

# Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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## Former Ingersoll resident continues historic space journey

LEE GRIFFI, *Editor*

& KYRAH SMITH, *Echo Correspondant*

It's one small step for man, one giant leap for the Town of Ingersoll. On April 1, the town showed its support for astronaut Jeremy Hansen.

The Ingersoll Public Library marked the moment with a space-themed display celebrating the upcoming Artemis II launch, featuring news clippings and books related to space exploration.

Library staff recalled the excitement surrounding their 2024 Summer Reading Club, which also embraced a space theme.

"When we did all our class visits, we already knew about Artemis," said Shannon Follington. "We were telling all the kids Jeremy Hansen went to high school in Ingersoll," she added with a laugh.

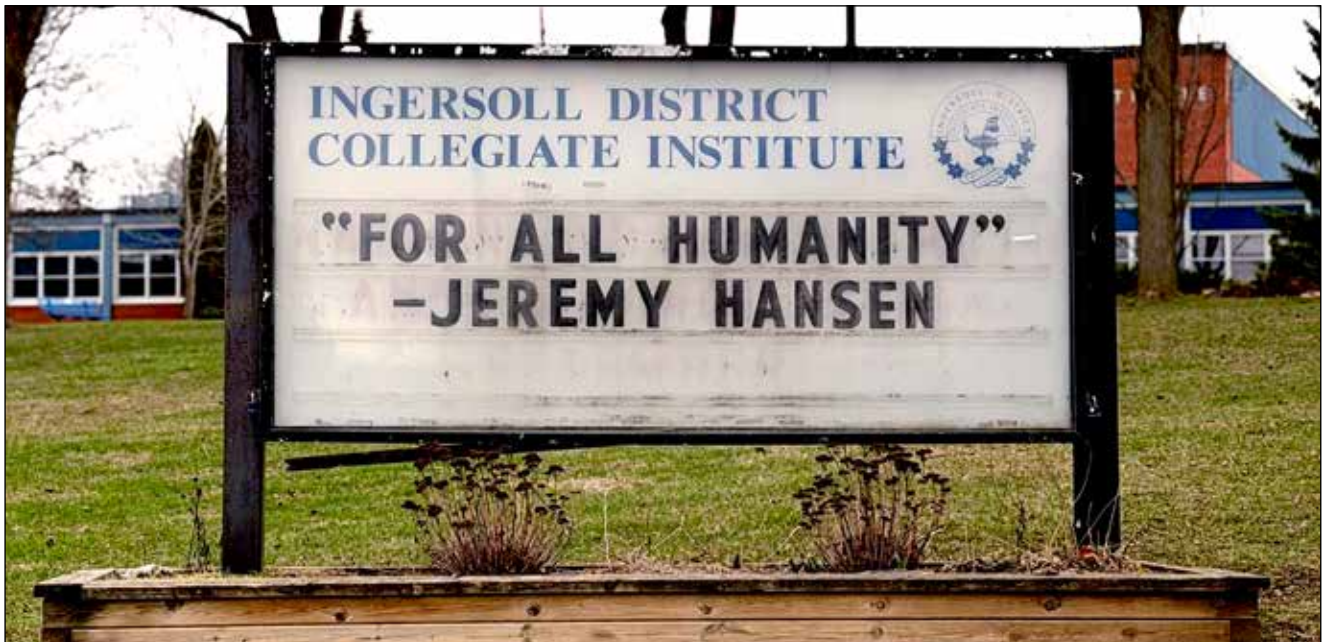
The enthusiasm has only grown since then.

"We had an Easter event this morning, and there were kids dressed in little space shirts saying, 'Have you heard of Jeremy Hansen?'" she added.

Hansen's former high school, Ingersoll District Collegiate Institute (IDCI), also joined in celebrating his journey. A large sign displayed out front reads "For All Humanity," a nod to the Artemis mission. The school has even launched an Artemis Explorers Club following Hansen's selection and features several displays honouring the accomplished alumnus.

Ahead of the anticipated launch, Hansen's parents, Nancy and Greg Hansen, visited the school on March 12 and were deeply moved by the community's enthusiasm and pride.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 5



### FROM INGERSOLL TO THE MOON

Ingersoll District Collegiate Institute (IDCI) proudly displays a sign outside in support of former student and astronaut Jeremy Hansen. Story on left. (KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

## Taylor begins role as Woodstock's new Deputy Police Chief

LEE GRIFFI

*Editor*

"It is truly an honour to be the Deputy Chief of the Woodstock Police Service."

Those were the first words uttered by Jamie Taylor, who was recently appointed Woodstock's new Deputy Police Chief.

The Stratford native began his new role on April 1, following the retirement of former Chief Rod Wilkinson, who was replaced by Nick Novacich, leaving the deputy role vacant.

"With more than 25 years in policing, Inspector Taylor brings ex-

tensive operational, leadership, and community-focused experience to this role. Since joining the Woodstock service in 2023 as Inspector of Operations, he has provided oversight of General Patrol, Criminal Investigations, Community Response, Drugs and Intelligence, and the Emergency Response Unit, and has served as Incident Commander during major events," said a Police Services Board release.

"The biggest difference for me has been moving from a very hands-on, operational role into more of a leadership and oversight position. In Stratford, I was working on the frontline and supervising the Training, Street Crime, and Emergency Response Units. That's really where I learned the job from the ground up."

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3



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# Former member of Stratford Police Service excited about new role

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

He added In Woodstock, his role looks quite different.

"I'm overseeing operations at a command level, making sure our members have the training, resources, and support they need, and that everything we do is thorough and aligned with our policies and procedures. I also report to the Police Services Board, liaise with the Special Investigations Unit, investigate complaints, and work closely with our command team."

Taylor added a large part of his role is relationship-building, working with community partners, sitting on boards, and collaborating internally with the WPS media relations officer, hiring committee, and the Emergency Response Unit, where he acts as Incident Commander.

"I've learned a lot here, especially around leadership and managing people. I definitely wear a lot of different hats, but it's been a really rewarding transition. I've loved my time at both services and continue to grow. One highlight for me was completing the Rotman leadership program at the University of Toronto."

Over the past two decades, policing—like many other sectors—has experienced profound change, particularly driven by advancements in technology.

"It has changed a lot since I started in 2001. Back then, I was typing Crown briefs on a typewriter, and everything was paper based. Now we're using AI-assisted reports and fully electronic disclosure. Everything has gone digital."

He added investigations have also become much more complex.

"What used to take an hour can now take hours with the gathering of CCTV, digital evidence, body-worn camera footage, and often working with subject matter experts. We're also doing more production orders and judicial authorizations, especially for digital evidence."

Among the technological improvements are drones, body-worn cameras, and advanced data systems, which didn't exist when Taylor started his policing career.

"Social media has also completely changed. News used to be in the newspaper and on the radio. Now, information is instant, and platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and X play a role in both investigations and communication."

Taylor added police deal with more complex calls today, especially around mental health.

"We work much more closely with community partners than we used to. There's also a greater expectation for accountability and transparency, which is important."

He spent 22 years with the Stratford service and explained that, for the most part, policing is policing no matter where the municipality is.

"Honestly, both Stratford and Woodstock are incredible places to work. The job itself is very similar, and the calls and



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

the challenges don't really change. What makes each place different is the people and the community. I've been really lucky. The people at both services are fantastic, and I truly feel like I have two police families."

Taylor said his priority in the short-term is to fill his previous inspector role and ensure his successor is set up for success.

"I want to provide the same mentorship and support that I was given throughout my career. I'm also focused on improving communication with our members and with the public. With the new Community Safety and Policing legislation, there's been a lot of required training and new equipment. Making sure we're compliant and our members feel confident with those changes is a big priority."

In the long term, he's looking at details in one, three and five-year plans.

"It's important to always think ahead. With my move into this role, there are going to be several internal promotions, and that's exciting for the service. It's a great opportunity to continue building strong leadership from within. Personally, my goal is to keep learning from our chief, support his vision, and continue developing as a leader."

Taylor sees his role as supporting the chief's vision and making sure the force is moving forward as an organization in line with its strategic plan.

"It's about ensuring we're providing adequate and effective policing, making sure our members have what they need to do their jobs and that we're meeting the expectations of the community. It's also about taking care of our people. Member wellness is really important to me, both physically and mentally."

At the same time, the deputy chief said he has a responsibility to be fiscally accountable.

"We're working with taxpayer dollars, so we need to be responsible and thoughtful in how we use our resources."

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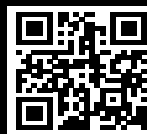
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# Municipal election 101 session held in Woodstock

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Those interested in running for a spot on one of the eight Oxford County councils later this year attended an information night in Woodstock. They learned not only how to get there, but also what happens if elected.

Two representatives from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing presented to a full Oxford County Council Chamber, attended by current and prospective elected officials, along with municipal staff.

Nigel Bellchamber, a well-known municipal consultant, recruiter and trainer, was on hand to explain to attendees how the municipal system works. He spent over 30 years in municipal government, including roles such as Chief Administrative Officer for counties like Middlesex and Huron, and Commissioner of Finance and Administration for the City of London.

Ingersoll Mayor Brian Petrie explained clerks from across the county organized the event and were

concerned about a lack of attendance.

"This is great, and there is obviously interest and people are getting educated, which is important."

He added the evening provided the basic information people need in order to make an educated decision on whether to run or not.

"Campaigning and deciding to run is personal, it is a big decision, and everyone approaches it from a different direction, so it's good to provide that baseline."

The first-term Ingersoll Mayor, who will be seeking a second term in the fall, said his best advice for candidates is to get involved in the local political process.

"Come to council meetings. I sat there for four years before I was elected. See what the job is really about because it may not be the community involvement you think it is. It's not as exciting as people think it is sometimes, and starting on committees is a good way to get involved first."

The future of the Ontario School Board system remains in the air as Education Minister Paul Calandra promised system reforms

by the end of 2025 but has yet to table new legislation.

Anyone interested in running must complete what's called a Form 1 nomination paper and submit it to a municipal clerk with a filing fee of \$200 for the head of council and \$100 for all other offices. The clerk may require candidates to show proof of eligibility or fill out a declaration that the individual is eligible to run.

To be eligible, candidates must be a resident, owner or tenant of land in the municipality or the spouse of someone who does, be a Canadian citizen of 18 years of age or older and not be legally prohibited from voting and not disqualified by any legislation from holding municipal office.

Occasionally, a candidate changes their mind and decides to run for a different position but can only run for one spot at a time. If a candidate files a second nomination, the first one is automatically withdrawn.

Woodstock Mayor Jerry Acchione was also present and said the turnout was very encouraging.

"It's great anytime you have standing room only



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTO)

**Dozens of Oxford County residents packed County Council Chambers in Woodstock recently for an information night to prepare candidates for the Monday, Oct. 26, elections.**

during an information night. I think democracy is exactly that. Everybody should come out and at least investigate if they are interested, find out about the process and how to contribute to their communities."

Acchione is in his twelfth year as an elected official and added he's been asked for advice many times from people interested in a political career.

"I have had dozens of people sit down over different terms. Most of them are surprised at the amount of dedication the job takes. It

is what you make it and I've always been one to put that extra effort in. You can always see those who do.

He added someone with a history of community involvement is a better fit than a candidate leaping straight into a position on a council.

"If you are jumping into it and have never volunteered, take a look at your commitment level and your family support. This is a job that is all hours of the day, mostly evenings and weekends, so you want to make sure you have the support of your

family."

The nomination for an office must be endorsed by at least 25 persons using Form 2 - Endorsement of Nomination Form. This step is not needed in municipalities with fewer than 4,000 people. Anyone endorsing a nomination must be eligible to vote within the municipality.

If you're planning to run for mayor, council, or school board trustee in Ontario, you can officially file your nomination with your local clerk starting May 1 up until 2 p.m. on Aug. 21.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SEND YOURS TO [INFO@THEECHO.CA](mailto:INFO@THEECHO.CA)

I could not stand by without a rebuttal to A. Gowling's letter regarding Woodstock Hospital (March 13, 2026 issue). I am sorry that his experience was not to his liking. My husband was in for nearly 4 months and a mere \$45.00 for an ambulance is nothing. Please google the cost of Alberta and other provinces, as many are a 3 figures. We had excellent care in ER and Complex care with smiling nurses, PSW;s working 12 hour shifts. It is always wise for diabetics to carry something, if sugar evolves, at all times. Yes, the hospital

has TV, internet, movies etc and menu selection and the food is excellent and hot on arrival. The care could not be better. I heard many people from other areas saying what a great hospital we had. You will get a big surprise in the parking lot of other hospitals, as \$4.00 is very low. I had to go in another hospital in another city and so many people were in beds in the halls, so I appreciated Woodstock Hospital and staff. Keep supporting our great hospital.

*Marlene Boakes, Woodstock*

## Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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# Hansen and Artemis II crew reaches farthest distance from Earth

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Jeremy Hansen may have only lived in Ingersoll for a few years, but the astronaut could have just become the town's most famous son.

