice Chair of various Council Committees and the Board of Health. As a part of my role as a County Councillor I serve on the Joint Social Services Committee, the Library Board, the Committee of Management of John Noble Home, the Board of Health (GEPH) and the Board of Brant Municipal Enterprises. Outside of Council I have been a Board member of the PrimaCare FHT here in Paris for the last decade.

In this campaign I will not go door to door but I would very much like to hear from you. I invite anyone who would like to speak with me or share their issue/concerns/thoughts to contact me and I will happily meet them in the coffee shop or just take a walk to talk. If you would like to learn more about me, or wish to contact me, please go to my FB page - or e-mail me - or call/text me - or go to my website (see below for details). If you would like to show your support by placing a sign on your property I will ensure you get one (after Labour Day).

"I will continue to actively represent my Ward 3 residents on their local issues and continue to advocate for a number of County wide issues I feel are important to our community.

These issues form the focus of my 2026 platform together with the successful build of a new main branch library and advocacy for a new Brant/Brantford Hospital."

MY PRIORITIES



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* Authorized by the campaign Re-elect John Bell in Ward 3.

Wing lovers invited to rock their way through Paris on new Fowl Tour

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

Grab your friends, loosen your belt and get ready to wing your way across town.

Nine Paris restaurants are going head-to-head this summer in Sauce, Suds & Sin: Fowl Tour Paris 2026, a rock-and-roll-inspired food tour that puts local chicken-wing lovers in the judge's seat.

Created by Paris entrepreneur and former chef Jennifer Spencer, founder of Freeats.ca, the tour challenges participants to visit nine local restaurants, sample their featured wings and ultimately decide who deserves the coveted title of Best Wings in Paris.

"We wanted to create something that was fun, a little different and would get people out exploring Paris," Spencer said.

"Paris has so many great places to eat, and we wanted to create an event where people could discover them while having a really good time. The rock-and-roll theme just seemed like the perfect fit. Every restaurant is a headliner, every wing is part of the setlist, and the people of Paris get to decide who deserves the Platinum Gold Record."

The tour is the latest community-minded initiative from Freeats.ca, the online platform Spencer launched in September 2025 to bring Paris restaurant specials, live entertainment and community events together in one place. Spencer spent 15 years working as a chef before developing the site, giving her firsthand insight into the challenges restaurants face and the importance of connecting them with customers.

Now she is taking that mission off the screen and into restaurants across town, one plate of wings at a time.

Participating in this summer's showdown are Capeesh Kitchen & Cellar, Cobblestone Public House, Legends Taphouse & Grill, Paris Pub, Pizza Time, Stillwaters Plate & Pour, Tito's Pizza, Wild Wing and Wing'n It.

Each restaurant has developed its own featured wing experience. Dine-in restaurants are pairing their wings with beer, cocktails or mocktails, while takeout locations are offering special food pairings.

The result is a nine-stop tour designed to showcase the

variety of Paris' dining scene while giving residents a good excuse to revisit an old favourite — or finally try somewhere they haven't been before.

And no rock tour would be complete without some memorabilia.

Participants can pick up an official Fowl Tour Passport, designed with a distressed rock-and-roll look and signature sugar-skull artwork. At each stop, diners purchase the restaurant's featured wings and collect a stamp in their passport.

Then comes the important part: judging.

Tour-goers can rate their wing experiences in several categories, including Best Sauce/Flavour, Meatiest Wings and Best Food Pairing.

At the top of the charts is the Platinum Gold Record, awarded to the restaurant voted to have the best wings in Paris.

"It's about getting people through the doors of our local restaurants," she said. "When someone buys a passport, they're not just buying a piece of paper. They're buying an excuse to go out, try somewhere new, order some wings, have a drink, bring their friends and discover another local business."

That philosophy has been central to Freeats.ca since its launch. The platform is free for restaurants, community organizations and service groups to promote specials and events, and Spencer has described the project as a way to strengthen the local economy and help residents connect with their community.

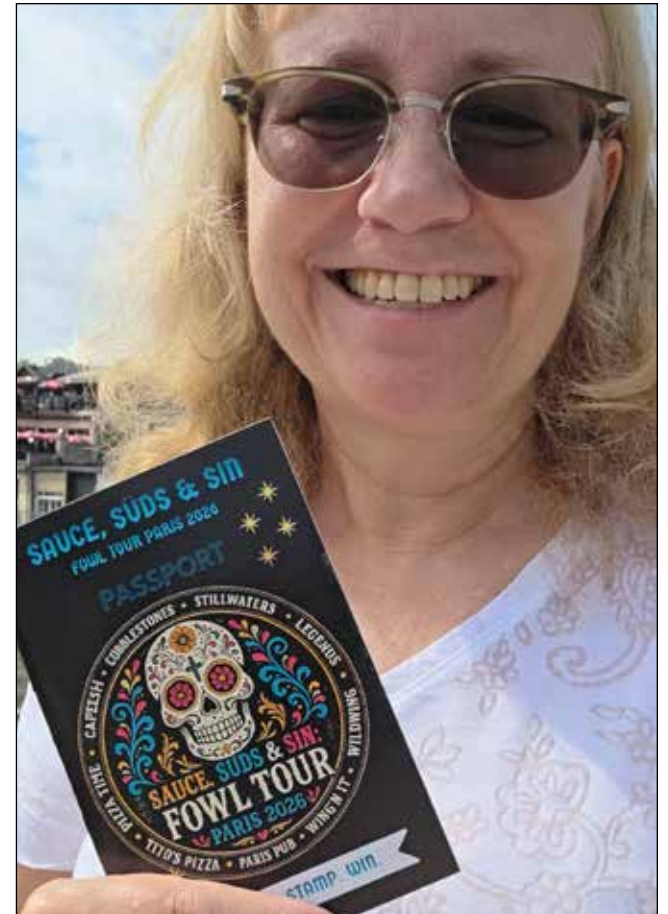
There is also a little extra incentive for wing fans willing to make their way through the tour.

Participants will have opportunities to win prizes, including a stay at the Arlington Hotel, a Grand River Rafting adventure, restaurant gift cards and other giveaways.

The tour continues until Saturday, Sept. 12 at 11:59 p.m., giving participants plenty of time to work their way through all nine stops, although deciding which restaurant gets their vote may prove harder than finishing the wings.

Passports are available through Freeats.ca and at participating restaurants while supplies last.

Paris Independent readers can save 50 per cent on the Fowl Tour passport by using promo code TPI50 at check-



Freeats.ca founder Jennifer Spencer promotes Sauce, Suds & Sin: Fowl Tour Paris 2026, a nine-stop culinary adventure inviting wing lovers to sample signature creations from local restaurants and cast their votes for the best wings in Paris. The tour runs until Sept. 12.

out.

The Wingman Passport includes two official Fowl Tour passports and two individual contest entries, allowing each participant to vote separately in the Rock Honors Awards while collecting stamps and exploring all nine participating Paris restaurants together.

