CHILD CARE WAGE FREEZE PAGE 5

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SWPH to amalgamate its Woodstock sites with a $5.5 million price tag

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

The Southwestern Public Health (SWPH) Board of Health has decided to relocate its multi-building Woodstock operations to a single location, but the move won't come cheap.

All operations will move to 712 Peel Street in Woodstock, the current Oxford Children's Aid building, to serve Oxford County and surrounding regions from a single-site model. The move is expected to occur in late summer 2027 after millions of dollars in renovations.

As a tenant, SWPH will occupy approximately half of the building, with the other half continuing to operate independently by Children's Aid.

This central site offers an efficient use of existing public sector space that is currently underused," said Bernia Martin, outgoing Chair of the SWPH Board of Health. "It keeps public health services local, with a more practical approach to delivering those services to our clients."

Renovations will begin this fall, and SWPH said it will share updates with the community as planning advances.

SWPH currently operates from three separate addresses in Woodstock: 410 Buller Street, 93 Graham Street, and leased dental space at the Oxford County Community Health Centre.

"In 2023, the Board of Health formed a Special Building Ad Hoc Committee to explore options that would bring its services together, including new construction, leased space, and other available development properties. The Committee chose 712 Peel Street for its location, functionality, and value," explained Martin.

CONTINUED TO PAGE3



REMEMBRANCE DAY (RON YUZARK PHOTO)

The sentries stood on guard at the walkway entrance to the Cenotaph during this year's Remembrance Day ceremony in Woodstock. More on Woodstock's ceremony on page 9, and Ingersoll's on page 15.

Caressant Care selling long-term care and retirement homes

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

After more than five decades of providing care for seniors Caressant Care is selling its operations to Jarlette.

The two companies announced late Thursday that, pending provincial government approvals, Caressant Care's homes will transfer to the Jarlette family as owner Jim Lavelle retires after more than five decades in long-term care. Applications have been submitted to the Ministry of Long-Term Care and Ontario Health to transfer Caressant Care's long-term care bed licences, and to the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority to transfer its retirement homes.

The for-profit Caressant Care owns a total of 15 long-term care homes and 10 retirement homes, stretching to Bourget in the east and St. Thomas to the south. President Jim Lavelle

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

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Jarlette Health Care Services will double in size once approved

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

made the announcement in a video on the company's website on Wednesday afternoon.

"We have entered into an agreement with Jarlette…to purchase Caressant Care and we have to go through a process, which is working through now, with the ministry and with the licensing body for retirement homes."

The company has had purchase offers in the past but Lavelle said Jarlette was simply the best fit.

"We picked Jarlette because, first of all, it is a family business. It started in 1970 by the great-grandfather and transferred to David Jarlette who became president and a year ago Harrison Jarlette took over the presidency…I feel it's a good fit because they are a good organization, they have a good reputation, they care about the residents which is what we've tried to do for all our years in the business."

Founded in Midland in 1970, the Jarlette Family operates 14 long-term care homes and eight retirement lodges, mostly in rural communities such as Midland and Southampton.

Both companies said there will be no disruption to services and no one will be required to move as a result of this transition, and team members' employment will continue with the Jarlette Family.

The company's first long-term care home was built in Woodstock in 1975 and its corporate office is located on Norwich Ave. in Woodstock. Its future is up in the air.

"As for specific plans for the homes and the corporate office, our focus right now is on supporting the Caressant Care team through this transition and on continuity for residents, their families, and team members," explained Jarlette President Harrison Jarlette.

"All Caressant Care team members will continue their employment with the Jarlette Family. That was essential to Jim Lavelle as part of this agreement. Residents and families rely on the people who care for them every day, and keeping those relationships and familiar faces in place is a priority," he added.

Caressant Care's corporate team along with Lavelle will be visiting each home in person, followed by visits with the Jarlette Family.