He grew up on a farm near Ailsa Craig, not far from London. As a teenager, he moved to Ingersoll, and during that time, he was already deeply interested in aviation and joined the Air Cadets at age 12 while working toward pilot qualifications.

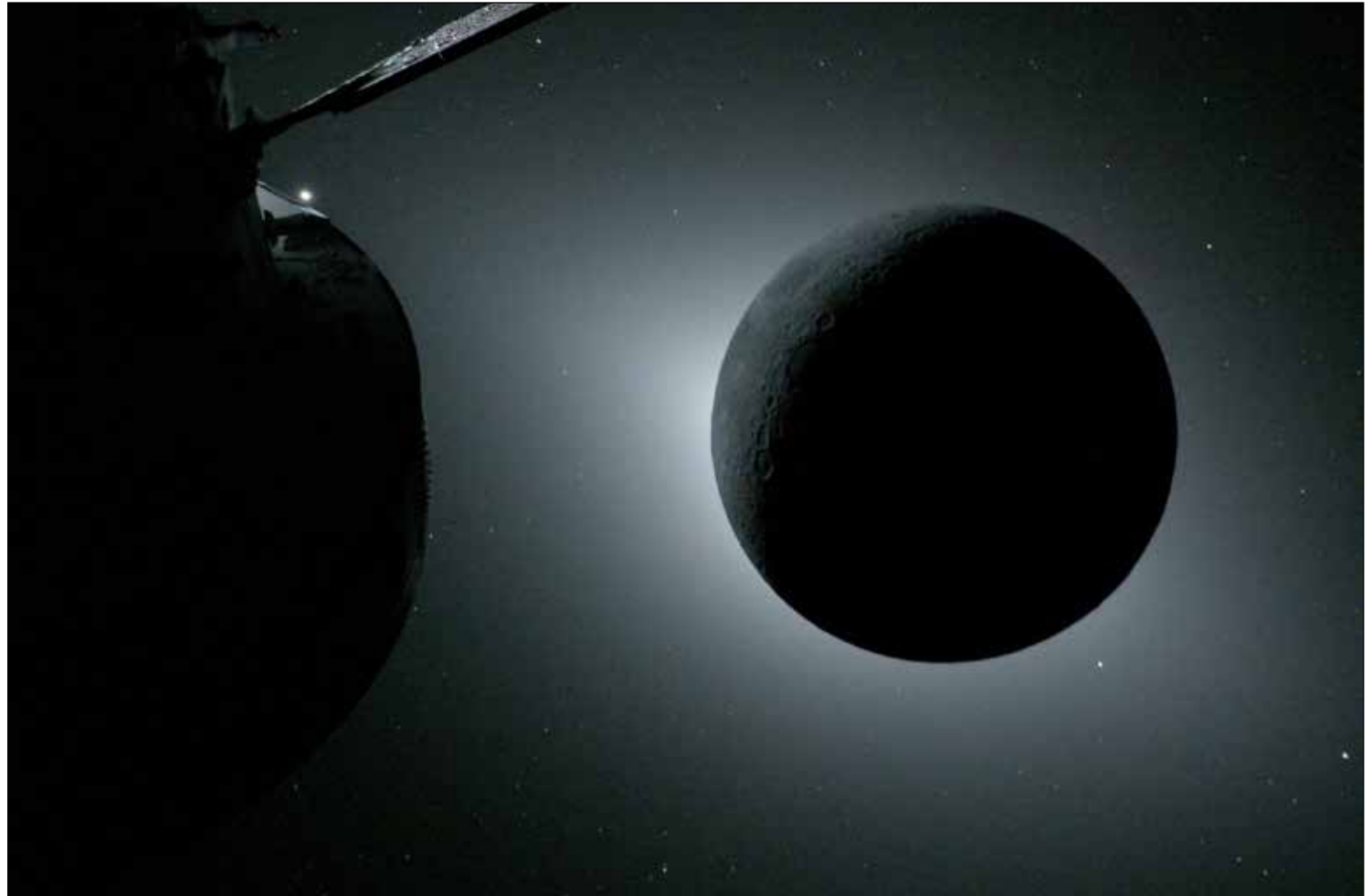
Hansen is joined on the Artemis II mission by NASA astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover and Christina Koch.

"Sharing this journey with Canadians is incredibly meaningful to me. I want every young person watching to know that this mission belongs to all of us," said Hansen while aboard the ship. "I hope it sparks the imagination of the next generation, because Canada's future in space is bright, and it will take all of us to build it."

He also made sure his crew members had a true taste of Canada while in space.

"Here's the maple syrup that we opened up at lunchtime today," Hansen said during a television interview, as a packet of maple syrup floated in front of him in the weightless environment aboard the Orion space capsule. "So, we had a little bit of Canada on board today."

Hansen and the rest of his crew are expected to re-enter the Earth's atmosphere on Friday afternoon around 5 p.m., landing in the Pacific Ocean off San Diego.



(NASA PHOTO)

The Moon, backlit by the Sun during a solar eclipse, is photographed by NASA's Orion spacecraft on Monday, April 6, during the Artemis II mission. Orion is visible in the foreground on the left. Earth is reflecting sunlight at the left edge of the Moon, which is slightly brighter than the rest of the disk. The bright spot visible just below the Moon's bottom right edge is Saturn. Beyond that, the bright spot at the right edge of the image is Mars.

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# OPP participated in seatbelt compliance campaign

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

"Half a century later, Ontario's seatbelt law still saves lives. If you aren't buckling up, what's holding you back?"

That was the opening line from an Ontario Provincial Police press release as cops remind people that seat belts are a critical part of a vehicle's safety regime.

With Ontario's seatbelt law heading into its 51st year, the OPP said nearly one in four road fatalities they investigate still involves someone who was not wearing a seatbelt.

"Dealing with dozens of deaths linked to a lack of seatbelt use every year recognizes that what makes these incidents even more tragic for the surviving families is learning that their loved one made the choice not to wear their seatbelt before heading out on the road," added the release.

Over the Easter long weekend, OPP officers conducted a province-wide seatbelt campaign, hoping to see all drivers and passengers make the right choice by buckling up.

Oxford OPP Media Relations Constable Randi Crawford said her detachment was out in full force.

"The goal of the campaign is to highlight

the education and enforcement of wearing seatbelts. This was done through spot checks similar to RIDE programs, safety messaging through social media and extra officers allocated to patrol."

She added that while the focus over the weekend was on seat belt violations, it also allowed officers to closely monitor and address other offences at the same time.

"These initiatives allow us to focus on messaging about specific types of infractions. By pairing that messaging with highly targeted patrols, we hope to positively influence driving behaviour, even if it's just one person making a safer choice."

The fine for not wearing a seatbelt is \$240 and 2 demerit points. What people often forget is seatbelt laws include children being properly secured in an appropriate child car seat, booster seat or seatbelt for their weight, height and age. People are also encouraged to reinforce with their children and other family members the importance of making seatbelt use a life-long habit.

More information is available at <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/choose-car-seat.shtml>.

While recent local statistics on local historic fatalities or Easter weekend charges are unavailable, Crawford said the overall

goal is to improve driver behaviour.

"As a police officer, we are always looking for every type of infraction while on patrol. These initiatives allow us to focus on messaging about specific types of infractions. With our messaging paired with increased patrols being very focused, we hope it changes the driving behaviours of at least one person for the better."

Crawford said she didn't encounter many people improperly wearing their seatbelts during her patrol days.

"I was really hoping we were getting to a point in society where everyone just wore them automatically. Perhaps the most concerning was seeing parents driving with their children not in car seats or with seatbelts."

She said that excuse came mainly from folks in rural areas during nice weather when they were just going for a drive down the road.

"I would remind them that a driver may have to slam on the brakes or redirect their car for an unexpected animal or piece of debris, which could cause the children to move freely in the vehicle, potentially causing serious injuries, and that can happen anywhere. Seatbelts need to be worn for any distance."

One concern from parents is a lack of

car seat clinics to ensure they are installed correctly. Crawford agreed but said there are still some out there.

"I suggest you search online for 'car seat clinics near me'. I know Oxford EarlyOn and the Children's Aid Society of Oxford are hosting two events in May by appointment."

She added one example of the importance of the proper installation of any type of baby or booster seat, or seatbelt, is still carved in her mind.

"There was a collision on the 401 outside of Woodstock last summer where the vehicle had rolled over. I remember everything was thrown around except the passengers who were secure with their seatbelts, and an infant safe and secure in their properly installed car seat. I saw with my own eyes it really can save lives."

In 2025, the OPP responded to 41 Ontario road fatalities in which the lack of seatbelt use was either the cause or a contributing factor.

"At any time, you can become involved in a collision caused by another driver. The single most important thing you can do to protect yourself during a crash is to ensure you and all other vehicle occupants are properly buckled in," explained OPP Commissioner Thomas Carrique.

## Ontario Investing \$757,700 to expand community programs and services in Oxford

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

The Ontario government is investing \$757,700 this year through the Ontario Trillium Foundation's (OTF) Grow program to support two non-profit organizations in Oxford. The funding helps organizations promote active lifestyles, protect arts, culture and heritage, and expand opportunities for children and youth across the province, while delivering on the government's plan to protect Ontario by strengthening local services while building stronger, more resilient communities.

"Our government is continuing to deliver for Oxford with new investments through OTF's Grow grants that will strengthen our communities and empower our local non-profit organizations,"

said Ernie Hardeman, MPP for Oxford. "Organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oxford County and Community Living Tillsonburg are pillars of our community, and this support will enable them to improve programs that are essential to the well-being of people in Oxford, making a positive difference for years to come."

Every year, OTF Grow grants support community organizations across the province to expand and improve the delivery of community-based programs and services that Ontario families rely on, with investments of up to \$600,000 to support programs and services.

Some of this year's recipients include:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oxford County, which will use a \$345,700 Grow grant over three years to expand a county-wide youth leadership men-

toring program that empowers high school students and inspires younger children to become future leaders.

- Community Living Tillsonburg, which will use a \$412,000 Grow grant over three years to expand a proven program that delivers strong job outcomes for people with developmental disabilities through enhanced training, AI-supported job matching, outreach, transportation, and school-to-work pathways.

"In Oxford and in communities across Ontario, non-profits are running proven programs that help people build skills, stay active, and feel more connected to where they live," said Stan Cho, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming. "This investment will help build on the successes of local initiatives, empowering them to reach more people, deepen their im-

pact, and strengthen community life all across the province."

"The Ontario Trillium Foundation is pleased to invest in this new round of Grow grants, which are designed to improve the lives of Ontarians. These grants play an essential role in helping non-profit organizations broaden their local programming to address diverse community needs," said Katharine Bambrick, CEO of the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Through OTF's various granting programs, Ontario has invested more than \$857 million in over 7,700 projects since 2018. These investments have created more than 10,700 full-time jobs and generated over \$1.3 billion in economic benefits for communities across the province. For more information and a list of recipients, visit the Ontario Trillium Foundation's website at [www.otf.ca](http://www.otf.ca).

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# WIRIWG to host screenings on Indigenous-led Grand River events

AMANDA NELSON

*Echo Contributor*

The Wilmot Indigenous Relations Interfaith Working Group (WIRIWG) is hosting an evening focused on two local, annual Indigenous-led water events on April 23 at Zion United Church, 215 Peel St., New Hamburg, at 7 p.m.

Screenings of the documentaries *Two Row on the Grand* and *The All Nations Grand River Water Walk* aim to educate through video and guest speakers.

"We aim to teach people how to build relationships of respect, equality and fairness," said Melissa Miller, communications officer with WIRIWG. "It's also about honouring the Grand River and everything it means to Waterloo Region, as well as remembering our history and our current relationship with the Grand River and its peoples."

The first screening, *Two Row on the Grand*, explores the em-

bodiment of the Two Row Wampum — the original peace treaty between Indigenous and settler communities.

The paddle is an annual canoe trip where participants, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, build mutual respect and understanding of individual values and cultures by sharing the river, meals, campgrounds, mutual aid, cultural and environmental teachings, friendship and summer fun.

"It's based on the idea of the Two Row Wampum, which is an early treaty made among Indigenous peoples in the Waterloo Region and beyond about how people would live together in peace," Miller said.

"When the Dutch and English later came into the area, they became signatories to that treaty, along with the Crown. We're all part of the Two Row Wampum Treaty, which means we each have our own boats — our own canoes — and we paddle alongside one another. I don't interfere with your



(TWROROWONTHEGRAND.COM PHOTO)

**Paddlers take part in the annual Two Row on the Grand canoe journey, which promotes mutual respect and understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. The event is one of two documentaries being screened by the Wilmot Indigenous Relations Interfaith Working Group on April 23.**

progress, and you don't interfere with mine. We travel side by side."

The second screening, *The All Nations Grand River Water Walk*, highlights an Anishinaabe ceremony based on the teachings of the late Josephine Mandamin, who walked around the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River carrying a copper pail of water in

one hand and an eagle staff in the other. She brought global attention to the sacredness and value of water.

The screenings, along with guest speaker presentations, aim to educate non-Indigenous people about truth and reconciliation, foster relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous res-

idents, and promote learning.