County of Brant invites residents and visitors to explore local agriculture during Farm Crawl Brant Event

MEDIA RELEASE

The County of Brant is inviting residents and visitors to experience local agriculture during Farm Crawl Brant, taking place on Saturday, September 12, 2026.

This one-day, self-guided, ticketed driving tour, running from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, will provide participants with the opportunity to visit five local farms, meet the farmers behind the products, learn about agriculture in Brant and support local businesses. This year's event is presented in partnership with our friends at Farm Crawl Hamilton and is supported by RTO3 - Hamilton Halton Brant through the

2026/2027 Partnership Fund Program.

Visitors to Farm Crawl Brant will enjoy behind-the-scenes experiences while exploring a variety of participating farms throughout the County. Each stop will offer a unique opportunity to discover how local food and agricultural products are grown, raised and produced.

"Brant's agricultural community plays an important role in our local economy and helps shape the character of our rural communities," said Zach Gable, Director of Economic Development and Tourism. "Farm Crawl Brant provides a unique opportunity for residents and visitors to connect directly with local farmers, learn about

agriculture and experience everything our farming community has to offer."

Participating farms in 2026 Farm Crawl Brant include:

- Glenridge Hazelnuts located in Glen Morris
- Moore Farms located just outside of Paris
- Brantview Apples & Cider located in St. George
- Browndale Farm located in Paris
- Blue Gable Acres Inc located in Paris

"Thank you to the participating farms," said Gable. "We are incredibly fortunate to have a farming community that is eager to

share its passion and expertise with others. By opening their farms to residents and visitors, they are helping foster a greater appreciation for local agriculture and the important contributions farming makes to the County of Brant."

Tickets are required to participate in the event and are now available for purchase on the website. As tickets are limited, we encourage you to purchase yours early to avoid disappointment.

We look forward to celebrating Farm Crawl Brant with the community and visitors this September! To learn more about Farm Crawl Brant and stay up to date, visit brant.ca/FarmCrawl.

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A Few Doors Down

RACHELLE ROUSSEAU

Rousseau Rares Vintage

There are a few things you learn pretty quickly when you work downtown. One of them is who owns a ladder.

You also learn who has packing tape, who can make change, who might have the tool you need, and who you can ask for an extra set of hands when something heavy needs to be moved.

It's a part of downtown life most people probably never see.

From the sidewalk, our businesses look separate. Different signs, different doors, different things for sale. But behind those storefronts are little communities of people who spend an awful lot of time together.

Every street in our downtown block seems to develop its own group of helpers. The businesses a few doors down become the people you see every morning. They're the ones you wave to through the window, pop in to see, borrow something from, or ask for help when you suddenly realize a job requires more than two hands.

Sometimes we pop into each other's shops because we need something. Sometimes to ask a question. And sometimes just to say hello and see how the day is going.

There are conversations in doorways and quick chats on the sidewalk. Someone runs over to tell you something funny that just happened. Someone notices the new display in your window. A delivery arrives

while someone has stepped away and a neighbour makes sure it gets inside.

And sometimes a summer rainstorm rolls in without much warning and everyone moves a little faster.

Suddenly people are running down the sidewalk helping each other pull displays inside before everything gets soaked. Clothing racks, signs, tables, boxes, whatever is outside starts disappearing through the nearest doors. Nobody really stops to think about whose things they're carrying. If you're nearby, you grab something.

It happens in little pockets all over downtown. Different streets, different businesses, with their own little groups of neighbours looking out for each other.

And those little communities overlap.

Someone from around the corner stops in for a chat. Someone walks down the block looking for a tool. Lunch gets carried back across the street. Someone pops in with a treat or offers to lend a hand.

And we send people to each other all the time.

"Do you know where I can find...?" is probably one of the most common questions you hear working downtown.

And quite often, we do.

Try a few doors down. Check the shop across the street. They might have one at the market. Have you tried the place around the corner?

There's something really lovely about being able to send someone to another

local business when you don't have what they're looking for. We recommend each other's services, buy gifts from each other, grab lunch from each other and get genuinely excited when someone brings something new to downtown.

Then there are the days that aren't quite as easy.

Running a small business can be wonderful, but it can also be unpredictable. There are slow days, stressful days and days when absolutely nothing seems to go according to plan. Sometimes the person who understands that best happens to be standing behind another counter a few doors away.

It doesn't mean everyone always agrees. We are still neighbours, after all.

But there's something about sharing the same few streets. We notice when someone's door hasn't opened. We celebrate a busy weekend or a great sale. We hear about the new idea someone is working on and watch as it slowly comes together. Sometimes it's simply having someone nearby who understands when the day hasn't gone quite as planned.

Most of this happens quietly, behind the version of downtown you see from the sidewalk.

A downtown may be made up of individual businesses, but so much of what makes it feel like a community happens in the spaces between them. The conversations on the sidewalk. The recommendations. The borrowed tools. The frantic rescue of



a sidewalk display in the rain. The quick check-ins and little acts of kindness that probably don't seem particularly important at the time.

But added together, they are.

We talk a lot about supporting local businesses, but sometimes we forget how much local businesses support each other.

With recommendations. With encouragement. With little check-ins throughout the day.

And, every once in a while, with a ladder.

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downtownparis.ca

HISTORIC PARIS

PARIS PAST: Memories of Paris' old South End and the Gilston - Crombie Farm Legacy



By Chris Whelan

Jim Creeden and I have been neighbours and friends since my family moved to the south end in 1984. While Jim brings a treasure trove of firsthand memories from the 1950s and '60s, I love digging into the archival history to find out how those iconic local spots came to be. Together, we're taking a stroll down memory lane to look at the stories, secrets, and history behind Paris' old south end community it what was once known to many as Upper Town.

Things have certainly changed over the last six decades in our neck of the woods. How many readers remember Crombie's Farm? Or Manns' horses in the field on the left of the end of Washington Street? How about Gord "Pappy" Simons' wrecking yard on Ann Street, or the old beaters parked along the Grand River on the English property off Spencer Street?

Longtime residents might also recall when Canadian Tire occupied the building where The Secret Lunch and Little Paris

Bread Co. sit today, or when the south end boasted two neighborhood variety stores right across from each other: Beechy's on the corner of Queen and Creeden Streets, and Ramey's just down Creeden Street.

The Origins of Creeden Street

Before it was home to Ramey's store, the property belonged to Jim and Elsie Creeden. Early in the Second World War, their son, Pilot Officer Wally Creeden, enlisted in the Royal Air Force. Wally holds the tragic distinction of being the first Paris boy killed in WWII when his badly damaged aircraft crashed upon returning to England.

Creeden Street itself carries a rich history. Formerly known as Grand River Street South, the road originally ran between Southward School and the river, stretching all the way into downtown Paris.