"We've also set up a dedicated webpage at CaressantCare.com/NextChapter and an email address, NextChapter@CaressantCare.com, so anyone with questions has a direct place to go," said VP of Operations Natalie Dechert. "Keeping our communities informed is top of mind for us, and we'll continue to communicate openly as details of the transition become clearer."

Dechert added after more than 50 years in long-term care, Lavelle is looking forward to spending more time with his family. He's proud of what Caressant Care has become, and he wanted to step back knowing the homes were in good hands.

The Ministry of Long-Term Care conducts public consultations before making decisions on long-term care home licensing proposals. Information about Caressant Care Nursing and Retirement Homes Limited Project #26-027, including how to participate in the consultation, is available through Ontario's long-term care licensing public consultation registry at https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-long-term-care-licensing-public-consultation-registry#26-027.

"A public meeting will be held on Nov. 26 to give an opportunity for interested parties to an opportunity to provide oral feedback on the project. The ministry also accepts written input for the full consultation period, in this case, up to Dec. 18," said a ministry statement.

"This public consultation is conducted over a 45-day period, with notices posted in affected long-term care homes, shared with resident and family councils, published in local media, and posted on the ministry's public consultation website. The public has 23 days before and 22 days after the public meeting to provide feedback," it added.

Before a licence transfer is approved, the ministry conducts a thorough review to ensure all legislative requirements are met. This includes assessing whether the transfer is in the public interest, reviewing the proposed licensee's financial and operational capacity and compliance history, and seeking community input through a public consultation process. Once these reviews are complete, the Director will make a decision on the licence transfer request.

Lee Griffi worked for Caressant Care for 14 years as Manager of Corporate Communications.

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Health Unit said planned move to 712 Peel Street would bring client services together

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

"We see great advantage in moving toward a centrally located, single-site model in Woodstock. The core benefit of this decision is it will allow us to deliver clinical, dental, harm reduction and other programs and services through a more functional and accessible building," she added.

The cost of leasing the current properties totals $680,000 per year. All SWPH sites, including the St. Thomas office, are funded through the annual operating budget shared across the municipalities of Elgin County, Oxford County, and the City of St. Thomas, as well as a portion funded by the Ministry of Health.

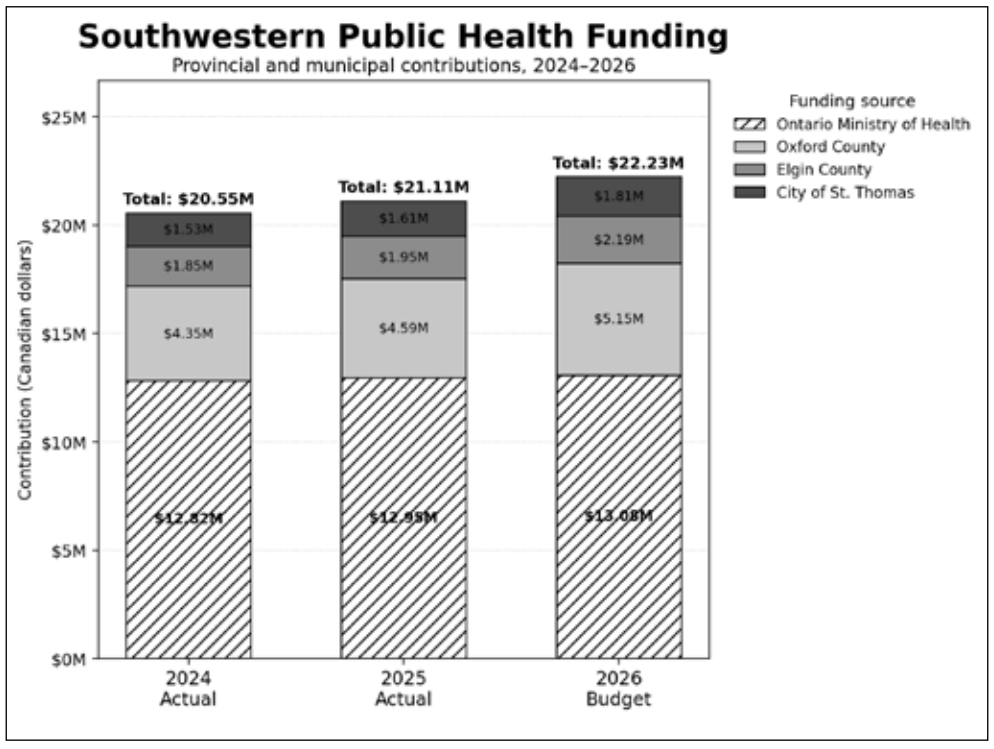
The health unit has not released what the cost of rent will be at the new location but will do renovations with a board-approved $5.5 million renovation estimate.