All are welcome, especially those interested in learning more about the Grand River from Indigenous perspectives, past and present.

There is no fee to attend; however, donations are gratefully accepted to support WIRIWG's work.

# Theatre Woodstock's 39 Steps full of mystery and British humour

EMILY STEWART

*Echo Correspondent*

A parody of a spy thriller promises plenty of laughs during the chase around England and Northern Scotland.

Theatre Woodstock will run *39 Steps* from April 17 to 29. The "whodunit" play by Patrick Barlow combines elements of the Alfred Hitchcock movie also called *39 Steps*, a spy novel, and Monty Python-Esque humour to tell the story of a man with a dull life meeting a woman claiming that she's a spy. After the woman is murdered, the *39 Steps* organi-

zation chases after the man.

"It's just a fun show overall," said director Rob Coles.

Coles said there is a lot of British humour and tactics akin to Monty Python's works, and so far, there's been a positive response during rehearsals.

"Some of it is obscure humour, it's very colloquially British but we've had people coming in during rehearsals and some of the jokes I didn't know if they would get, they got," he said.

Rehearsals overall are running smoothly and now the team is fine-tuning the show to

expand the humour's reach as wide as possible.

There are more than 150 characters in the play, with the majority played by two clown characters who each have between 40 and 50 roles.

"Some of it is very short, maybe about three or four words, but it's fast paced, and there's one part where they're at a train station and literally as they change the hat, they change the character," he added.

The two clown characters have two base costumes and items are either added or subtracted throughout the show as characters

change.

"For the four cast members, this is a huge undertaking, and for the two, there's a huge number of roles and also a huge number of lines," Coles said. "They have to be convincing as to what characters they are, and I think they're doing a great job of accomplishing that."

All tickets for *39 Steps* are \$28 each with the exception of the \$20 Thrifty Thursday tickets. To purchase tickets, either visit the box office on 22 Reeve St., call 519-537-2582 or visit [www.theatrewoodstock.com](http://www.theatrewoodstock.com) to purchase online.

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## Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. What is the only country that begins with 'q'?
2. What American restaurant chain is the biggest purchaser of lemons worldwide?
3. A cutlass, gladius and katana are all types of what?
4. In Greek mythology, who are Artemis' parents?
5. Which U.S president was a peanut farmer before entering politics?
6. Finish the saying, "April showers bring \_\_\_\_\_"
7. Mount Everest is part of which mountain range?
8. In scrabble, each player starts with how many letters?
9. What acid gives sourdough its tangy flavor?
10. What is the strongest currency in the world?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

# Local MPP said budget may be expensive but will support Ontarians through tough times

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Ontario's finance minister tabled the 2026 provincial budget last week, and the reaction from Oxford County's Conservative MPP is positive.

The 231-page document lays out plans for a record \$226 billion in program spending while projecting a deficit that is expected to reach \$13.8 billion this year, up from the \$7.8 billion projected last year.

Ernie Hardeman said he doesn't always like spending so much money, but at this point, the government needs to help build a strong economy.

"It doesn't just happen. We are going to build a lot of new infrastructure and that means there will be a lot of people earning a good paycheque. Building at a time when we need to increase employment is a great way of dealing with it."

He said the government is investing in transportation, education, and healthcare infrastructure and added the budget is about protecting the people of Ontario.

"We have to find a way to make life more affordable, and there are two ways we can do that. One is to make sure people have jobs to go to and also to make sure we don't have products being more expensive than they need to be."

The government said it is protecting communities through a multi-year Tax Action Plan and the removal of the full 13 per cent Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) for all eligible buyers of new homes, provid-

ing a maximum rebate of \$130,000.

"Reducing the administration costs of building a new home is so important. Not only is the tax reduction going to help, but we are going to make sure municipalities look at reducing the cost of development charges to reduce the cost of homes," said Hardeman.

He added the budget will build Ontario's economy while, at the same time, reducing the tax burden.

"This is a great way to present a budget. I think this is number 31 for me as an MPP, and I think it's one of the best."

The small business corporate income tax (CIT) rate is being cut by more than 30 per cent, from 3.2 per cent to 2.2 per cent, effective July 1. The government claims that over 375,000 Ontario small businesses would benefit from an additional \$1.1 billion in CIT relief over the next three years.

"Ontario is navigating economic challenges with a pragmatic and prudent fiscal plan," said Minister Bethlenfalvy. "To help the province navigate these times and come out stronger, we are investing in strategic priorities such as energy, critical minerals, key infrastructure and critical technologies that will make our economy stronger, while cutting red tape and creating the conditions for businesses to grow, supporting workers and strengthening Ontario's economy."

Oxford County's top politician said the budget appears to address current economic uncertainty, with an emphasis on



(WESTERN ONTARIO WARDENS CAUCUS PHOTO)

Oxford County Warden Marcus Ryan (centre) attended the Ontario budget announcement at Queen's Park in Toronto last Thursday along with Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman (left) and Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae.

building a resilient economy and supporting families. Warden Marcus Ryan added he's hopeful the document will make life a little easier for county residents.

"The budget acknowledges the infrastructure challenges for municipalities related to growth, an area of discussion and advocacy recently identified by Oxford County Council. We're also optimistic about additional funding for supportive housing and long-term care operating funding, both of which are key needs in Oxford."

He added that it does not address long-term municipal fiscal sustainability.

"That was something we were hoping to see. As a municipality, we're committed to working with the provincial government to address this issue to ensure we truly are building strong and resilient communities."

The government is expanding investment in the Primary Care Action Plan to \$3.4 billion from 2025 to 2029. The plan's goal is to connect everyone in Ontario to a family doctor or primary care provider.

An additional \$300 million over six years will be available through the Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund to help meet the needs of growing communities as they foster healthier and more active lifestyles for families.

\$9.4 million is also being invested over three years to renew grants for the Summer Company and Starter Company Plus programs delivered through the Small Business Enterprise Centres network.

For the first time in Ontario history, the province's net debt is forecast to cross the half-trillion-dollar mark, with the government forecasting a \$514 billion debt.

# Ingersoll Cheese and Agricultural Museum to begin Big Cheese Days with We Lend a Hand screening

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

Month-long celebrations highlighting the region's dairy products and history will begin at the Ingersoll Cheese and Agricultural Museum with a film highlighting the hard work of Ontario's farmerettes during World War II.

The museum will kick off its Big Cheese Day Celebrations with a screening of *We Lend a Hand* followed by a meet and greet on May 2 starting at 1 p.m. at the museum's Sherbrooke Barn. The film highlights the stories of the Ontario 'farmerettes', the teenaged girls who filled in during and after WWII to ensure agricultural operations still ran and kept the Canadian food supply going.

Big Cheese Days, run by Tourism Oxford, celebrates the county's dairy industry by featuring special programming from participating businesses and organizations every weekend in May.

"We wanted to open Big Cheese Days with



(STEPHANIE CONRON, BY ALBIREO FILMS IMAGE)

a story that speaks to the heart of our community's resilience," said Stephanie Conron, museum manager. "While Oxford County is known for its agricultural and dairy output, we often focus on the what and the where. Bringing this film to the Ingersoll Cheese Museum allows us to focus on the who."

*We Lend a Hand* has held sold-out screenings across Ontario including in London, Stratford, Dorchester, Oakville, and Kingston and won awards from the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), Stratford Film Festival, and Niagara Canada International Film Festival in 2025.

Conron said the film represents the core values of dairy farming and agriculture.

"The dairy and agricultural industries are built on service and hard work, and no one embodies that better than these 40,000 young women. During the war years, the labor shortage threatened every aspect of farming, including the production needed to support the front lines."

She added the film highlights how these

girls, many with no prior experience, stepped into Southwestern Ontario's fields to ensure the survival of our food supply.

"It's a perfect bridge between our local dairy heritage and the broader national effort to feed the world."

In addition to the screening and meet and greet, there will be a musical performance by the BackSeat Girls and food provided by PB's French Fries.

The Ingersoll Cheese and Agricultural Museum will also host the May Market on May 30 to close off Big Cheese Days festivities between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

"It's the perfect way to wrap up a month of cheesy fun and bring together local vendors and a vibrant atmosphere right here in the 'Home of the Mammoth Cheese,'" Conron said.

Tickets for the *We Lend a Hand* screening are \$19.90 and can be purchased online by visiting <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/big-cheese-days-we-lend-a-hand-show-and-meet-greet-tickets>.

Visit us online at [theecho.ca](http://theecho.ca)

# United Way Oxford Celebrates Another Successful Campaign Year

## STAFF

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

United Way Oxford hosted its annual Campaign Celebration on Thursday, March 26, where it announced that \$1,315,358 was raised for the 2025 campaign exceeding a \$1.3 million goal.

“United Way Oxford is privileged to serve a community that cares so deeply for its neighbours, friends, co-workers, and family. This campaign is such a perfect example of how Local Love can result in positive action,” said Executive Director Kelly Gilson.

“From immediate supports for those dealing with food insecurity, to mentoring and opportunity programs for youth, assistance for those seeking employment, social connections and respite for those dealing with dementia, or transitional housing at our Light Houses, the campaign will fund vital programs and services to help our community,” she added. This year’s celebration theme focused on community and belonging, with attendees given cookies outlining actions they could take to build connections, and a special presentation on social connection and its impact on health by Rebecca Wallace, Public Health Nurse, Infectious Disease from Southwestern Public Health.

The event also marked the end of Lisa Wells’ two-year campaign run as Campaign Co-Chair.

The celebration concluded with the Community Impact Awards, recognizing select individuals, organizations, and workplaces for their impact during the year’s campaign.

The two hour event brought together the people who helped shape this year’s campaign—donors, volunteers, workplace

partners, and local agencies—for an evening dedicated to honoring community spirit and shared accomplishments.

Gilson reflected on the year with gratitude, noting how the campaign demonstrated the power of collective action.

“This event gave us the chance to thank the people who make our work possible. Every donation, every volunteer hour, and every act of kindness contributed to real change in Oxford County.”

The program featured compelling guest speakers who shared personal stories and experiences that illustrated the importance of United Way supported programs. Their messages underscored how community investments translate into life changing support for individuals and families.

Campaign Co-Chairs Shauna Pow and Wells also addressed the crowd, each expressing pride in the community’s resilience. Pow highlighted how residents rallied together despite a challenging year, saying she was “incredibly proud of how our community supported one another and stayed focused on building a stronger, more connected County.”

Wells emphasized the essential role of donors and volunteers, noting that “many vital programs simply wouldn’t exist without their dedication.” One of the evening’s highlights was the presentation of the 2025 Community Impact Awards, recognizing outstanding contributions from workplaces, individuals, and partner organizations. The awards celebrated leadership, creativity, and commitment—qualities that helped drive the campaign’s success. United Way Oxford expressed appreciation to Toyota Motor Manufacturing Inc. for sponsoring the celebration and supporting the organization’s ongoing work.



(RON YUZARK PHOTO)

Unifor Local 88 was represented by Jamie, Monica, Vince, Amanda, Mark, Juli, Brent, and President Steven, whose presence underscored the union’s ongoing community support.



(RON YUZARK PHOTO)

United Way Oxford recognized the contributions of committee members Macy, Jenn, Kelly, Lindsay, Megan, and Amanda.

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# A farm girl at heart: Getting to write about rural Ontario

AMANDA NELSON

Echo Contributor

Recently, with my change in title to Director of Community Engagement for Grant Haven Media, I've had the opportunity to connect with more of our local papers than ever before, including our rural publications and farming papers. It's something I don't take for granted — in fact, I feel incredibly lucky to now be writing about rural Ontario and the agricultural communities that shaped me.

Although people often look at me and assume I'm a city girl, I actually grew up on a small beef farm in Chesley, Ont. The only thing Chesley is really known for is Chesley Lake — which, ironically, isn't even in Chesley and is actually located about a half-hour northwest of the town.

We had about 30 head of Simmental cattle, and at one point I even had six of my own cows and calves. Raising them gave me a head start on saving for college, but it also opened the door to countless pets along the way, including a pot-bellied pig named Jamie, a donkey named Francis and even a peacock named Iago. My sisters and I loved living on the farm, but I think I was the most animal-loving out of

all of us.

Growing up, I showed calves in 4-H and even went to The Royal a few times. I also generally came home from livestock sales with at least a few rabbits or chickens. At one point, my dad blocked off an entire pen just for my animals. Through one winter, I kept Jake, Iago, several ducks and chickens, and a few guinea hens together before letting them roam free around the farm — including up by the house — in the spring.

One of my favourite things about being the local animal-loving farm kid was that whenever someone had a newborn animal whose mother died, I was usually the first person they called. At one point, I had a pet sheep named Oscar that I raised from birth. He sucked on a soother, knew how to unlatch gates and sometimes slept outside with my dog. He even tried to sit in my lap when he was fully grown.

I loved living on the farm. I loved the scratches down my legs every summer from unloading hay, and I loved connecting with the land in a way few people ever get to experience. Beyond all the pets, farm life grounded me, and I feel blessed to have grown up that way.