Crombie's Farm & The Gilston Legacy

In the 1960s, a little north of where the stop sign stands today at Washington and Hillside, Washington Street simply ended and bent to the right to become Mile Hill Road. There was no stop sign then, just a smooth curve. If you drove straight through, you were heading down the long driveway to Crombie's Farm, where you were instantly welcomed by the loud barking of their massive dog.

The old farmhouse sat back from the road, surrounded by fields where cattle grazed. Sitting out on the front porch on Ann Street late at night with family, it would be so quiet you could hear the bullfrogs calling from the farm's pond.

That land holds deep historical roots.



Gilston Farm Colour

(JIM CREEDEN PHOTO)

Known historically as Gilston Farm, 35 to 40 acres at the end of Washington Street were purchased in 1911 by Edward Rubidge Crombie and his wife Hildegard. Edward, a banker and writer, created illustrated diaries capturing farm life, family news, and local lore, he called his journals the Daily Twitter. Following Edward's death in 1938, Hildegard managed Gilston Farm until her passing in 1964, after which her brother Edward operated it until 1966.

In 1966, Douglas and Richard Foulds acquired the property. Douglas Foulds subsequently established the Gilston Park subdivision, constructing 70 new homes where cows once grazed. Unwilling to demolish the historic Crombie residence, Foulds moved the original house to sit closer to Mile Hill, where it stood overlooking the Grand River. Featuring a preserved 27-by-19-foot oak-panelled room, the house was renamed "Hillside".

Just before the bend at the end of Washington Street was an open pasture belonging to the Mann family of Amelia Street. Kids in the neighborhood spent countless hours standing at the fence line, offering handfuls of sweet grass to persuade the horses to come over.

At that time, Ann Street was the last street off Washington. On the south side at the corner of Amelia and Ann stood Gord "Pappy" Simons' wrecking yard, where many local auto owners towed their old clunkers over the years. Back then, Ann Street lacked even a stop sign at Ball Street. Neighborhood kids could play road hockey for hours at a time, rarely interrupted by passing traffic.

By 1967, teenager Jim Creeden and a few

local friends, including John Cooke, Gerry Miller, and Rick Brown, were eager to drive. They were fortunate to gain access to Bob "Strawberry" English's unused field, situated between Race Street and the river. Because the English family (who lived at what is now #7 and #9) were related to John, the boys received permission to practice their driving skills, or, more accurately, to have an absolute blast tearing around the open field in \$15 beaters.

Over time, they carved out a full figure-eight dirt track and accumulated a collection of rusted, derelict cars. Some remained parked as field ornaments until Tate's Auto Wreckers hauled them off to the "Great Auto Museum." As home construction began expanding down Ball Street south of Ann, new residents backing onto the field weren't always thrilled by the roaring engines, after all, who put mufflers on a \$15 car?

Near the end of Spencer Street, parallel to the Grand River around where the Bean Park parking lot is located today, ran an old water raceway.

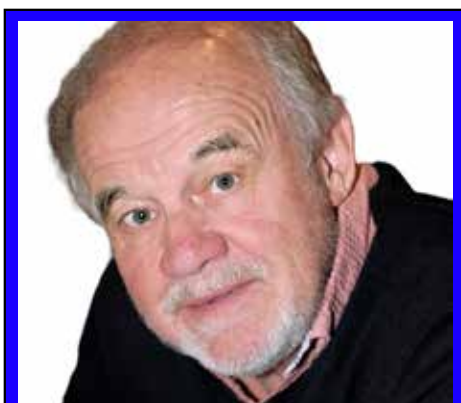
Over the decades, the historic channel had reduced to a series of small ponds. When the surrounding land was eventually opened for residential development, this historic feature inspired the name of Race Street.

From farm ponds and figure-eight dirt tracks to quiet evening porches, the south end of Paris has undergone a remarkable transformation over the last 65 years, yet the memories of those who grew up there remain as vivid as ever. Next week Paris Past will visit memories of "Creeden's Pond" email your memories to: editor@theparisindpendent.com



DOWN ON THE FARM — All babies like being cuddled, even this piglet in the arms of Miss Hildegard Crombie. With Miss Crombie is Prof. Forshaw of the OAC (left) and Isaburo Shimade, a Japanese government agriculturalist now studying at the OAC. — (Expositor Photo)

LIVING RETIRED: 'A Tinker's Damn'



By Gary Chalk
Non-Pulitzer Prize
Winning Columnist

I seldom tinker trying to fix things around the house. Take our toaster, it religiously turns bagels into a burnt offering. I can count on Jan saying, "Gary I don't give a tinker's damn. Get a new toaster on Amazon."

It's the same trying to fix the bathroom tap that leaks like Living Retired men rushing to the toilet in the middle of the night. I can count on Jan to say, "Gary, call Carl. He will fix it without water leaking to the basement."

Jan and I have a routine: she will say,

Living Retired

"Gary, the light bulb needs to be replaced in the guest bedroom." I say, "Okay I'll get a replacement bulb and my hammer." Of course, I am joking — sort of — but I have repeated this so many times that last week I actually did return with a light-bulb and hammer. It was a joke! But Jan grabbed the hammer and I dropped the bulb on the floor smashing it to smithereens. Recently, our refrigerator ice dispenser stopped dispensing ice cubes. Instead, when I pressed my glass to the dispenser, crushed ice scattered all over the floor. I was in a quandary: tinker with it or stop drinking rum on the rocks. After walking around in soaked socks, I decided it was time to tinker...

"Jan, have you seen my hammer? I'm going to fix the ice cube dispenser."

"Gary, I don't want you tinkering. I hid your hammer with your saw, screwdrivers, cordless drill, and the level that bent when you dropped it from the ladder when you

used it clean the eavestrough."

Undeterred, I reached for one of my tools of choice: a kitchen paring knife. I removed the ice bin from the refrigerator and went to where I repair, okay screw up, stuff — the laundry room.

First, I emptied the ice cubes from the ice bin into the laundry room sink — then I chased the ice cubes that slid all over the floor.

Next, I grabbed the paring knife and began what professional tinkers call 'poking around.'

As expected, I quickly reached the next step, "Jan. I am in the bathroom. You didn't hide the bandages, did you?"

"No Gary. When you tinker, I keep the bandages beside the supply of emergency tourniquets."

With my bleeding under control, I was back in laundry room to tinker on the defunct ice dispenser — first I wiped up the melted ice cubes that seeped underneath the laundry cabinets. Then, I looked why it only dispensed crushed ice, not cubes. I didn't know what to look for, but I did what professional tinkers call a 'look see' of the ice dispenser. It looked cool to me. As any true tinkerer knows, when you tinker with your refrigerator ice cube dispenser, you need a bag of replacement ice cubes to refill the dispenser when you

finish. Before you could say, 'Break the ice' I dashed to the store. Back home I refilled the ice bin — then again chased the errant ice cubes scattered across laundry room floor. Back at the refrigerator I installed the ice bin. It was time for my tinkerer's tradition whenever I test my home repair projects. I prayed, "Lord, for Jans sake, please make this damn thing work. Amen."