"The initial announcement was intended to inform the community about the Board of Health's decision to proceed with a relocation of our Woodstock operations. We are committed to sharing more information as the project progresses at swpublichealth.ca/about-us/woodstock-site-project," Martin said.

The health unit's location at 1230 Talbot Street in St. Thomas is not affected by the announcement.

Public health units are funded by both the provincial government and the municipalities they serve. SWPH received money from the taxpayers of all Oxford County municipalities, Elgin County and the City of St. Thomas.

In Ontario, municipalities are legally obligated to pay their share of a local public health unit's costs, even if they disagree with the amount being requested. The authority comes from Section 72 of Ontario's Health Protection and Promotion Act.



(CONTRIBUTED IMAGE)

Southwestern Public Health is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health along with participating municipalities, including Oxford County.

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Outgoing members of Woodstock City Council say their goodbyes

Acchione applauds outgoing members and looks forward to new faces

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Councillors Liz Wismer-Van Meer and Mark Schadenberg and City/County Councillor Bernia Martin sat around the horseshoe in the city's council chambers as elected officials for the last time on Nov. 5. All three delivered goodbye messages as the meeting drew to a close.

"It has been an incredible honour and privilege to sit at this table for the past four years and it's not something I ever took lightly," said Wismer Van-Meer who did not seek re-election. "I truly believe we accomplished some extraordinary work in this time. I am very proud of what the Mayor's Task Force has achieved in three and a half years."

She added that work focused on the core of social well-being, but there is much more work that needs to be done. Wismer Van-Meer also thanked Woodstock staff members and her fellow council members.

"To those who are sitting here today, thanks for the laughs, especially when you laughed at my bad jokes. I appreciate that. Answering my calls, emails and text messages, and even answering what I felt were sometimes silly questions or felt like answers that should have been obvious, especially during budget time."

An emotional Martin, who came second behind Deb Tait in the race for the newly created Deputy Mayor/County Councillors, said she had learned a lot despite already having a good understanding of how municipalities work through past employment.

"The number of policies we have advanced in four years is really quite remarkable. I'm excited to move on to some other opportunities. The very next morning (after the election) my phone started ringing. When one door closes, another door opens."

She added her four years on council was an impressive journey and offered a final anecdote.

"People often wonder why this box is on our desk between us. It is a box of mints, not a box of cigarettes. I will leave this in the desk drawer to whoever gets to sit here next term. The mints will be there."

Coun. Schadenberg thanked every Woodstock citizen who voted for him, but more importantly, anyone who cast their ballot and praised city staff for their hard work.

"I want to thank CAO David Creary for coming up and taking to (us) before the meeting to thank us for our service. (He) of course is retiring next year, and the clerk and deputy CAO, Amy Humphries, has a great set of ears and provides great input to councillors who have questions, concerns or worries."

He also thanked the city's senior administrative assistant, Ann Ash, for her dedication to her role as well as the many volunteers who sit on city committees.