Now, through journalism, I've been able to reconnect with those roots in a

completely unexpected way. Writing for our rural community newspapers and farming publications has allowed me to re-establish that connection more every day. Recently, I attended the annual general meeting for the Ontario Agri-Food Discovery Centre concept — a future STEM-based learning centre designed to teach kids where their food comes from. I've written about soybeans and the challenges farmers across Ontario face, as well as issues affecting dry bean producers. I've spoken with local representatives and community leaders who care deeply about supporting rural communities and agriculture.

In a roundabout way, I've come back to farming — not by working the land, but by telling the stories of those who do. And I feel incredibly fortunate to be able to connect with farmers and those in the agri-food industry after leaving that life so many years ago.

Through my work, I've also been reminded of the emotional connection farmers have with their land and livestock. Recently, there was a fire on a local farm, and I felt deeply for the family. I know the pain of losing livestock. I think the first time I ever saw my dad cry was when we

lost a cow during a difficult birth. While animals provide income, they also become part of the family, no matter the size of the operation. It's something people who haven't lived it don't always understand.

The same goes for the land. Yes, crops represent livelihood, but farmers also care deeply about their growth. They prepare the soil, plant the seeds and watch them grow. They wake up at night hoping frost won't damage early crops and pray rain holds off after hay is cut. Farmers know their land, their crops and their livestock better than anyone. Now, I'm privileged to write about them from a new perspective — someone who no longer lives on a farm, but still appreciates it deeply and wants to share their stories.

While farming isn't the path I see for myself now, I still dream of owning a home with a bit of land — maybe a few chickens and perhaps another pot-bellied pig someday. My parents no longer have livestock and now focus on soybeans and grain, but they still own more than 200 acres. When I return, my shoulders drop and I finally relax. That's the feeling of going home, I suppose.

And for me, home will always be the farm.

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Attention: Board Chair, Rural Roads Health Services  
c/o Lisa Dahm, Executive Assistant [lisa.dahm@rrhs.ca](mailto:lisa.dahm@rrhs.ca)

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: 12:00pm Monday, April 13, 2026**

# Oxford MP's Jail Not Bail Act voted down in second reading

JEFF HELSDON

*Echo Contributor*

Oxford MP Arpan Khanna's Jail Not Bail Act was amongst four justice-related Private Member's Bills voted down last week.

The bill, co-sponsored by Brant MP and Shadow Minister for Justice and the Attorney General, Larry Brock, aimed to prevent repeat offenders who are released on bail from committing another crime. Khanna garnered victims' testimony from across the country to back his position.

"That would have been a full crack down, full stop," he said. "It would have taken those repeat offenders off the street."

The bill was defeated 193-136, with the Liberals, NDP, and long Green MP voting against it.

"Law enforcement came out and said it was a sad day," Khanna said, adding victim advocacy groups were also disappointed. He has had widespread nationwide support for the legislation.

"The calls and emails I have been getting are insane, saying we need some rule of law back in our country," he said.

With the Jail Not Bail Act, three other

Conservative bills intended to help victims and justice, were also defeated. These bills would have ended discount sentencing for sexual predators, ended lighter sentences for rapists and child predators who were non-residents, and ended the practice of parole board hearings making victims relive the horror of their traumatic ordeals.

"They didn't want to work with us on these and collaborate on these," Khanna said with disappointment, explaining all four were defeated in 40 minutes.

While the Liberals brought some changes through Bill C-14, which the Conservatives supported, Khanna doesn't believe it went far enough.

"C-14 is a step in the right direction, but won't get us to the end destination," he said. "If Liberals bring good policy forward that will protect Canadians, we will support it. We did that with C-14. We expect the same and them not to vote down a bill."

Khanna added the Conservatives will keep on fighting and will continue to be a voice for victims and law-abiding gun owners. He hinted that other caucus members have more justice bills in the works.

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# Theatre Woodstock's 2026/2027 role includes three new musicals

EMILY STEWART

*Echo Correspondent*

The 80th season of Theatre Woodstock will feature more musical productions than ever before.

The organization announced its upcoming season on April 1 at the Market Centre Stage.

"It's our 80th anniversary season, so we're very excited for the shows that we're going to be putting on," said Emil Wijnker, president of Theatre Woodstock. "We've taken some risks this year, which is a great step for our organization."

The season will kick off with *Dracula: The Chamber Musical* from Oct. 16 to 25. *A Christmas Story*, the beloved Christmas movie about a young boy named Ralphie who wants nothing more than a BB gun for Christmas, will take the stage from Nov. 27 to Dec. 6.

The Tony award-winning musical *Avenue Q*, a parody of *Sesame Street* with mature themes that are absolutely unsuitable for children, is set for Feb. 18 to 29, 2027.

"It's a bit of a riskier production for us to take on as a small community theatre, but we're very confident that our patron base is ready for it and we're very excited to bring a Tony-award winning musical for Best Musi-

cal to Woodstock," Wijnker said.

*Strangers Among Us*, a love story between two patients with Alzheimer's disease, will run from April 2 to 11 of next year. The play was supposed to be presented in 2020 but was cancelled due to worldwide COVID-19 restrictions which included putting a pause on live theatre.

The 2026/2027 season will conclude with the Senior STAGES production of the *Mean Girls* musical from May 7 to 16.

Families with young ones in theatre also have some shows to look forward to. Theatre Woodstock also announced their STAGES programming for the year, beginning with their summer camp production of *Madagascar: A Musical Adventure*.

The fall STAGES session will have Disney's *Frozen: Kids and The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* with performances between Jan. 24 and 27, 2027. The spring session will end with *Treasure Island* and *Oliver! Jr.* performances from June 11 to 13 of next year.

Throughout the roll out, members of Theatre Woodstock talked about all the ways to get involved with the community theatre group both on stage and backstage.

"We're always looking for people to join our volunteer ranks, whether it's on stage



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

(Left to right) Alicia Suavé, Rusty the Puppet, and James Callaghan announcing that *Avenue Q* will be Theatre Woodstock's winter musical for the 2026/2027 season.

you can audition to be one of our performers but also behind the scenes or backstage. We're always looking for assistant stage managers, technical operators, technical designers or even people helping behind the scenes with production; sewing, costumes, props creation, props assembly," Wijnker said. "There's always something to do. If you want to become involved with theatre, there's certainly a job for you to be found in one of our shows."

Wijnker added Woodstock will host the Western Ontario Drama League (WODL)

from May 18 to 24 of 2027 on the Victoria Day long weekend.

The evening also featured performances from *Into the Woods JR.*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *The Addams Family Musical*.

Theatre Woodstock will present *39 Steps* from April 17 to 26 and *STAGES The Addams Family* from May 22 to 31.

Packages are available now for the 2026/2027 season, where subscribers can pay \$100 for five shows. More information can be found online by visiting [www.theatre-woodstock.com](http://www.theatre-woodstock.com).



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

Jordyn and Emelyn performing "Pulled," one of the songs from *The Addams Family Musical* taking the stage between May 22 to 31.



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

Haley performing "I know things now" from the *Into the Woods JR.* production run by STAGES.



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# Woodstock Ingersoll Echo **SPORTS**

## Slam dunk competition starts early in 2026 boys Captains-Veterans basketball evening

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

The 2026 Captains-Veterans boys basketball game slam dunk contest started early.

“Wasn’t expecting to do that one,” admitted Team White and Woodstock St. Mary’s Warrior Josh Morgan, who threw one down with emphasis during the second half of a 91-65 loss to Team Purple in the junior contest. “Just off impulse and adrenaline.”

Morgan’s slam highlighted a White Team (St. Mary’s, Tillsonburg Glendale, Ingersoll DCI and Lord Dorchester) MVP performance featuring 16 points, eight rebounds, two assists and two steals. He was joined on the stats sheet by Warriors teammates Jessie Adeoye whose five three-point field goals fuelled a 17-point performance, Tristan Manalo with 10 and Atiki Wani, whose six points included a massive two-hander.

“It was a good feeling,” said Wani. “Hanging on the rim - boom!”

Wani would go on to win the official dunk contest held during halftime of the subsequent senior game.

Glendale’s Trevin Patrick added six points, James Strathearn five and Ingersoll’s Percy Gavin one field goal.

Western Ontario Secondary Schools Athletics Association AA gold medallist and Captains-Veterans MVP Lukas Mickevicius paced Team Purple’s (College Avenue,

Woodstock CI, Woodstock Huron Park and Lord Dorchester) attack with 28 points, including a solid dunk. CASS Knights teammates Kameron Roos, Greyson Padfield and Easton Freeman added 24, 15 and 3 points, respectively. Huron Park’s Alro Minnaar and Nasir Hadari added four and two, Dorchester’s Tehg Randhawa four and WCI’s Hunter Grass, Jude Buchner and Jack Litchy three apiece.

“Fun chance to meet new people, build chemistry, a bond,” Hadari summed up.

Woodstock Huron Park Huskie Jance Jorgensen took a diversified route to team Purple senior MVP honours, knocking down a late corner three to round a 22-point performance, unguarded perhaps due to the fact his team was on the ‘power play’, having six players on the court to Team White’s five at the time.

“We just felt like we needed it at that point,” he smiled. “Had to hit that one.”

The three was part of a spirited Team Purple (Huron Park, WCI, IDCI and CASS) fourth-quarter comeback, which ultimately fell short, Team White (St. Mary’s, Lord Dorchester and Glendale) prevailing by a 93-81 margin. Jorgensen had an unofficial three-plus-two dunks in the game. Three were fully legit, two on the borderline of elevated power layups, an assessment Jorgensen was willing to accept.

“I like to really flush it to count.”

Huron Park teammate Bakhtawar Sidhu had 14, including several lay-ins during



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

**Junior Team Purple MVP Lukas Mickevicius puts two of his 28 points home from close range.**

team Purple’s late run, while WCI’s Diangelo Sanfilippo had 13 and Red Devils teammates Nick Hagen-Johnson, Preston Hilderley and Kael Wettlaufer had seven, three and two, respectively. CASS Knight Devon Fordham contributed six points as did IDCI’s Trestyn Veldman, while fellow Blue Bomber Zack Paton went 0-4 from the three-point line, 0-2 from midrange but 2-3 from inside the paint for four points.

“Only focus on that one - that’s the one that matters,” laughed Paton, who, while closing out high school basketball on the evening, is looking forward to extending his football career this fall with the Wilfrid Laurier Golden Hawks.

“Back at the bottom,” said Paton, a dominant lineman for the TVRA champion Blue Bombers. “I’m happy I’ve got to work my way back up.”

Lord Dorchester’s Mason Faulkner earned MVP honours for Team White, pacing the attack with 25 points. St. Mary’s Warrior Kymani Small added 19, including a trio of three-point field goals, Dorchester’s Kalen Greenfield 13, and Glendale Gemini Jason Mogg 12, Sean Krahn 10 and Kayden Pittao seven. CASS Knight Kalen Krupp added two field goals to the winning total.

“Fun and very exciting,” Krupp said. “Good competition too.”

Before the senior game, Oxford Basketball Officials Association President Nino DeLuca and Vice-President Paul Cowan presented the annual Bill Gillespie Me-



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

**Huron Park Huskie and Team Purple MVP Jance Jorgensen slams home one of an unofficial ‘three plus two’ dunks during the senior boys Captains-Veterans game.**

morial Award for service to the sport in Oxford to Glendale’s Terry Coulthard. A College Avenue graduate who went on to play with the Waterloo Warriors before a career in education, Coulthard subsequently retired to Tillsonburg. Responding to need within the school, she coaches both junior and senior teams for both the boys and girls programs.

Honoured and humbled to accept the award, Coulthard spoke to the extra meaning it represents due to the fact she knew, admired and respected its namesake.

“Bill led by example and touched many lives.”

She thanked Glendale staff members Kiersten Sanderson and Kait Buchner for their invaluable support.

“And they willingly subject themselves to my running commentary every game,” Coulthard smiled.

Her approach is to back up player development in the game’s X’s and O’s with the intangibles of sport, commitment, sportsmanship, respect, accountability and teamwork.

“The we over me.”

Coulthard emphasized how coaching is a two-way street; she is learning from the players while thoroughly enjoying a court-side seat to their broad-based development.

“It’s the relationships that drive me, and I truly value,” Coulthard concluded.

Proceeds from the event go to the Terry Fox Foundation in Gillespie’s honour as the founder of the Captains-Veterans evening.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

**St. Mary’s Warrior and Team White MVP Josh Morgan put the ball down with authority during the junior Captains-Veterans game.**



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

**College Avenue Knight and Team White’s Kaleb Krupp (right) covers CASS teammate Devon Fordham (left), suiting up with Team Purple during the senior Captains-Veterans game.**



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTO)

### A BET IS A BET

Woodstock Mayor Jerry Acchione (right) completed his side of a gentleman's bet with East Zorra-Tavistock Mayor Phil Schaefer at Wednesday morning's Oxford County Council meeting. The loser of the PJHL series between the Tavistock Braves and Woodstock Navy Vets would be required to wear the winning team's jersey throughout the meeting, which Acchione did graciously.