Suddenly! I had an OMG moment! The front control panel on our refrigerator has two buttons, one for 'Ice Cubes' and the other for 'Crushed Ice.' This was the OMG part: the 'Crushed Ice' button was on, instead of 'Ice Cubes.' I pressed 'Ice Cubes' and placed a glass of rum underneath. Ice cubes tumbled out! I thanked the Lord.

Two days later...

Jan called from the kitchen. "Gary, I told you not to tinker. We are back to crushed ice."

Rum on crushed ice isn't so bad after all.

Living Retired, written by Gary Chalk, is published throughout Canada and USA. To receive Living Retired by email each week, or to book Gary to provide some laughs at your service club, corporate event, or retirement party contact Gchalk@me.com

Register for the County of Brant Seniors Active Living Centre on Wednesday, September 9

Join the County of Brant **Seniors Active Living Centre** for another exciting season of programs designed to help older adults stay active, make new connections, and enjoy lifelong learning in a welcoming and supportive environment.



Memberships will also be available for purchase online at brant.ca/COBConnect

The Seniors Active Living Centre offers a variety of social, recreational and educational opportunities for adults 55+.



Registration for the September 2026 to June 2027 season opens:

Date: Wednesday, September 9

Time: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Location: Sojourn Church, 112 Scott Ave, Paris

For more information, please email seniors@brant.ca



brant.ca/Seniors

The Fall Guide arrives August 27



View the guide online or pick up a **printed copy** at any County of Brant Customer Service office, community centre or library

Registration opens:

September 14, 2026
at 6:00 pm

SCAN HERE



brant.ca/guide

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The Baird family's place in Paris's military history



NEIL EDWARDS

Paris Independent Contributor

Homes of Heroes has been busy continuing to research the military heroes who have come from Paris. Our focus last year was on Second World War veterans and this year, our main focus has been on First World War veterans, partly because we want to preserve those stories while they are still available. But we thought readers might be interested in two Parisians, father and son, whose military service began 160 years ago, and had a direct connection to Paris.

Andrew Hugh Baird married Cynthia Cole Capron, the daughter of Horace Capron, the brother of Hiram Capron, who is the founder of Paris. Andrew Baird was at one time the mayor of Paris and the owner of the Wincey Textile Mills. In the 1860s, he built a 15-room manor house at 194 Grand River Street North. (The house backed on to Broadway Street East, now renamed Baird Street.) It was one of the first three houses in the world to have a telephone. That was a direct result of the fact that the telephone call by Alexander Graham Bell from Brantford to Paris was the first long-distance telephone call ever made. Andrew also served in the militia. He became the 3rd Captain of the Paris Rifle Company and was gazetted, or appointed, to the 38th Brant Battalion in October 1866 at the time of the Fenian Raid of 1866. The Fenian Raid was an invasion of Canada West (now Ontario) by the Fenian Brotherhood, an Irish-American organization seeking to use Canada as leverage to gain Irish independence from Britain. The Brotherhood aimed to launch

attacks on British territory in North America to achieve military victories that could be used to liberate Ireland. The American government at the time made little effort to prevent the attacks. They were thinking that a successful invasion might encourage the then British colonies to join the United States. (Maybe that hope never quite died.)

The plan was to attack from two directions, from Fort Erie in the east and Sarnia in the west. The town of Paris was a prime objective for the raiders because Paris was at the junction of two rail lines. The 38th Brant Battalion would have been responsible for defending that strategic target. Fortunately, the attack from Sarnia never materialized, but the Fenian force, 700 to 800 men strong, crossed the Niagara River on June 1, 1866. They tore up railway tracks, cut telegraph lines and occupied Fort Erie, but were repelled by Canadian and British militia and indigenous fighters at the Battle of Ridgeway. Although the Fenians were unsuccessful, their raids highlighted the vulnerability of British North America and only strengthened support for Canadian Confederation in 1867. Elbows up!

Andrew's son, Charles Baird, was born in Paris in 1859. He joined the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada as a Private in about 1879. By 1882 he was a Corporal and by 1885 he had been promoted to Sergeant. He was commissioned in April 1885 as a Second Lieutenant (Provisional), and soon after was headed west as part of the Northwest Field Force which was assembled to quell the uprising in Saskatchewan, commonly referred to as the North-West Rebellion or the North-West Resistance, depending on who is telling the story.

Metis in Saskatchewan as well as Indigenous Nations, mainly Cree and Assiniboine, felt threatened by the advancement of European settlers onto their traditional land and organized an armed rebellion against the Government of Canada. They were led by the Metis leaders Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont. The rebels achieved several victories in the beginning, due in large part to the strategies of Gabriel Dumont. He is seen by many historians as the first military leader to use guerilla tactics in warfare. The tide of battle turned, how-



194 Grand River Street N Paris

ever, when the government force of 5,500 men, including the North-West Mounted Police, armed loyal residents of the North-West Territories and militia units from Ontario and Quebec, including the Queen's Own Rifles and Charles Baird, arrived in the West. They were able to get to Saskatchewan quickly because the Canadian National Railroad had recently been completed. Government forces finally quashed the rebellion at the Battle of Batoche and Louis Riel was captured, placed on trial, convicted of treason, and hanged. Eight Indigenous leaders were also hanged with him and others served time in prison.

And Charles Baird was promoted to full Lieutenant in March 1886. He retired from the militia with that rank in March 1891. He returned to Paris in 1922 after working in Toronto, to the family home at 194

Grand River Street North. He became the Vice-President and later President of the Paris Wincey Mills Company Limited, a position he held until the time of his death in 1947.

So, these days we know that these two conflicts, with our neighbours to the South and with relations with our indigenous peoples, are still unresolved, but this father and son from Paris played their part to protect and defend, just as men and women from our community have continued to do until today. If you can add to their stories, please contact us at info@homesofheroes.ca. We do not expect to collect many stories from the 19th century, but we know that there are people in Paris and the surrounding area who can help us to preserve the stories of our veterans, whether in war or in times of peace. All their stories deserve to be told.

Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. Albuquerque is located on the shores of what river?
2. What are baby Koalas called?
3. What is the most spoken language on Earth?
4. The deficiency of which vitamin causes scurvy?
5. What is the term for the maximum amount of oxygen the body can use during exercise?
6. The "Hollywood" sign originally spelled out what word?
7. What's the name of the pig in the book "Charlotte's Web"?
8. How many points does the Star of David have?
9. Which dinosaur is famous for having three horns?
10. What is the term for being romantically or sexually unfaithful to a partner?

This week's answers are found on pg. 18



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The Paris Independent SPORTS



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Challenger Baseball caps inaugural season with first-responder showdown

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

Paris Challenger Baseball players capped off a successful inaugural season in fitting fashion - with a win over some of the community's finest.

The league wrapped up its first summer with a special exhibition game against members of the County of Brant Fire Department and Brant County OPP, giving its young athletes a chance to celebrate a season built around inclusion, friendship and a shared love of the game.