"Community volunteerism is something, for lack of a better word, something I have literally preached about. To be able to have participation from general folk in the accessibility, environment, recreation or anything along those lines."

Schadenberg went on to thank many other city employees and reminded everyone to remember how important transitional housing is to Woodstock.

"Let's not forget Ingamo and DASO. DASO.ca is the website if you are looking for an organization to volunteer with or contribute to, whether it be financially or with some pantry food items. I really do feel (they) need to be higher on the rungs of our ladder or organizations we support."

Returning Mayor Jerry Acchione thanked everyone around the council horseshoe for their efforts over the last four years throughout discussions at meetings, some of which were spirited.

"I have appreciated what each of you has brought to those conversations. Thank you for the time you have given us, for listening to our residents and for the work you've done on behalf of Woodstock. I also want to thank everyone who put their name forward in this election. It does take a lot of courage to stand for public office and invite your neighbours to weigh in on your ideas."

He also had some words of gratitude for the three outgoing councillors.

"It's been an absolute privilege working for you all for a number of years…We will miss you. I truly mean that from the bottom of my heart."

He added a lot of good work was done over the last four years, and so much of it is done outside of council chambers, something people just don't see.

"All the phone calls you return at the end of a long day. The residents you took time to hear out and the follow-up you made because you said you would. Those are the things people remember – the commitment you have given over these years."

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Licensed child care sector dealing with fallout from ECE wage freeze

Part 1 - Executive calls out province as new facility remains shuttered due to recruitment challenges

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

"As Executive Director of Paris Child Care, I am deeply disappointed by the Ontario government's decision to freeze the Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) wage floor and halt previously funded wage increases for 2027."

These are the words of a statement released publicly by Tavistock resident Krysta Hajovic, calling out the province over its wage freeze. Early Childhood Educators were to receive a $ 1 per hour raise next year, but the provincial government has put a stop to it.

"At Paris Child Care, our new mission and vision centre around Inspiring Children, Empowering Educators. We have intentionally placed educators at the forefront because quality child care begins with quality professionals. We are doing our part. But we cannot do it alone," the statement added.

Hajovic, who posted her statement on various social media platforms and sent it to several elected officials, said the response from the public has been very positive. On the other hand, the reply from others has been quiet.

"I have heard back from one, and it's the new mayor of Brant County, Jennifer Kyle. I found it interesting she is the only one who got back to me because realistically, she has the least amount of power in this situation because it is a provincial issue."

Brantford-Brant MPP Will Bouma has not replied to Hajovic. Grant Haven Media has reached out to him for comment, along with other government officials.

She added child care operators did not get a heads-up when the wage freeze was announced and learned it when the media reported on it. She also has a theory on why it may have happened, and it has to do with the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC), the federal-provincial program designed to make licensed child care more affordable for families with children under six to provide care for $10 per day.

"It's been no secret the provincial government has not managed the funds for CWELCC properly. They've been fighting with the federal government trying to sustain it. We're not even close to the $10 a day target in Ontario."

Hajovic said she feels the province is freezing wages to offset underfunding from the federal government as a way to recoup funds.

"I think they are pointing the fingers at each other in a battle against CWELCC and in the end it's the staff and the RECEs who are taking the hit for the fight."

Ontario parents are currently paying an average of $19 per day for licensed child care through CWELCC. The most licensed providers can charge is $22.

Hajovic said it is utterly impossible to recruit and retain staff and added the province keeps saying there aren't enough child care spaces available, but she has a new building in Paris with 65 spaces ready to open, but she can't open the doors because she can't find qualified staff.

"It is sitting empty because I haven't been able to find staff to allow me to fill those spaces. I need 15 employees, and at least 10 of them need to be RECE's. There are good RECEs, and there are not so good RECEs. We have an obligation to be very particular with the quality of the people we are hiring."

A child care centre cannot ignore provincial staffing requirements because it has difficulty recruiting. It must maintain the required staffing ratios and qualified-employee proportions, and failure to comply can result in enforcement action by the Ministry of Education, including administrative penalties.