# Navy Vets bow out to Braves in entertaining Doherty Division final

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

It wasn't the ending the team had hoped for as Woodstock bowed out to Tavistock in the Provincial Junior Hockey League's Doherty Division final in seven games.

The Braves jumped out to a 2-0 lead by the 16-minute mark of the first period, but goals by Cooper Vickerman and Will McGregor tied the game with just under 7 minutes left in the second. Tavistock's Carter Arseneau then took over with the go-ahead goal with one second left in the period on a powerplay and added the eventual game-winner 13:30 into the final frame. Carson Littlejohn found the back of the net with just over two minutes remaining, but it was too little too late as the Braves won the series and moved on to face Dundas in the South Conference final.

Tavistock currently leads the Blues 2-0 after 5-0 and 3-2 victories.

The Navy Vets took to social media to release a statement following the loss to the Braves.

"As the Vets Jr. C season comes to a close, we want to take a moment to thank our amazing fans.

Friday night hockey in Woodstock became something extra special this season. You packed the barn, made it loud, and turned Southwood into one of the toughest places to play. What we've built here in Woodstock isn't just hockey; it's a tradition, and it wouldn't be what it is without our fans and community.

We truly have the best fans in the league, and we couldn't be more grateful for the support you brought all season long. The 2025-2026 season was one to remember for this team.

A big thank you to all of our sponsors, especially our team sponsor @confidencesports, for being a huge part of this season and this community.

Congratulations to the Tavistock Braves. Thanks for an electric Doherty Division Final and a battle to finish off the last season in the PJHL. We wish you the best of luck as you continue your push toward the Schmalz.

Anchortown, thank you for everything. See you back at the barn in 2026-2027 for a new chapter."

That new chapter begins with a Prospects Camp taking place from May 21 to 23. Spots are limited, and registration is at <https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSddKM5m0d7ze7.../viewform>.

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# Wildcats U18 team ready for 2026 provincial championships

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

"I've coached girls' hockey now for 18 years, and for me, this is what the entire season is all about."

Those were the words of Woodstock Wildcats U18 BB coach Jeff Shapton when asked by the Echo how excited he and his team were heading into this weekend's Ontario Women's Hockey Association Provincial Championships. The massive tournament is being held across the GTA from April 10 to 12.

"My philosophy is I treat the league as a buildup to get to provincials, and this is the pinnacle. We've had a pretty successful season where we've won three tournaments, including the International Silver Stick, finalists in a tournament in Montreal, and we won our league championship which was a huge accomplishment," he added.

Shapton explained winning the league title was likely more of a challenge than what the provincials will be.

"Winning the league, which we just won, we had to play really high-end hockey for about two months. We won provincials two years ago, so we know what it takes to win. We know we are one of the best teams in the province, but guess what, we know we have to play well."

The Wildcats are ranked number two in Ontario, and Shapton admitted his team doesn't win on skill alone, but it will take one heck of an effort for any team to beat them.

"My style and my system are you don't have to be the most talented play-

er in the world to play for us, but you have to be willing to work harder than anyone else. I would much rather have a team like I have today, with a whole bunch of hard-working kids who are good hockey players."

The coach admitted he doesn't have a star player on his team, something he sees as a huge positive.

"The problem when you have one or two kids who are so-called stars is that as a coach, you get so fixated on them you forget about the rest of the game. What we have is a bunch of really good players, but we have to play a team system to have success."

Shapton said he and his coaching staff have come up with a style of hockey that is hard to compete against.

"It's very hard for our opposition to play three 15-minute periods at the same level we do. Teams can hang around with us for two periods but we seem to find another gear in the third period and distance ourselves late in games."

32 teams are competing at provincials, and joining Woodstock in Pool B are Collingwood, Flamborough and Waterloo, all teams the Wildcats have not faced this season.

"No matter who is in your pool, provincials are hard and we know every team is gunning for us. There are some really good teams and this is going to be a battle. Only one team comes out of each pool. I think we have an advantage playing teams who haven't seen us before because we play a high-energy, heavy on the forecheck, really good on the backcheck, where we take teams' time and space away."

While not bringing home a medal



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Woodstock Wildcats U18 BB team recently won the Southern League Championship and is ranked second in the province as the OWSA provincial tournament begins on Friday, April 10.

would be a disappointment, Shapton's teams have only won a single medal in more than a dozen appearances.

"It's so hard to just make Sunday. And if this team doesn't come home with a medal, I don't want that to take away from the accomplishments this group has made. Our focus is to win gold because I truly believe we are the best team in the province."

He added several other teams feel the same way, which should make for an extremely competitive tournament.

"I tell my girls all the time, this shouldn't be easy. If we come home with a medal of any colour, it will be a massive accomplishment."

The Southern League championship game against the Sudbury Lady Wolves was played on March 28 at Westwood Arena in Etobicoke with the Wildcats winning in a dramatic shootout.

The U15 A Wildcats are also participating in the tournament and are in a pool with Flamborough, Nepean and Peterborough.

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# Ingersoll public school evacuated after bomb threat



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTOS)

Oxford Provincial Police were assisted by the Ingersoll Fire Department to search and secure Laurie Hawkins Public School following the discovery of a written bomb threat. The school was cleared and students were back in class early in the afternoon

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

There was an increased police presence on April 2 at an elementary school in the Town of Ingersoll.

At approximately 9:30 a.m. on April 2, 2026, Officers from the Oxford OPP, along with Ingersoll Fire Services and Oxford County Paramedic Services, were called to Laurie Hawkins Public School at 9:30 a.m. for a reported bomb threat.

All students and staff were safely evacuated from the school and relocated to an alternate location. Police conducted an extensive search of the school and property without incident. No threat was detected.

Members of the Oxford OPP are actively conducting an ongoing investigation and are appealing to the public for assistance. Anyone with relevant information is urged to contact Oxford OPP at 1-888-310-1122.

The Thames Valley District School Board and Principal Dan Murrell released a statement to parents.

"We are writing to you that, based on the advice of police, all students have been temporarily relocated...to Ingersoll District Collegiate Institute (IDCI) after a written bomb threat was discovered at the school."

It went on to say the students were safe, supervised and remained with their teachers.

"There is no need for families to pick up their children from IDCI. The expectation is that students will return to Laurie Hawkins Public School before the end of the instructional day," it added.

A second communication from the board and Murrell said students were being allowed back in the school around 12:30 p.m.

"We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the police, fire and EMS personnel for their prompt response and careful investigation, as well as to our families for their cooperation and understanding. We also appreciate the support of IDCI staff and students in accommodating our students during this time."

Police say no charges have been laid at this time.

## "Tillson Centre" 121 E. Concession Street, Tillsonburg



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A key advantage of the site is its 112 on-site parking stalls, ensuring ease of access for customers, staff, and deliveries alike. Ample parking is increasingly rare in central locations, making this a significant competitive edge for tenants.

**Located near the core of Tillsonburg, this site benefits from:**

- Strong daily traffic counts
- Established consumer awareness from its prior use (**Peavey-Mart**)
  - Proximity to residential neighborhoods and local services
  - Easy access routes for surrounding rural communities
- The property is well suited for a diverse mix of tenants, including:
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# Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

## PART-TIME NEWSPAPER DELIVERY PERSON

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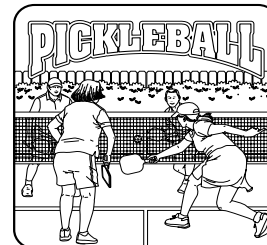
### SPORTS FACT:

This is a low-impact paddle sport that mixes rules of tennis, paddle ball and more.

Answer: Pickleball

### Creative Colouring

Colour in this picture to create your own masterpiece.



### Double Word Puzzle

Unscramble the individual words to reveal letters for the phrase.

LPREAY 

1	2	3			

ROECS 

	4	5	6		

OIPTN 

		7	8		

ATCKAT 

				9			

	H									B					
8															

			Z				
	4	5		3		9	

Answers: Player, Score, Point, Attack, The pickleball craze

### CANADA

MONTH



### HISTORY

1870

During the Battle of Eccles Hill, Canadian Militia defeat Fenian raiders.

### NEW WORD

### BASELINE

the line marking each end of a court



- English: Ball
- Spanish: Pelota
- Italian: Palla
- French: Balle
- German: Ball



Although pickleball seems like a recent phenomenon, it actually was created in 1965. The game initially was played using makeshift equipment.



### Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Pickleball and paddle



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Richard Lee. Photo: Dariane Sanche.

# Abandoned Ingersoll encampment undergoes cleanup

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority is clearing an Ingersoll eyesore.

The organization hired a professional crew to clean the site located near the Thames River between Carnegie and Wilson Streets. The encampment had been present for an extended period and raised concerns among some residents.

The site was also the location of two fires on March 2, which were ignited within structures at the encampment. Fortunately, no injuries were reported.

In a statement, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) said staff worked alongside trained partner agencies to take a humanitarian-focused approach. The organization noted that both the presence and duration of encampments reflect broader social challenges, including the ongoing housing crisis.

Brent Verscheure is the UTRCA's Manager of Lands, Facilities and Conservation Areas.

"We can confirm that a clean-up of an encampment on conservation authority lands in Ingersoll is currently underway. The work is being carried out by qualified third-party contractors, with support from UTRCA staff and partner organizations. For safety and liability reasons, members of the public (including media) are required to maintain a safe distance from active work zones and require specialized training and authorization from CN Operations and police due to the proximity to the active rail line."

A member of the Echo team was asked to leave the area after taking photos, despite being several hundred feet from the site.

A similarly sized encampment in Woodstock cost the city \$100,000 to clean up in 2025. Verscheure said it is too early to put a price tag on this one.

"All personnel involved are trained and equipped to manage the potential risks, including the handling and disposal of materials that may pose health or environmental concerns, and the health and safety of workers and the public is our top priority. At this time, costs associated with the clean-up are still being finalized. UTRCA staff



An Ingersoll encampment is in the process of being cleaned up by a company hired by the UTRCA.

(LEE GRIFFI PHOTO)

are working to ensure that such activities are coordinated with partner agencies and are conducted cost-effectively while meeting all regulatory and safety requirements."

One question consistently posed to stewards of land, such as municipalities and conservation authorities, is why these encampments are permitted to be set up in the first place. Verscheure said they present complex challenges.

"The UTRCA does not permit unauthorized occupation of its properties. However, like many public land managers across Ontario, enforcement must be balanced with coordination among municipal partners, social service agencies and, where necessary, law enforcement. The presence and duration of encampments can be influenced by broader social issues, including housing availability and support services."

Despite the risks encampments pose to the environ-

ment, particularly being so close to the Thames River in this case, Verscheure assured the public the UTRCA keeps a close eye on the dangers involved.

"This process includes ongoing monitoring and assessment of site conditions, engagement with appropriate agencies and municipal partners, the provision of notice where required, and the implementation of safe and compliant site remediation measures. UTRCA staff will continue to respond to any future encampments in accordance with our policies, applicable legislation, and in coordination with our community partners. The UTRCA remains committed to protecting public lands, ensuring environmental stewardship, and prioritizing public safety."

The conservation authority did receive several complaints from the public about the encampment, but Verscheure said they have no choice but to follow the process.

"This encampment has been present for an extended period of time, during which staff worked with partner agencies to determine an appropriate course of action, with a focus on a humanitarian-first approach. Again, as mentioned above, the presence and duration of encampments are largely influenced by broader social issues, including local transitional housing availability and support services."

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority oversees watershed health across parts of southwestern Ontario, including rivers, flood control, and environmental protection.

Cleaning up illegal dumping or degraded sites fits directly into that mandate, especially when they affect water quality, wildlife habitat and flood-prone or sensitive land.

With notes from Kyrah Smith

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# Construction update

Oxford County undertakes projects year-round to improve roads, properties and infrastructure. For construction information, updates and detour maps, follow us on social media or visit us online at [www.oxfordcounty.ca/construction](http://www.oxfordcounty.ca/construction)

## Starting this spring

### Woodstock — Oxford Road 35 (Devonshire Avenue)

April - November 2026

Oxford Road 35 (Devonshire Avenue) will close from just east of Wellington Street to just east of Knightsbridge Road this year as part of a multi-year reconstruction project. Work takes place from April to November 2026. The detour route includes Vansittart Avenue, Dundas Street and Springbank Avenue.

### Woodstock — Oxford Road 2 (Dundas Street)

April - November 2026

Road reconstruction on Oxford Road 2 (Dundas Street) between Oxford Road 30 (11th Line) and Oxford Road 12 (Mill Street) takes place April to November 2026. The main detour route will guide traffic along Oxford Road 30, Oxford Road 17 and Oxford Road 59 (Vansittart Avenue). Additional detours will be in place at different stages.

### Ingersoll — Oxford Road 9 (King Street)

April - December 2026

Oxford Road 9 (Hamilton Road/King Street West), from the intersection of Oxford Road 9/10 west to the town boundary, will close to through traffic from April to December 2026. A detour is in place along Oxford Road 10, Oxford Road 60, Elgin Road and Hamilton Road.