And while the first responders may have arrived ready for some friendly competition, it was the Challenger athletes who ultimately came away with the bragging rights.

"Of course our athletes won and the sense of accomplishment and pride from the players was fantastic," said head coach Tiffany Hayes.

The game served as the finale to the first season of Challenger Baseball in Paris, an adaptive program launched this year by the Paris Youth Softball Association (PYSA) in partnership with the Jays Care Foundation. Designed for individuals living with physical and/or cognitive disabilities, the program adapts equipment and gameplay to individual needs and pairs athletes with volunteer "buddies" who provide support on and off the field.

Ten athletes between the ages of seven and 15 participated in the inaugural season, and organizer Grace Aulsebrook-Smith said the program exceeded expectations.

"The inaugural season has been a really positive experience, and in many ways, it exceeded our expectations," she said.

"From the very beginning, the goal was to create an opportunity for athletes of all abilities to get out on the field, have fun, build confidence and feel part of a team. Seeing that happen week after week has been incredibly rewarding."

That growth extended beyond learning the fundamentals of baseball.

Aulsebrook-Smith said organizers watched players become more confident and develop their skills throughout the summer, supported by enthusiastic families and volunteers. Community members also came out to watch and learn more about the program, reinforcing what organizers believe is a local demand for inclusive recreational opportunities.

Hayes said the impact became increasingly evident as the weeks went on.

"The biggest thing I've learned is just how important belonging is. It's such a basic human need, and giving these athletes a place where they know they belong, where they're part of a team and where everyone is genuinely excited to see them each week—that's priceless."

"Sports give us so much more than just the game, it builds confidence, friendships, structure and a sense of accomplishment. We watched that happen over the course of this season. Kids became more comfortable, more confident and more connected as friends as the weeks went on."

Organizers wanted the season finale to reflect those accomplishments, so the idea emerged to invite local first responders onto the diamond for an exhibition game.

For many of the Challenger players, getting the opportunity to compete against firefighters and police officers added another level of excitement.

"A lot of our athletes look up to first responders, so getting the opportunity to step onto the field and actually play against them made the game feel like a really big deal," Hayes said.

"The firefighters were fantastic. They understood what the day was about, had fun with our players and made them feel like



(JENNIFER KYLE PHOTO)

Challenger Baseball players, coaches, volunteers and members of the County of Brant Fire Department and Brant County OPP gather for a group photo following the league's season-ending exhibition game. The special matchup celebrated a successful inaugural season of inclusive baseball in Paris.

absolute stars."

Paris firefighter Phil Dalpe said members of the department were quick to accept the invitation.

"Any chance we get to participate in something like this, we jump on it," he said, before adding a little pre-game trash talk: "It means a lot, but more importantly, we are searching for our first win and I heard the other team is stacked to say the least."

Beyond the competition, Dalpe said community events provide an opportunity for residents to see another side of emergency personnel.

"Events like this show a side of the emergency services that are needed. The fun, human side of our service. Shows the men and women behind the badge."

Brant County OPP Community Engagement Officer Enzo Coletta said the game was similarly about much more than baseball for participating officers.

"It is an opportunity to build positive relationships, strengthen community connections, and demonstrate our support for programs that promote accessibility, teamwork, and belonging," Coletta said. "The enthusiasm, determination, and sportsmanship displayed by the players are truly inspiring, and our members are honored to stand alongside them as they enjoy this special experience."

Events such as the exhibition game also allow young people and police officers to meet outside emergency or enforcement situations, he said, helping break down

barriers and build relationships through positive interactions.

For organizers, the exhibition was as much a thank-you as it was a baseball game, recognizing the athletes, families, volunteers and community supporters who helped turn an idea into a successful first season.

And it won't be the last.

Aulsebrook-Smith said organizers have learned valuable lessons about structuring practices, organizing volunteers and providing the individual supports athletes need to participate at their own pace.

"We definitely see this as the beginning rather than the end," she said.

Challenger Baseball is expected to return next season, with organizers planning to use feedback from athletes, families and volunteers to strengthen the program. As interest grows, they will also explore opportunities to expand participation while keeping the league welcoming, accessible and fun.



(GRACE AULSEBROOK-SMITH PHOTO)



Paris U13 girls cap season with competitive playoff run

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

Paris Youth Softball Association's U13 girls wrapped up their season with a strong playoff showing, holding their own against some of the top teams in the Flamborough Minor Softball Association.

Playing in the Flamborough league for the first time this season, Paris finished the regular season with a 6-7-1 record, good for sixth place heading into the double-knockout playoffs.

That set up a first-round matchup against third-place Copetown, where Paris wasted little time showing it was ready for the challenge.

The bats came alive as Paris combined an offensive explosion

with strong pitching to pull off a convincing 17-6 upset and advance in the tournament.

The victory moved Paris into a matchup against second-place Binbrook A. Paris once again proved it could compete with one of the league's top teams, battling through a high-scoring contest before falling just short in a 13-11 loss.

Facing elimination, Paris met Lynden A in its third game of the tournament.

The offence continued to produce, but Lynden ultimately came away with a 17-14 victory to bring Paris' playoff run — and season — to an end.

Despite the two losses, Paris never had an easy draw. All three of its playoff opponents finished ahead of Paris in the regular-season

standings, yet the sixth-place squad remained competitive throughout the tournament.

The playoff performance was a fitting conclusion to a season marked by considerable growth.

Newer players gained confidence as the season progressed and developed into increasingly productive contributors at the plate. Paris also benefited from strong and consistent pitching throughout the year, an important factor as the team adjusted to tougher competition in its first season in the Flamborough league.

Several second-year players helped lead the offence, delivering clutch hits in key situations, while the entire lineup showed determination and continued improvement throughout the season.



(CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTO)

Pictured left to right, back row, Brynlee Ross, Olivia Turnbull, Lucy Witt, Alissa Carr, Avery Peterson. Back row, Kennedy Rusnak, Briella McCauley, Hailey Kipp, Tessa Schiedel, Kaylee Carr, Addison Korslick and Alice McLagan. Absent: Reagan Deane.

Opy brings offence to defense in Duster Display!

SID LUCKMAN

Paris Independent Contributor

Yes, the Dusters are winding down an extremely good season of rather minimalist hockey. Which is also a great art form and even cubist could be a good label for Dusters Hockey. The hockey dreams are being laid to rest every Thursday at 5:30 pm.

But someone forgot to tell Andrew Gordon that his hockey dreams had long gone! Opy as the man is

known, had the goal of the game from defense no less! Taking a cross-ice pass from Papple (the question is was Papple playing his proper wing?), Opy buried the puck with such force that the Ontario Seismology Department called the Brant Sports Complex to report a tremor in Brant County! No, but the tremor was Opy!

Well, if you want to see a repeat, the Dusters play three more games this season. Catch them on Thursdays in August at the Brant Sports Complex at 5:30 pm.