"We held a job fair in October and heavily advertised it. We had 32 people attend and only two were RECE's. I spend over $600 a month on recruiting," she explained.

Part of the problem is many applicants have what is called an ECA, or Early Child Care Assistant. Unlike RECEs, ECAs are not regulated by the College of Early Childhood Educators. Hajovic said the ECA program is bogus.

"It is not a real thing. Some international career college is saying come to Canada and take this program and you'll get a job. Then they come to us, and we're saying we can't hire you. The program isn't months long; it's hours long to get a certificate."

Hajovic said the province is investing money in trades but there is no cost savings for someone looking to enter a RECE program, one that typically takes two years to graduate from in Ontario. She added while she is not an RECE, all she wants is to advocate for her staff.

"I see what they put in every day and I know what they deserve. It is a lot more than a dollar an hour. At the very least, give them what they are expecting."

She said it is important for the public to not believe everything they hear.

"My wait list for the new centre is hundreds long. This beautiful, state-of-the-art facility has three dark rooms."

In her statement, Hajovic said her organization is doing their part, but it's time the provincial government did theirs.

"And as a leader, I will not stay quiet. I will speak up. I will advocate. I will fight for my team."

Early childhood educators called out the Ontario government at Queen's Park recently.

"To freeze wages in the middle of an affordability crisis is both heartless and foolish," said Carolyn Ferns, policy co-ordinator at Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. "In real dollars, this is a direct cut for our lowest-paid educators."

The current wage floor is $25.86, and Ontario has raised the minimum pay for early childhood educators by $1 per hour each year through the initial child-care deal with the federal government.

In Part 2 of this story, we will hear from provincial politicians, including NDP MPP Teresa Armstrong, the Ontario NDP's critic for child care.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Krysta Hajovic, Executive Director of Paris Child Care, said the provincial government's wage freeze on Registered Early Childhood Educators will make it even more difficult to open a new 65-space child care centre in the Brant County town.



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Woodstock Police recover stolen vehicles at city business

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Police have laid multiple charges following an auto theft investigation that recovered stolen vehicles and specialized equipment used to program vehicle keys.

Members of the Woodstock Police Service executed a search warrant at a local business near Devonshire Avenue and Griffin Way on Wednesday, Nov. 4, as part of an ongoing investigation into vehicle theft and fraud-related offences.

During the search, officers recovered two stolen vehicles, numerous vehicle key programming devices and blank key fobs.

As a result of the investigation, a 45-year-old Woodstock male has been charged with possession of property obtained by crime over $5,000, altering, destroying, or removing a Vehicle Identification Number, fraud over $5,000, public mischief and fraudulent concealment.

The accused was released on an undertaking with conditions.

"The investigation highlights the increasingly sophisticated nature of vehicle-related crime, including the use of technology to facilitate vehicle theft and fraud," said a police press release.

"In response to the growing complexity of these offences, the Woodstock Police Service's Street Crime Unit maintains a dedicated Auto Theft Investigator position to strengthen its ability to identify, investigate and disrupt vehicle-related crime," it added.

Deputy Chief Jamie Taylor said the force is committed to addressing auto theft by identifying emerging crime trends, gathering intelligence, coordinating investigations across jurisdictions, recovering stolen vehicles and holding those responsible accountable.

"Auto theft continues to be something we're paying close attention to. So far this year, we've had 54 vehicles reported stolen in Woodstock, and we've recovered 43 of them," he explained.

"We've invested resources into auto theft investigations, including a dedicated Auto Theft Investigator within our Street Crime Unit, and we see some really good work from our officers."

Taylor added a good example is the recent search warrant executed here in Woodstock.

"Without getting into the specifics of that investigation or the techniques being used, I think it's important to recognize the work our officers are doing. These investigations can be complex, and there's a lot of work that happens behind the scenes."