### Norwich Township — Oxford Road 19 (Otterville Road) bridge, Otterville

April - December 2026

Oxford Road 19 between Church Street and Bullock Street in Otterville will be reduced to a single lane with alternating traffic for bridge rehabilitation work from April to December 2026. A detour route will be in place for Church Street along Maple Street and North Street West.

### Zorra Township — Oxford Road 2 culvert replacements, Thamesford

April - May 2026

Oxford Road 2 between Oxford Road 119 (19th Line) and Oxford Road 6 will close to through traffic for culvert replacements from April to May 2026. Construction will be completed through a combination of lane restrictions and road closures. Detour routes will be in place with applicable signage.

## Upcoming public information meetings

APR

16

### Norwich Township — Oxford Road 59 (Stover Street S) bridge, Norwich

Oxford County will start bridge rehabilitation work on Oxford Road 59 (Stover Street South) bridge, located just south of Tidey Street, beginning spring 2026 to October 2026. This work will close Oxford Road 59 from Front Street to Carman Street to all vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Two detour routes will be in place during construction, including a detour for pedestrians and cyclists. Businesses will remain open during construction. Learn more at the drop-in Public Information Centre on April 16 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., Norwich Community Centre, 2nd Floor (Optimist Hall).

APR

30

### Norwich Township — Oxford Road 59 (Church Street) urbanization, Burgessville

Road reconstruction work on Oxford Road 59 (Church Street) from 150 metres west of Deer Crescent to 150 metres east of Smiths Lane in the Village of Burgessville takes place from May to December 2026. Learn more at the drop-in Public Information Centre on April 30 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Norwich Township municipal building.



Construction schedules may change due to weather, site conditions, contractor availability and other factors.



Help keep our community and workers safe: respect work zones, obey traffic signs, and maintain a safe distance.



Businesses remain open during construction – please show your support!

# How to find time to be more physically active each day

Physical fitness is one of the keys to a long and healthy life. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention note that routine physical activity helps people maintain a healthy weight, reduces a person's risk for chronic health problems like cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes, and strengthens bones and muscles, which can help aging adults overcome age-related reductions in muscle mass and strength and reduce their risk for falls.

People have much to gain from incorporating exercise into their daily routines. But many adults are not reaping those rewards, and studies indicate sedentary lifestyles are on the rise. A 2024 study published in the journal *The Lancet Global Health* noted that 31 percent of the world's adult population was physically inactive in 2022, which marked a 5 percent increase since 2010. And a recent report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the United Health Foundation found that roughly one in five adults get no physical activity beyond their regular job.

The Heart Foundation notes lack of time is often cited as an excuse for not exercising, and that's a legitimate hurdle for many professionals. Indeed, a 2026 report from



Monster indicated that 73 percent of workers report regularly working more than 40 hours per week and 47 percent cite employer expectations or company culture as their top reasons for overworking. While professionals in such situations may find it challenging to overcome a lack of time to exercise, the following strategies may be just what people need to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines.

- Drive less. Driving is undoubtedly convenient, particularly for people who feel they're continuously pressed for

time. But leaving the car behind and walking or cycling to run local errands is a simple and enjoyable way to incorporate physical activity into your daily routine. Parents can walk children to the bus stop or their school in lieu of driving. Adults also can try walking to a local coffee shop near their home or office in lieu of driving to get their morning cup of Joe.

- Break up workouts. WHO guidelines recommend adults between the ages of 18 and 64 get at least 150 minutes of

moderate-intensity physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity each week. The WHO also recommends muscle-strengthening activities two or more days per week. That can seem daunting to adults pressed for time, but workouts can be broken up throughout the day. A pre-breakfast strength training session at home may only require 20 minutes, and that night adults can go for a jog or a brisk walk around their neighborhood.

- Workout while watching television. Adults who like to unwind at the end of the day by watching their favorite television shows can use that time to exercise without giving up their entertainment. Invest in a treadmill or elliptical and turn television time into a time to break a sweat as well. Watching a 30-minute episode of a favorite TV show while on a treadmill or elliptical can help adults meet WHO physical activity guidelines without requiring them to sacrifice their preferred way to unwind.

These strategies can help time-pressed adults incorporate more physical activity into their daily routines and lay a foundation for a long and healthy life.

# Answer the call.

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# Avoid exercise-related injuries

Exercise promotes mental and physical well-being in myriad ways. However, injuries remain a cause for concern for both seasoned and novice exercise enthusiasts.

According to WifiTalents, which provides comprehensive market data and statistics, more than 3.4 million emergency department visits occur for sports and recreation injuries annually in the United States. Roughly 2.5 million injuries occur in gym and workout environments, highlighting the importance of an approach to exercise rooted in injury prevention. Understanding the risk factors and how to manage them can help individuals stay active and safe.

## Types of injuries

Exercise injuries tend to be acute injuries or overuse injuries. Acute injuries are sprains or fractures, while overuse injuries include tendinitis or stress fractures. Overuse injuries develop gradually when tissues are repeatedly stressed without affording time for adequate recovery, says Boston Children's Hospital.

## Injury prevention

A proper warm-up gradually increases heart rate and improves blood flow to muscles. Experts recommend five to 10 minutes of light aerobic activity before engaging in a more lengthy workout. A

similar cool-down period afterwards returns the body to resting levels, says WebMD.

Beginners often do too much too soon. Orthopedic specialists recommend beginning with moderate exercise and gradually building up intensity and duration to allow tissues to adapt. Sudden spikes in training tend to lead to overuse injuries.

It's also important to follow proper form while exercising. WebMD says working with a qualified trainer or coach, even if it's just in the beginning to learn techniques, can help establish safe movement to avoid injury.

Repeating activities day in and day out will stress the same tissues. That is why the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons suggests cross-training. Cross-training alternates between cardio, strength and flexibility workouts to help distribute exercise load in an effort to reduce injuries.

## Afford yourself time for recovery

Recovery is when the body repairs and strengthens tissues. Overtraining without proper rest of at least one to two days per week can lead to fatigue and higher injury risk.

## If injury occurs

Should an injury occur, it is essential



to follow a doctor's orders for rest without returning to activity too soon. Early management follows the RICE protocol: Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation. Exercising through sharp or persistent pain can worsen minor injuries, so it pays to be mindful of what the body is saying, says Just Move Athletic Clubs. Most mi-

nor injuries improve within a few weeks, but persistent symptoms should be addressed with a medical professional.

Exercise is highly beneficial, and the risk of injury should not deter people from physical activity. Instead, following key prevention strategies can dramatically reduce injury risk, even for beginners.

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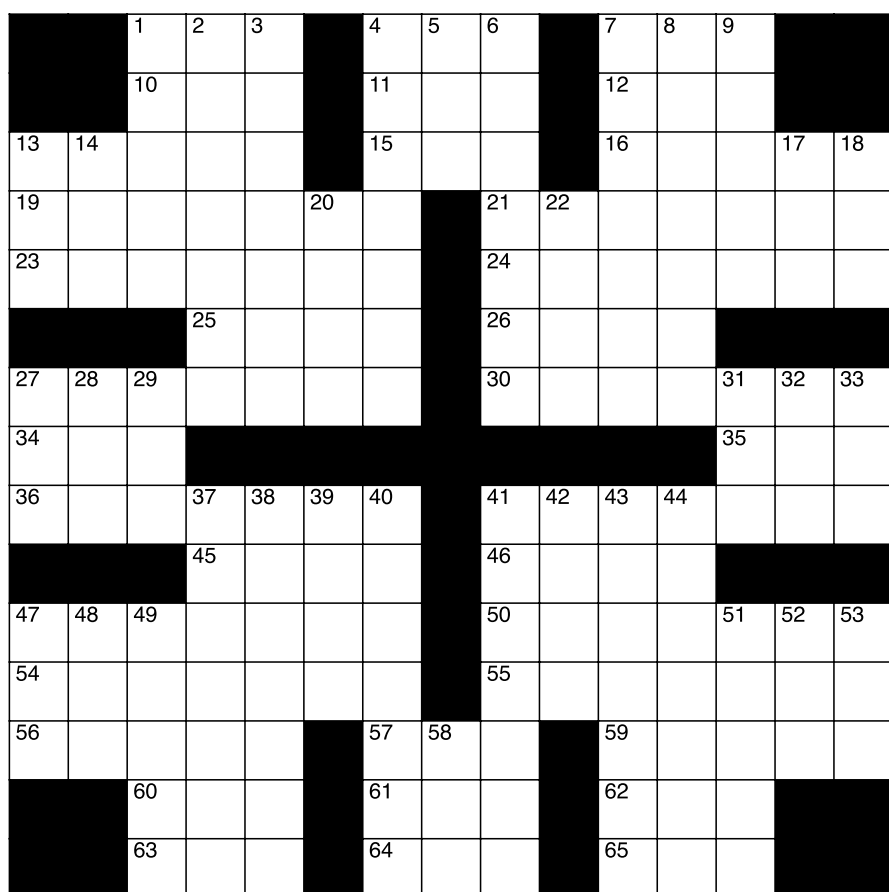
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GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

# CROSSWORD



## CLUES ACROSS

1. Health care pros
4. A person inhabiting Benin
7. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
10. Split pulses
11. Frozen water
12. Small constellation
13. Perennial mountain rice
15. Pick up
16. Japanese historical period
19. Suggesting the horror of death and decay
21. Unattached
23. Fishing port in SE France
24. Products for dogs
25. One point south of southeast
26. Having the skill or resources to do something
27. Involve oneself deeply
30. Immobile

## CLUES DOWN

1. A legally binding command
2. General feeling of discomfort
3. Dribble
4. Soft touch
5. South American plant
6. Clouds of gas and dust in space
7. Warm-blooded vertebrates
8. Lines created by folding
9. Strong belief
13. Senior officer
14. Adult
17. Joint entrance examination in India
18. Passports and drivers' licenses are two
20. Those who go against an accepted authority
22. One point east of northeast
27. Journalist Tarbell
28. One's mother (British)
29. Nowhere to be found

34. \_\_\_ pai dong: Hong Kong food stall
35. Move quickly on foot
36. Gathered
41. A way through
45. Another name for Thor
46. Sharp dueling sword
47. The supreme commander of a fleet
50. Seasoned sausages
54. Path
55. Christian hermit
56. Ancient region of Asia Minor
57. Where wrestlers go to work
59. Roman statesman
60. Explosive
61. Licensed for Wall Street
62. Where golfers start
63. Grow old
64. Autonomic nervous system
65. No seats available

31. A way to save for old age
32. Fall behind
33. Midway between northeast and east
37. The work of a sailor
38. Mark with striae
39. Energy, style and enthusiasm
40. Sticky situation
41. Monetary units of Spain
42. Three-banded armadillo
43. Chooses
44. More disreputable
47. Defensive nuclear weapon
48. "The Partridge Family" actress Susan
49. Livestock owners assn. in Spain
51. Duplicating machine (abbr.)
52. OJ trial judge
53. Politician
58. Airborne (abbr.)

Solution found on page 31

## OFA VIEWPOINT

## AGRICULTURE

# Rising costs and uncertainty weigh on Ontario farmers heading into spring

**BILL GROENHEIDE**

*Director, Ontario Federation of Agriculture*

I'm a director with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and we're the largest advocacy organization for farmers and rural issues in the province.

Throughout the winter, we travel across Ontario attending farm shows, conferences and meetings — including OFA's Policy Advisory Council and Northern Caucus — to hear directly from our members and bring their concerns forward to decision-makers.

As winter meeting season wraps up, a few clear themes have emerged.

The volatility in both the cost and availability of key inputs like seed, crop protection, fertilizer and fuel is an ongoing challenge. Rapidly rising fuel prices linked to global instability, alongside a spike in fertilizer costs just as planting season approaches, are weighing heavily on farmers. At the same time, ongoing trade uncertainty, particularly with the upcoming review of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), continues to create concern across the sector.

Together, these two issues reinforce why strong government Business Risk Management programs are so important for farm businesses. The federal government's recent decision to set the interest-free portion of the Advanced Payments Program at \$250,000 for 2026 is welcome, and a permanent increase to \$350,000 would even better reflect the realities of modern farm businesses.

Protecting our productive farmland also continues to be top-of-mind. In Eastern Ontario in particular, ongoing planning for Alto, the proposed high-speed rail corridor linking Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec City is on the radar of farmers and rural communities alike.

The proposed rail alignment is currently planned to be built through areas that include some of the most productive farmland in Ontario and Quebec, and OFA has been actively meeting with Alto and bringing the urgent need for an agriculture-first approach that avoids prime agricultural areas into the public eye.

We're also hearing concerns about the amalgamation of conservation authorities and the potential loss of strong agricultural representation in decision-making related to land use, water

management and conservation. At the same time, federal cutbacks to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada research stations and programs are raising questions

about our ability to respond to climate change, emerging pests and diseases, and to remain competitive globally.

I farm near Thunder Bay, and I represent farmers across northern Ontario on the OFA board. We just recently held our Northern Caucus, where local OFA federation members come together for two days of updates and policy discussions around issues affecting northern Ontario farm businesses.