Paris Duffers Report

BY GRIEG GRAHAM

Paris Independent Contributor

The Duffers were out in full force this past Friday as we had five groups show up. I guess the hunt for free milk is catching on. My guess is everyone is practicing for the upcoming tournament. More on that later.

Haybo and Happy Al were up against Jackster and Ferg. Since The Hay had to leave early the played some stupid game Al came up with. When asked for details Ferg said "I don't know what the game was but I got a drink out of it".

Cutter and Dino prevailed over Kopper and Hoogs. This was death by putter as Dino was on fire! Being down late did not deter Jacquer and AA from pressing on the last hole. It cost them as Double G and Dr. Fever had too many options to overcome. On the second hole Feve sunk a 25 footer that broke their spirit.

Billy B and Chick played textbook and, in another case of pressing gone wrong, cost Jay Bird and Bergy bid time. Apparently BB gave Chick a pep talk the night before and it stuck.

Willie and Enzo bowed to Brownie and Sinc. According to Brownie "Sinc won, not me"! Bringing up the rear was Swanee, Stones and Tommy. After this round a mulligan was renamed a McCulligan.

Dino was overheard saying "Bergy doesn't talk to himself, neither does anyone else". Next week is the annual The Dick tournament on Saturday in memory of Dick Emerson. We will forgo the Duffers report to cover this amazing event that raises funds for the Canadian Tire charity of Jump Start. I will leave you with a Stony quote directed at his ride home. "Kopper's my Uber but he would like to Skip the Dishes".

Until next week, keep em in the fairways.



Change begins with voting Christine Garneau Bisailon for County of Brant Mayor

Having the right experience matters now more than ever because we cannot afford to lose ground to learning curves and strategic missteps, nor can we afford for Council to continue as it has for several years.

With a background in small business, farming, governance, and experience as a Councillor, I am well positioned to lead the County's next chapter!

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Brantford-Brant adds 1,300 workers as full-time employment climb

MEDIA RELEASE

Full-time employment climbed in Brantford-Brant in July, with about 1,300 more people working locally as gains were recorded across several key industries.

The local labour force also grew by approximately 1,300 people during the month, while the unemployment rate held steady at 6.4 per cent, according to the latest seasonally adjusted estimates from Statistics Canada.

The employment gains were largely concentrated among full-time positions, with approximately 2,700 youth aged 15 to 24 and core-working-age adults aged 25 to 54 securing full-time work.

Manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and accommodation and food services were among the sectors recording gains, while part-time employment declined.

The local numbers came as unemployment edged down nationally and provincially.

Canada's unemployment rate fell 0.1 percentage point to 6.4 per cent in July, while Ontario's rate dropped 0.2 percentage points to 6.8 per cent.

Several surrounding communities, including Hamilton, St. Catharines-Niagara, Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo and Guelph, also recorded employment gains.

While more Brantford-Brant residents found work, the number of new job postings declined.

The Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie's Grand Erie Jobs platform recorded approximately 1,900 new postings in July, a 14 per cent decrease from June.

Retail salespersons, transport truck drivers, material handlers, machine operators and food counter attendants were among the occupations most in demand.

Despite the decline in postings, the Workforce Planning Board says many employers continue to struggle to find suitable candidates for hard-to-fill positions and, in some cases, are repeatedly hiring for the same roles.

The organization says programs such as Skills2Advance are designed to help address those workforce challenges by providing jobseekers with technical, essential and employability skills before connecting them with local employers.

The Workforce Planning Board is currently recruiting participants for two Skills2Advance programs beginning in September.

The Skills2Advance Home Building program, delivered at Conestoga College's Tollgate campus in Brantford, includes 12 weeks of free, hands-on training in carpentry, plumbing and exterior finishing, followed by an eight-week paid work placement.



(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Participants in the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie's Skills2Advance program receive hands-on training designed to prepare jobseekers for in-demand careers in the skilled trades. Two tuition-free programs, Home Building and Industrial Trades, are recruiting participants for September, with training followed by paid work placements with local employers.

ment.

Participants can earn industry-recognized certifications and receive job-search and apprenticeship support.

A second program, Skills2Advance Industrial Trades, is offered at Six Nations Polytechnic's Brantford campus and provides 10 weeks of introductory training in

machining, welding, tool and die, and millwright work. That training is also followed by an eight-week paid work placement with a local employer.

Both programs are tuition-free and are designed to prepare participants for in-demand skilled trades careers. More information is available at skills2advance.com.

#GoodTimesinBrant

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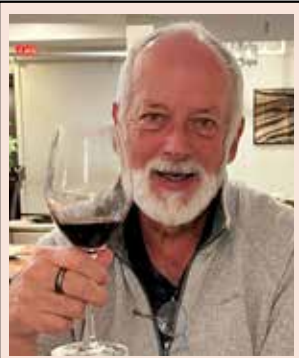
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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Soothing your spirit – and wearing a monkey – in Grenada's rainforest



By Paul Knowles

It's not a surprise that, when travellers visit Caribbean islands, they often have two thoughts in mind: the beach, and rum punches. And there is no doubt that most Caribbean islands have great beaches, and no lack of rum drinks.

But the best Caribbean destinations offer so much more, and it would be a shame to miss the wonders you will find if you dare to leave the beach resort and start to explore.

In my view, Grenada is definitely one of "the best Caribbean destinations." I have a special fondness for the "Windward Islands" – the nations that are in the eastern part of the Caribbean. And when I was in Grenada, earlier this summer, the beach played very little part in a menu of fantastic activities – although there is no doubt that the four-kilometer-long Grand Anse white sand beach is one of the best in the world.

But we turned our focus inland, and spent one of our days exploring Grenada's spectacular rainforest.

Grenada has 3,800 acres of protected rainforest. The diversity of plants is mind-boggling: there are over 100 varieties of ferns, alone.

One of my favourite stops was at Annandale Waterfall and Forest Park. This being the rainforest, it wasn't too surprising that it was, in fact, raining. But this being a tropical island, it also wasn't too surprising that the rain was warm, and nobody seemed to care that we were getting wet. Because the plants and flowers were astonishing, and the waterfall is beautiful.

Annandale is a 30-foot waterfall on a stream that



The author, with a Mona monkey pal.

(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

emerges from the rainforest, and plunges into a beautiful, emerald pool below... open for swimming if you so choose. It's one of nine waterfalls in Grenada, which is a volcanic island (there are hot springs you can visit), and so, rises sharply from the oceanfront to the heights of the rainforest.

Not to wax overly botanical, I wandered along paths bordered by dramatic heliconia, lush bougainvillea (the national flower of Grenada), "shampoo ginger", bird of paradise flower, torch ginger, and large, bright yellow flower called "buttercups" that bear no resemblance to any buttercup I have encountered in Canada. Plus dozens of plants I wouldn't even begin to try to identify. The rainforest is simply beautiful, and I noticed that all of us travel-writing colleagues almost immediately relaxed, and stopped to savour the visual delights around us – in spite of the rain.