Many concerns are similar to what we heard from farmers in other parts of Ontario, but the geography and distances in the north do bring some unique challenges to agriculture in our region.

There's no doubt that the north is growing, but that means infrastructure, from roads and bridges to communications and more must keep up with that expansion. It was a tough winter for road closures in the north, for example, due to weather and major accidents, and unlike in southern Ontario, there are often no alternate routes available.

Access to veterinary care is an ongoing challenge in our region, and we're pleased to see various provincial government initiatives underway to ease the strain. We'd like to see continued roles for the Northern Producer Animal Health Network and Veterinary Service Committees to help local vets and clinics access available programs and supports.

And more than in any other region in the province, farmers in northern Ontario continually struggle with crop damage caused by wildlife, such as Sandhill Cranes and black bears, for example. The damage to corn, grain, forage and hay crops is significant and current management tools and insurance programs don't adequately address these losses for farmers.

OFA has been pushing for government action on this issue, including giving farmers more tools to protect their crops, expanding compensation, and supporting the Canadian Wildlife Service proposal for a limited Sandhill Crane hunting season to balance conservation objectives with farmers' need to protect their crops.

From strengthening risk management programs and protecting farmland, to investing in research, infrastructure and region-specific solutions, the decisions made today will shape the future of farming in Ontario. Farmers are ready to do their part, but we need policies that

recognize these pressures and support our ability to continue producing safe, reliable, homegrown food for Ontarians.

**Visit us online at [theecho.ca](http://theecho.ca)**

## ROUTE TO THE PAST

## HISTORY

# Furs Feature in Fiery Fury

SCOTT GILLIES

*Echo Contributor*

In the early hours of November 9, 1917, Ingersoll residents noted the sound of an explosion before they heard the fire bell tolling from the tower of Town Hall. What was the cause?

Over the next few hours, witnesses were able to report they had heard a large automobile travelling slowing down Market Lane, immediately behind the Thames Street businesses. Delbert Bonesteel, local veterinarian, reported that he had been returning home from a late-night call when he noticed flames in the windows of the Northway dry goods store. He had called in the alarm.

Before daylight, that building and the Bowman store on the north side were in ruins and several other stores suffered smoke damage. Had it not been for the diligent efforts of the Ingersoll and London Fire Departments, the devastation could have been much worse. No doubt visions of the last major fire in Ingersoll raged through their heads. Memories of the 1872 conflagration which had destroyed the entire downtown core must have caused much heartache and panic. But this time they had help.

Yes, the London Fire Department was contacted and they were able to be on site within minutes. Newspapers reported that twelve men with pumper and hose wagon had travelled the 13 miles from the city on a special express train of the Grand Trunk Railway in 13 minutes – a mile a minute!

When the flames were extinguished, the ashes cooled and the smoke had finally drifted away it was determined that \$100,000.00 in losses had been suffered by the Northway store, Fred Bowman's sporting goods and music shop, James Murray's bookstore, and D.N. Flanders heating and plumbing store. Northway's loss was pegged at \$30,500 and Bowman's at \$23,266.00 by The Monetary Times insurance industry trade magazine.

Two weeks later, Toronto Police were in touch with the folks in Ingersoll. They had been investigating a couple of suspicious characters who were selling fur coats, mink stoles and mantles out of the back of their car.

On further investigation they found the manufacturer of the fur garments in Hamilton who was able to advise the police that those items had been sold to the Northway store in Ingersoll. Store manager H.W. Clarke was on the next train to Toronto and he was able to confirm his marks on the clothing tags.

The fiery fury in Ingersoll had been deliberately set by thieves to hide the robbery of these furs.

As the two would-be thieves were being transported to Toronto police headquarters near the old Toronto City Hall, one of them known only as Morrison made a daring get-away.

As they were about to enter the building, he feigned the need to stop and tie his shoelaces but took the opportunity to pull out a concealed revolver which he used to wallop Detective Stewart in the head. He then dashed down the street and commandeered a passing vehicle by jumping onto the running board of the car with his gun pointed at the head of the startled driver. To add to the excitement and danger of his get-away, he fired several shots at a passing trolley and in the direction of the detective.

An all-points bulletin was issued for the apprehension of the escaped criminal, presumed to be armed and dangerous, but to no avail. It would be months before he was finally apprehended.

In the meantime, the other suspect named Burrige was charged with robbery and arson.

The missing Morrison was later identified as the notorious robber John aka "Jack" Roberts who was a wanted escapee from the Middlesex County gaol, the Burwash prison farm, and from a Michigan prison where he was known as "Young Jesse James"!



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Northway store robber Jack Roberts headshot.

Fleeing from Toronto, Roberts had wound his way to Port Burwell where he impersonated a returned injured Cana-

dian soldier named Lieutenant Wallace. With his particular skillsets and guile, he had won the admiration of the village folk as well as the heart of a young woman. The two had become man and wife.

One day, while the couple were in London, Roberts was recognized and led the local lawmen on a merry chase through back allies and yards, leaping fences and eluding the cops. Once again, he was armed with a revolver and in the course of the chase, his gun misfired and he was finally apprehended.

Citizens living in the area who had witnessed the pursuit thought that it was a movie scene being filmed in their neighbourhood!

All this while Burrige was awaiting trial for robbery. He had been transported from Toronto to Oxford County by Ingersoll Police Chief Walter Holmes. In March of 1918 he was in the County Courthouse in front of judge Sir Glenholme Falconbridge where he was found guilty of robbery, arson and disposing of stolen goods. He was sentenced to five years the Kingston Penitentiary. Roberts would later face the more serious charge of attempted murder.

The site of the Northway store robbery and arson is the new home of St. James Anglican Church in Ingersoll.

[route2thepast@gmail.com](mailto:route2thepast@gmail.com)



## TROPICAL COSTA RICA

JANUARY 25 – FEBRUARY 2, 2027

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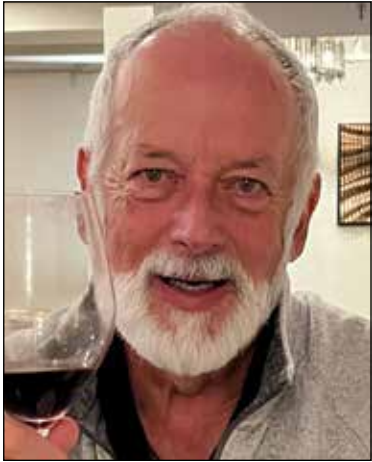


[heather@granthaven.com](mailto:heather@granthaven.com)

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Tillsonburg NEWS SIMCOE/ADVOCATE NORFOLK FARMS BRANT FARMS NIAGARA FARMS INDY

# The silly side of travel writing



PAUL KNOWLES

*Echo Contributor*

I get a lot of comments from people who are a bit jealous of my gig as a travel writer. They're right – it's a great job. I will insist that it does involve work – being on a busy, dusk to dawn travel “familiarization tour” can be exhausting. But still fun.

And sometimes, unexpectedly hilarious.

Often, these silly moments involve food. Like in Hong Kong, where I was taken out to breakfast at a congee restaurant. Congee is rice porridge, usually served with tea, and you add meat to the congee. My host recommended that I add... wait for it... bull's penis. I did not, and opted for chicken. At least, I hope it was chicken.

In Locarno, Switzerland, in the Italian canton of this multi-lingual country, I asked my waiter if he spoke English. “Yes,” he said, with a vigorous nod of the head. So, I ordered.

My meal, when delivered, bore no resemblance to what I had asked for. I explained. He nodded, hopefully, but clearly without comprehending my comment. I asked again: “Do you speak English?” “Yes!”

I pondered. And then, knowing that French is one of the four official languages of Switzerland, I asked, “Parlez-vous anglais?” He laughed and shook his head. “Non!” Well, that at least explained that.

And speaking of food, there was the time I punched a pigeon. I was in Ottawa, exploring the Byward Market, and decided to have a beaver tail. Yum. I sat down, and was immediately approached by a herd of rather aggressive pigeons. Foolishly, I thought that if I threw a couple of bits of beaver tail well distant from me, they would leave me alone. Wrong. They got more aggressive, and one flew straight at my face. I reached out to defend myself and... yep, I accidentally punched a pigeon.

In Ponce Inlet, Florida, at a diner, I ordered a salad. “We're all out of salads,” said the waitperson. “Really?” “Yes.” “Okay, I have a question,” I said. “If I order a hamburger, can I get it with lettuce, tomato and onion?” “Sure.”

“That's a salad!” I pointed out with some emphasis. Made no difference, of course. Salads were off.

Occasionally the unreal reality of being a travel writer does lead to amazing things – circumstances you still have to

laugh about, because they really are so genuinely unreal.

Like, the time in San Diego when I was supposed to go tandem hang-gliding off the cliffs. This seemed an ill-conceived idea, so I asked if there might be an alternative activity. “Do you want to play golf?” asked my host, “at Torrey Pines?” Did I want to play golf at one of the most famous golf courses in the world? We arrived. I was escorted to my golf cart, complete with a beautiful set of loner clubs, balls, tees, water, the works. I asked “Am I playing with anyone?”

“No sir,” came the answer, “We closed the course for you.”

I looked at my host. He quietly said, “I don't know who they think you are, but go with it.” So, I did. I played well – about which, I have no proof, and no one believes me.

I have been bit on the lip by a sea turtle in the waters off Barbados; I have kissed a stuffed beaver in New Brunswick; I have marched in two parades in Québec City, once in full, brilliant blue costume as a 16th century seigneur; I have felt my underwear fall off during a walking tour of Lugano; and I have been trussed up like a hippopotamus in bondage gear to go ziplining in the Jamaican rainforest.

But it was in Mexico that two incidents left me laughing and feeling rather humiliated, at the same time.

We went snorkelling; the transportation to the coral reef involved two-person speed-



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The Beaver Tail kiosk in Ottawa, where our hero punched a pigeon.

boats. Upon arrival at the reefs, they tethered the boats together, and said “Jump in.” Jumping in, I could do, but there was no way I was going to be able to haul myself back up and into the boat. I tried to ask, but our guide spoke as much English as my Locarno waiter. What the heck – I jumped in. The snorkelling was great; eventually, we were called back to the boats, and I was first to return. I went to the back, and started to try to board the beast. No luck, of course.

The guide motioned that I should come to the front, which was even farther out of the water. I obeyed. Whereupon he grabbed me by the life jacket, and landed me unceremoniously on the prow. It's hard to laugh hysterically with the breath knocked out of you,

but I managed it.

And also, during that visit to Mexico, I was offered a moment of self-awareness. A small group of media folk went to the amazing attraction called Xcaret, where you can swim in an underground river. You don a life jacket, but it takes some effort to complete the course. When we finished, a much younger member of the group told me, “If I ever live to be as old as you, I hope I am able to do as well as you just did.”

Sigh.

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).



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

Kissing a stuffed beaver at the Big Fiddle Still in Harvey, New Brunswick.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

A sea turtle, perhaps a relative of the beast that nipped the author on the lip.



# *Spring into a New You!*

## **Health & Wellness Fair**

One Day Only—Don't Miss This Special Wellness Event.

**APRIL**  
**25th**  
1 - 4 PM

Join us for a dynamic day of health, wellness, and community at our Health & Wellness Fair! Enjoy an engaging experience filled with:

- Informative presentations from expert speakers
- Interactive exhibits and wellness demonstrations
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We're happily accepting cash donations for Big Brothers Big Sisters.



# COMING EVENTS

## APRIL

**APRIL 11 | 10 AM - 12 PM**

### DEATH AND DONUTS

55 Ingersoll Road, Lower Level, Woodstock, ON

Join the Caring Hearts Support Network for a morning guaranteed to spark curiosity and connection around death and dying. Our host "Do Good" is located at 55 Ingersoll Road, Lower Level, Woodstock, ON. To register please email or call [info@caringheartssupportnetwork.com](mailto:info@caringheartssupportnetwork.com) or 519-536-3370.

**APRIL 11 | WORKSHOP 1 - 4:30 PM,  
PERFORMANCE 7 PM**

### CELEBRATE 65 YEARS WITH THE BRANT MEN OF SONG: A DAY OF CHORAL SINGING

Hope Christian Reformed Church, 64 Buchanan Crescent, Brantford

The Brant Men of Song are inviting all individuals and groups interested in singing to an afternoon workshop. There is no charge for this workshop. Participants may also sing with the Brant Men of Song in an evening performance starting at 7 pm. Financial contributions will be collected for the Brantford Food Bank. Come sing with us and enjoy the sound of many voices.

**APRIL 13 | 7 PM**

### OXFORD COUNTY BRANCH – ONTARIO ANCESTORS APRIL MEETING: OWN THE ROOM – WRITING YOUR FAMILY STORIES AND MEMOIRS

Online zoom meeting

Please come join us for a presentation by Elaine Cougler, a former high school English teacher, a lifelong performer, singer and speaker who survived all of that to take up writing in a serious way. Descended from Loyalist and Pennsylvania Dutch ancestors, Elaine is one of thirteen children and was raised in a post-war Ontario farming community by parents who expected the best from their children and consistently helped them to achieve it. Her historical fiction and her biographical books praise the indomitable spirit of amazing human beings both in our time and through the annals of history. Join Elaine to hear about her journey of writing, publishing, marketing and selling books. Visit our website at <https://oxford.org.on.ca> to register for this free zoom meeting. Everyone is welcome."