Annandale Falls is just a small part of the large rainforest, which includes the Grand Etang National Park and Forest Reserve. There, visitors will encounter a cornucopia of unique delights.

There is an extensive lake that is actually a volcanic crater. There are beautiful birds, Rainbow Eucalyptus trees with bark the colours of the rainbow, and rath-

er shockingly large Giant Frangipani caterpillars.

But the highlights are the Mona monkeys.

As you enter the park, you encounter this posted warning: "Notice. The Mona monkeys within the Grand Etang National Park live in the wild and can be very unpredictable. If you choose to interact with them, you are doing so at your own risk. The management of the park assumes no liability for any injury sustained as a result of such interaction."

That notice certainly echoed in my head a few minutes and a short distance away, as a Mona monkey sat on top of my head. Because there are some gentlemen who have apparently trained the wild monkeys to prance about on visitors' heads, arms and shoulders in return for food.

Or perhaps – and I might actually lean toward this explanation – the monkeys have trained the gentlemen. It sure seemed like the monkeys were in charge, at any rate.

Our minibus driver stopped where these monkeys are likely to be found, and next thing we knew, we had become climbing posts for Mona monkeys. It was a ton of fun – and no tourists were hurt in the making of those photographs. Nor were any Mona monkeys.

Grand Etang National Park features several walking and hiking trails. The hikes through the rainforest

range from relatively easy walks to a challenging trail that climbs up Mount Saint Catherine, the highest peak on the volcanic island.

Of course, as wonderful as the rainforest is, Grenada offers a lot more for visitors to enjoy (including, natu-

rally, the beach). There is the unique and astonishing Underwater Sculpture Park (which I had the chance to re-visit, and which I will write about in a subsequent feature). The island is home to seven chocolate factories (and once you have had

Grenadian chocolate, you may never go back), and – you knew we're get back to this – five rum distilleries, which offer the most generous tasting experiences you are likely to encounter anywhere.

The tours of the chocolate factories are fascinating, and the tours of the rum distilleries are tasty, as well. Our visit took us to Belmont Estates for chocolate, and to Clarke's Court rum distillery.

But tempting as those options are (and yes, you should yield to temptation in this case), nothing will soothe and inspire your soul like spending time in Grenada's amazing rainforest.

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@golden.net.

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STONES Around Town

By Jeff Johnston
(a.k.a. Stones)

As the heat of late summer unfolds and the morning dew drips from the trees, take a moment to unplug and just breathe it all in. Before we know it, the Paris Fair will be here!

A few people reached out to say hello recently, including Jay and Judy Jasper. If you ever find yourself up in Lion's Head along the water, keep an eye out for their fruit and tie-dye stand, it is definitely a must-see. I've also noticed acts of kindness going on all over Brant County lately. I know of two specific folks who stepped up to help a friend in need, keeping it quiet in the most humble way. Keep on keeping on, as the County continues to grow, let's keep our community spirit strong.

Speaking of the broader area, I'll be making my way out to St. George soon, as we are a community paper through and through. I believe I already have a contact or two out there. Whether I'm enjoying a refreshing beverage or a bite to eat, or supporting the St. George Legion, I bet I'll know someone, and if not, I'll just enjoy the atmosphere

all the same. Give me time; I even have a former brother-in-law out that way. What are the odds?

Along my travels these last few weeks, I came across Ann (Cunik) Moore and Paul. It was so good to see our former teacher from Paris Central! She was always more than just a teacher to us, she taught us music and even had us playing handbells. Honestly, just ask Penny or Saralyn! Tony up top Quality Hill can verify it, too, even if he only heard about it second-hand.

I also ran into Dick Remus, always a smile with that guy. Seeing him reminded me that the original "Broom Band" from Branch 29 is all together now in the sky. Rest in peace to Pepper, Diane, Bonzo, Wardy, Anita, and Mick. Sending a special wink and a smile to my lifelong friend Cathy, and as always, it was good looking up at you, Hawk!

Out of nowhere, who should appear during my rounds but Laurie Burns (Burnsie)! We had a great visit and a real good gab session, it was wonderful to see you smile, Laurie. I also ran into Marilyn Thomas, though she refused to take my picture because I hadn't shaved! That's exactly what my Dad would have said, too. Thank you for keeping an eye on me Marilyn.

Then came the weekend, and what a time at Two Rivers Stadium behind Syl Apps Centre. Reporting here for The Paris Independent and Stones Around Town, I was making the rounds at Paris Drinks Fest 2026. I had Yazzy say hi to me, of course, and my daughter Rachel was there too!



(JEFF JOHNSTON PHOTO)

Jeff Johnston and daughter Rachel pictured here at the 2026 Paris Drinks Fest at Two Rivers Stadium.

The music was fantastic, the venue was top-notch, and there were so many great vendors to chat with (and sample a taste or two!). The team at Sassy Britches Brewing, Tara and Julie, were great, and the folks from Lost Craft helped me find my way. There was cornhole everywhere you looked, the crowd was awesome, and it turned out to be an absolute stunner of an evening. There

was so much to see and do, and it was great raising a glass with everyone while listening to some great live music right in the heart of downtown Paris.

To wrap things up, I'm reminded of a quote by W.B. Yeats: "Think where man's glory most begins and ends, and say my glory was I had such friends."

All the best, folks, Stones Around Town

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Jokes

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An ice cube!

I have a trunk but I'm not an elephant, and I love sunny weather. What am I?
A palm tree!

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 18

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PET OF THE WEEK

LINCOLN

Meet our Pet of the Week:
Lincoln is paddling this summer away, living his best life! Congratulations to Lincoln, he is this week's photo contest winner.

Stay tuned for more heartwarming stories every week from Paris Veterinary Clinic.



Word Search

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O R M L W K W P M I L K S H A K E I G R
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S T R A W B E R R Y L E M O N A D E Z R

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ICED TEA
SWEET TEA
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LIMEADE
SLUSHIE
SMOOTHIE
MILKSHAKE
ICED COFFEE
COLD BREW
SODA
ROOT BEER
ORANGEADE
FRUIT JUICE
WATERMELON
JUICE
MANGO JUICE
PINEAPPLE
JUICE
STRAWBERRY
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ICED COCOA
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9	5	1	3	6	8	4	7	2
4	6	8	7	2	1	9	3	5
6	2	3	8	4	9	7	5	1
8	9	7	2	1	5	6	4	3
5	1	4	6	3	7	2	8	9
1	8	9	4	5	2	3	6	7
3	4	5	9	7	6	1	2	8
2	7	6	1	8	3	5	9	4

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If you have a story about a Paris Veteran, please email the committee at info@homesofheroes.ca. Let's work together to give all our veterans, living and fallen, in war and in peace, the recognition and honour they deserve. If you have any questions about the project, please email Neil Edwards at neiledwards51@gmail.com.



WEEKLY
Horoscope
August 19 - August 25 2026

ARIES

Mar 21 - Apr 20

A fresh opportunity emerges, Aries. An unexpected development inspires renewed motivation and growing confidence. Stay positive—it encourages progress and reveals exciting possibilities ahead.



TAURUS

Apr 21 - May 21

Steady progress continues, Taurus. A helpful opportunity brings stability and renewed optimism. Trust your instincts—it encourages success and creates meaningful possibilities ahead.



GEMINI

May 22 - Jun 21

Fresh ideas emerge, Gemini. An inspiring conversation sparks optimism and renewed motivation. Stay open—it encourages creativity and reveals exciting opportunities ahead.



CANCER

Jun 22 - Jul 22

Positive energy surrounds you, Cancer. A thoughtful gesture brings comfort and renewed confidence. Follow your heart—it encourages harmony and deepens meaningful connections ahead.



LEO

Jul 23 - Aug 23

Your determination shines, Leo. A promising achievement reflects dedication and growing confidence. Stay focused—it attracts recognition and creates exciting opportunities ahead.



VIRGO

Aug 24 - Sept 22

A valuable opportunity creates momentum and renewed confidence. Trust your judgment—it encourages success and strengthens meaningful possibilities ahead.



LIBRA

Sept 23 - Oct 23

A welcome change restores balance and renewed confidence. Stay hopeful—it strengthens connections and encourages rewarding opportunities ahead.



SCORPIO

Oct 24 - Nov 22

Confidence grows, Scorpio. A promising opportunity rewards patience and careful preparation. Believe in yourself—it encourages success and creates lasting progress ahead.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23 - Dec 21

Exciting possibilities emerge, Sagittarius. A fortunate opportunity inspires confidence and renewed enthusiasm. Follow your instincts—it encourages discovery and memorable experiences ahead.



CAPRICORN

Dec 22 - Jan 20

Patient effort brings rewards and renewed confidence. Stay focused—it encourages achievement and opens meaningful possibilities ahead.



AQUARIUS

Jan 21 - Feb 18

New inspiration arrives, Aquarius. A promising idea encourages confidence and fresh enthusiasm. Trust yourself—it encourages creativity and meaningful progress ahead.



PISCES

Feb 19 - Mar 20

Hope returns, Pisces. A thoughtful surprise brings happiness, comfort, and renewed confidence. Trust your feelings—they encourage harmony, strengthen meaningful connections, and reveal rewarding possibilities ahead.



COMMUNITY
CALENDAR

EMAIL TO INQUIRE INFO@THEPARISINDEPENDENT.COM

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21

Movies in the Park Series - The County of Brant is hosting its free Movies in the Park series turning local parks into open-air theatres for family-friendly films under the stars. All screenings begin at dusk and are free to attend thanks to sponsorships from Riverside Heating & Air Conditioning Inc. and Grand Bridge Energy. Friday, August 21at King William Park in St. George, featuring the movie Bad Guys 2.

MONDAY, AUGUST 24

Grand River Women's Probus Club Monthly Meeting - will be held on Mon. Aug. 24, 10:00 a.m. till 12:00 noon at Best Western Hotel, 19 Holiday Dr. Brantford. Presentation by Ana Olson, Glenhyrst Gallery Director. We welcome semi-retired, retired people for fellowship and fun.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25

Knights of Columbus Monthly Meeting - on Tuesday, August 25th at 7:30 PM in the Sacred Heart Parish hall at 17 Washington Street, Paris.

MONDAY, AUGUST 31

Brant County Singers Hosting a Choral-oke - 7:00 pm at the Sydenham-Heritage United Church, 120 Sydenham Street, Brantford. The event is open to all potential singers as both the women's and men's choruses will be present to learn several songs. Join us for two hours of song and see if you enjoy the sounds with other singers.

SEPTEMBER 5&6

Afro-CariBrant Festival - returns to Lion's Park Paris for a free two-day celebration of African, Caribbean, and Black culture. In its fourth year, this vibrant event continues to celebrate the rich cultural contributions of African and Caribbean communities through music, food, art, dance, and storytelling, welcoming thousands of attendees from across the County of Brant, the City of Brantford, and surrounding regions. More information available at www.afrocaribrantfestival.org.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Brant For Nature's Annual Bird Walk- Kick off the fall season with Brant for Nature's annual Bird Walk on Saturday, Sept. 12 at 8 a.m. at Waterworks Park in Brantford. Participants of all experience levels are welcome to explore local birdlife and enjoy a guided morning in nature. Register at brantfornature.ca.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

8th Annual Heroes Walk and Roll Fundraiser -in support of Lansdowne Children's Centre at Brant Park, 119 Jennings Rd. Everyone is invited out to come together in support of infants, children, and youth, facing communication, physical, and developmental needs. The hero-themed event provides family-friendly entertainment, exciting activities, accessible games, interactive experiences, and plenty of opportunities to celebrate our favourite heroes. Learn more about how you can dress up, show up and participate at <https://www.lansdownecentre.ca/heroeswalkandroll>.

EVERY OTHER FRIDAY

Ingersoll Country Music Jamboree - Every other Friday, 1-4pm be fall-ish and come to the Ingersoll Country Music Jamboree at Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St. S. Ingersoll. Join us, walk ins welcome. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Perform, listen, dance & enjoy! September 4 & 18, October 2, 16 & 30, November 6 & 20, and December 4.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

It's a Boy!

Rattie
To Martha and Tyler, a baby boy,
Oakland Augustus Deane. Born at
home Friday August 7th, weighing
8lbs 5oz. 8th grandchild for Mary
and Steve Bohar and #6 for the late
Ken and Djuana Rattie. Spoiling
privileges go to older siblings Everett,
Meryl, Anderson, Ivor and Holly.



FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

AUGUST 19

Marcello Hernandez, Comedian (29)

AUGUST 20

Demi Lovato, Actress (34)

AUGUST 21

Usain Bolt, Athlete (40)

AUGUST 22

Jey Uso, Wrestler (41)

AUGUST 23

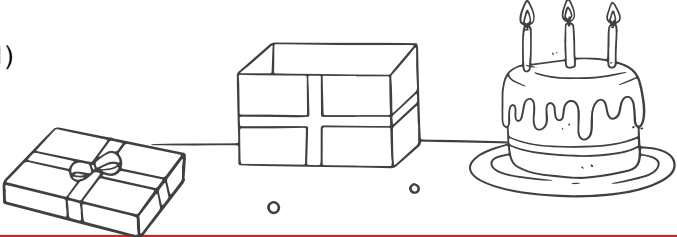
Seth Curry, Athlete (36)

AUGUST 24

Rupert Grint, Actor (38)

AUGUST 25

Tim Burton, Director (68)





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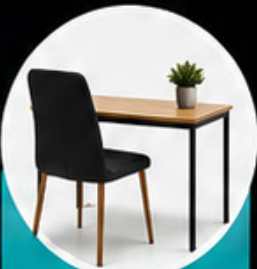
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