**APRIL 18 | 9 AM**

### INGERSOLL DISTRICT NATURE CLUB CARPOOL TO FINGAL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Ingersoll Municipal Parking lot behind the Arena  
Fingal Wildlife Management Area has hiking trails for all abilities, waterfowl viewing area and prairie grassland, creating a haven for nature enthusiasts. Call Ken for more information at 519 539 5234 or [www.ingersollnatureclub.com](http://www.ingersollnatureclub.com)

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

### HEARTS FOR ETHIOPIA IS HOSTING GEMS & JAVA - FUNDRAISER FOR ETHIOPIA

Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, 735 Frontenac Cres., Woodstock

A fundraiser that changes lives in Ethiopia. Tickets available at [www.heartsforethiopia.com](http://www.heartsforethiopia.com). 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.

**APRIL 25 | 3 PM**

### THE WOODSTOCK CHORALAIRES THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC, CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF SINGING

Knox Presbyterian Church, Woodstock

Tickets \$30, children free, available at Wildon & Markle Jewellers, online at [ticketscene.ca](http://ticketscene.ca). Guest artist, Luciano de Cicco (anthem singer at Blue Jays home games). [Woodstockchoralaires.com](http://Woodstockchoralaires.com)

**APRIL 29 | 6:30 PM**

### OXFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY MIGHTY MEN OF ZORRA

Chartwell Oxford Gardens, 423 Devonshire Ave. Woodstock

"History and land helped them rise to the 1893 World Champions". Special presentation by William (Bill) Butt, Playwright. Free Admission, Donations Welcome! For more information, please email us at [info@oxhs.ca](mailto:info@oxhs.ca)

## MAY

**MAY 3**

### 160TH ANNIVERSARY VILLAGE BAPTIST CHAPEL

8 King Street, Beachville, Ontario

Rev. Dr. Glenn Malcolm, speaking and musical guest, Brian Mallot. We welcome former members and friends to celebrate our anniversary with us. For information Eleanor Reeves at 519-423-6776 or Sheila Graham at 519-421-5460

**MAY 3 | 2 - 4 PM**

### KC AND THE SUNSHINE GIRLS

Mt Elgin Community Centre, 333204 Plank Line, Mount Elgin, ON

Put on your Boogie Shoes for an afternoon of dance hits of the 70's & 80's. This Tribute Show is being hosted by Mt Elgin United Church. Tickets are available by calling Joanne 519-485-1988 or Dawne 519-421-6836.

**MAY 8 | 7 PM**

### HOPE BLOOMS

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 56 Thames St. S., Ingersoll

Join the Ingersoll Choral Society as they present "Hope Blooms", a spring benefit concert in support of the Ingersoll & District Interchurch. Uplifting choral selections to brighten your spring day! A free will offering will be received for Ingersoll & District Inter-Church.

**MAY 27 | 6:30 PM**

### OXFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER

Chartwell Oxford Gardens, 423 Devonshire Ave. Woodstock

"A Celebration of Oxford County's Past". Guest speaker Liz Dommasch, Oxford County Archivist. Free Admission, Donations Welcome! For more information, please email us at [info@oxhs.ca](mailto:info@oxhs.ca)

**MAY 30 | 10 AM - 2 PM**

### FRIENDS OF THE WOODSTOCK PUBLIC LIBRARY BOOK SALE

Woodstock Public Library

Email: [fotwpl@gmail.com](mailto:fotwpl@gmail.com). Website: <https://www.instagram.com/friendswoodstocklibrary/?hl=en>

## JUNE

**JUNE 7 | 8 AM - 1 PM**

### KIDS DU

Southside Park, Woodstock

KidS Du is back for its 9th season. This event is a non-competitive run-bike-run for kids aged 3 to 13 with a focus on participation and having FUN! All courses are geared to the various age groups as set by Triathlon Ontario. KidS Du is held in Southside Park, Woodstock. Register before May 19 to guarantee a tshirt. For information and online registration visit [woodstocktriathlonclub.ca](http://woodstocktriathlonclub.ca)

## JULY

**JULY 6-10 | 9 AM - 12:30 PM**

### BASKETBALL POWER CAMP

Huron Park Baptist Church, 199 Berwick St, Woodstock, ON N4S 7L6

Ages 5 to 14. Please call 519-421-4722 for more information.

### ONGOING CLASSES, CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

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

### SPRING INTO THE 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! April 10 & 17, May 1, 15 & 29, June 5 & 19.

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

### CAREGIVER CONNECTION

Revel Realty Woodstock, 111 Huron Street (Virtual/ hybrid options available)

Are you worried about your child or youth? Parents and Caregivers for Mental Health (PCMH) is here to listen, support, and walk alongside you on this journey. Our free Caregiver Connection peer support groups offer parents and caregivers a community of support. Can't make it in person? Join one of our virtual or hybrid groups! Visit [family.cmho.org](http://family.cmho.org) or email [oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca](mailto:oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca) for more information.

**EVERY FRIDAY | 1 PM**

### TILLSONBURG DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB

Tillsonbur 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>

**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

# COMING EVENTS

## 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 will meet the **4th Wednesday of the month from 1 – 2:30 p.m.** at the Thamesford Library, 165 Dundas St., Thamesford. The group is free of charge and pre-registration is requested. The next meeting is **Wednesday, April 22nd**. To register or inquire about an evening group, contact Deb McKay at 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

**WEDNESDAYS | 7-8 PM GENTLE CHAIR YOGA**

**THURSDAYS | 7 PM EUCHRE**

**FRIDAYS | 8 PM DARTS**

**APRIL 17 | DOORS OPEN 6 PM, PLAY BEGINS 7 PM OXFORD COUNTY FELINE WELLNESS AND OUTREACH BINGO**

**APRIL 12, 19, 26 | 1 - 4 PM THAMES VALLEY BLUEGRASS AND OLD TIME COUNTRY PICKERS**

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

**APRIL 15 & 29 | 4:30 - 6 PM OX ON THE RUN LIBRARY BOOK MOBILE**

**APRIL 11 | REG. 9 - 9:45 AM, PLAY**

## BEGINS 10 AM OXFORD COUNTY DART TOURNAMENT

Doubles followed by singles \$10 per person, per event. All monies returned in prize money.

## APRIL 24 | 5:30 PM PULLED PORK AND BAKED BEAN DINNER

Call 519-423-6363 to order and avoid disappointment.

## APRIL 25 | 7 - 11 PM KARAOKE

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

**THURSDAYS | 1:30 PM SHUFFLEBOARD**

**TUESDAYS - THURSDAYS | ENDING IN THE EVENING DART LEAGUE**

**APRIL 11 | 3 PM MEAT DRAW**

## APRIL 12 | 5 - 6 PM SMOTHERED CHICKEN

Dessert is extra, Pre-order & pay no later April 7th. Please contact the Legion 519-537-3112 or email [rclbranch55@rogers.com](mailto:rclbranch55@rogers.com)

## APRIL 14 | 7:30 PM BRANCH GENERAL MEETING & ELECTION NIGHT

## APRIL 19 | 5 - 6 PM FISH N CHIPS

Dessert is extra, Pre-order & pay no later April 14th. Please contact the Legion 519-537-3112 or email [rclbranch55@rogers.com](mailto:rclbranch55@rogers.com)

## APRIL 14-21 RUMMAGE SALE

Come in, it's like a yard sale. You like it you buy it.

## SATURDAY EVENING ENTERTAINMENT:

**APRIL 11 | 7 PM - 11 PM BLUE SKY**

**APRIL 18 | 7 PM - 11 PM MIKE THORPE**

**APRIL 25 | 7 PM - 11 PM 2 FOR THE ROAD**

## MAY 2 | 4:30 - 6 PM WING NIGHT

Wings are 1 price and w/fries are a separate price. Please contact the Legion 519-537-3112 or email [rclbranch55@rogers.com](mailto:rclbranch55@rogers.com)

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Exeter Examiner

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

NORFOLK FARMS

BRANT FARMS

NIAGARA FARMS

# Riddles

What do you call a wizard from outer space that can fly?

*A flying sorcerer!*

How does the moon cut his hair?

*E-clipse it!*

Why is the moon like a dollar?

*Because it has four quarters.*

What kind of music do aliens like?

*Nep-tunes.*

Why did the moon skip diner?

*Because it was full.*

Large as a mountain, small as a pea, Endlessly swimming in a waterless sea. What am I?

*Asteroids.*

Why did all the pecans go to space?

*They were Astro-nuts!*

What sea is in space?

*The galax-sea.*

Riddle: Where do astronauts leave their spaceships?

*At parking meteors.*

Why didn't the Dog Star laugh at the joke?

*It was too Sirius!*

What is money called in space?

*Star bucks!*

What should you do if you see a green alien?

*Wait until it's ripe!*

Why haven't aliens come to our solar system yet?

*They read the reviews: one star.*

# Sudoku

by PeterS 2026

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

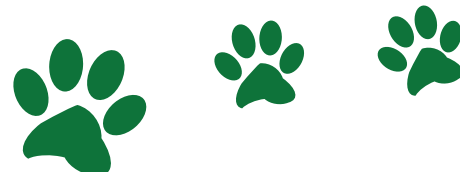
Solution found on page 31

## Featured Pet



### BABU

Babu is a 4 yr old Persian chinchilla male. He loves playing in the backyard watching the birds and hunting bugs in the grass.



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

# Word Search

## ARTEMIS II

M	Z	U	N	S	P	A	C	E	L	U	N	A	R	Y	A	E	S	Y	C
N	M	O	D	U	L	E	B	X	W	K	Q	Y	P	O	X	E	Y	A	R
M	I	S	S	I	O	N	G	N	M	L	Y	A	Z	S	N	B	V	D	V
C	H	Z	I	S	Y	A	K	J	D	B	E	R	B	D	L	Z	P	S	C
E	X	Y	F	E	A	S	N	N	I	S	B	Z	L	R	Z	E	D	K	R
O	N	I	U	C	T	A	N	A	S	T	R	O	N	A	U	T	R	V	E
H	X	I	N	R	N	T	J	W	G	S	E	D	X	K	S	C	W	R	W
V	W	S	X	A	T	H	P	R	E	C	L	I	P	S	E	L	U	K	V
S	T	Z	K	T	I	E	P	F	C	I	D	M	S	G	G	C	C	I	N
K	N	I	J	E	Y	L	T	X	E	A	R	T	H	L	L	T	Z	E	H
L	Z	A	G	R	O	L	I	K	F	R	M	Z	H	D	O	X	P	C	N
C	F	K	J	P	E	C	X	A	D	E	V	J	J	K	B	V	W	O	M
G	D	A	R	P	G	S	D	Z	X	T	P	A	R	T	E	M	I	S	Y
I	P	N	W	T	N	A	Q	W	J	R	L	A	M	O	O	N	X	V	H
P	P	A	R	B	I	G	H	Y	T	P	A	B	Q	Z	H	K	M	A	P
C	M	S	O	R	O	U	H	V	I	L	U	S	L	J	X	E	U	S	Z
G	Q	A	R	C	C	S	S	F	R	A	N	R	W	O	B	B	W	T	T
S	X	H	B	O	M	E	P	P	S	O	C	D	O	M	F	P	R	C	J
G	K	U	I	W	Y	Q	Q	Z	F	Q	H	L	V	X	D	K	H	X	V
D	D	F	T	G	U	R	O	C	K	E	T	J	L	N	C	Y	Z	K	O

- MOON
- ARTEMIS
- ORBIT
- NASA
- ASTRONAUT
- LUNAR
- ROCKET
- SPACE
- MISSION
- CREW
- EARTH
- ECLIPSE
- CRATER
- MODULE
- LAUNCH

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8. Seven
9. Lactic acid
10. Kuwaiti Dinar

### SUDOKU SOLUTION

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

### CROSSWORD SOLUTION

		E	M	S		F	O	N		M	C	F			
		D	A	L		I	C	E		A	R	A			
S	M	I	L	O		N	A	B		M	E	I	J	I	
M	A	C	A	B	R	E		U	N	M	A	T	E	D	
A	N	T	I	B	E	S		L	E	A	S	H	E	S	
				S	E	B	S		A	B	L	E			
I	M	M	E	R	S	E		S	E	S	S	I	L	E	
D	A	I										R	A	N	
A	M	A	S	S	E	D		P	A	S	S	A	G	E	
			A	T	L	I		E	P	E	E				
A	D	M	I	R	A	L		S	A	L	A	M	I	S	
B	E	E	L	I	N	E		E	R	E	M	I	T	E	
M	Y	S	I	A			M	A	T		C	I	M	O	N
		T	N	T		M	B	A		T	E	E			
		A	G	E		A	N	S		S	R	O			

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