(WPS PHOTO)

Woodstock police have charged a 45-year-old city man after recovering stolen vehicles and related equipment.

He added police will continue doing their part to disrupt auto theft, recover stolen vehicles and hold those responsible accountable.

"We also need the public's help. Lock your vehicle, keep your keys in a safe place, and don't leave valuables visible. Some of what we're seeing involves higher-end vehicles being specifically targeted, while other thefts are simply crimes of opportunity."

Oxford OPP probing discovery of a body in South-West Oxford

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

The Oxford Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police is investigating a death in South-West Oxford.

Officers responded to a call for service on Plank Line on the morning of Nov. 10 where one person was located with no signs of life. Due to the circumstances surrounding the death, the OPP has initiated a sudden death investigation.

"Preliminary information suggests this is an isolated incident, with no signs of a broader threat. Police continue to investigate and are actively monitoring the situation," said Sgt. Ed Sanchuk in a video released on social media.

"Residents of the area can expect to see an increased police presence as officers continue the investigation," he added.

The Oxford OPP Crime Unit is continuing the investigation under the direction of the OPP Criminal Investigation Branch, in partnership with the Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario and the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service. Assistance is also being provided by OPP Forensic Identification Services.

A sudden death investigation is an inquiry into a death that happened suddenly or unexpectedly, or whose circumstances are unclear. The OPP may investigate to establish what happened and check whether foul play or a possible offence was involved. The investigation will likely include gathering information from witnesses and examining the scene, but a coroner's investigation determines how and why the person died.

Anyone with information regarding this investigation should immediately contact the Oxford OPP at 1-888-310-1122.

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POLICE BRIEFS

Oxford Ontario Provincial Police briefs

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Police investigating mischief incident in Norwich as vehicle suffers severe damage

Police responded to the Tim Hortons on Highway 59 in Norwich Township for a report of a mischief in progress on Nov. 8 around 11:30.

Three unknown individuals approached a vehicle in the parking lot and caused significant damage to it. There were no injuries reported and there is no word on whether the driver was inside.

The three individuals are currently being described as three teenage males. No other descriptors have been obtained.

Police believe the incident is isolated. The investigation is ongoing, and police are asking anyone who may have seen or heard anything about this incident to please contact the Oxford OPP at 1-888-310-1122.

Impaired driver faces several charges

A driver faces five offences after a vehicle was located while police were on general patrol.

Police observed a motorist disobey a stop sign on the 37th Line in Zorra Township on the night of Nov. 5. As a result of the investigation, a 42-year-old Ingersoll resident was charged with operation while impaired, operation while impaired with a blood alcohol concentration of 80 plus, disobeying a stop sign, care and control of a motor vehicle with liquor readily available, and failure to surrender a license.

The accused has been released from custody and is scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Woodstock on Dec. 15.

Police hold Auxiliary Information Night

Members of the Auxiliary Unit of the Oxford detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police are holding an information night.

A short presentation is being held on Wednesday, Nov. 18 at 6:30 p.m., and then members will be available to answer questions about volunteering with the OPP.

"Becoming an auxiliary member can be a great stepping stone into a civilian or uniform career in policing or just a great way to give back to your community," said an OPP press release.

The event will take place in the Lion's Den Room of the Tillsonburg Community Centre, at 45 Hardy Avenue, and everyone is welcome.



(FACEBOOK PHOTO)

Oxford OPP are investigating a collision on Highway 59 near Gunns Hill Road. No details have been released regarding the crash, which occurred Tuesday afternoon.

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Ingersoll holds inaugural council meeting as mayor touts construction on MURC

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Members of Ingersoll Town Council were sworn in on Nov. 17 as two new councillors joined a returning cast of five.

"These days it seems life moves so fast and we seldom take the time to stop and acknowledge accomplishments and milestones. But tonight we intend to mark a significant milestone in the lives of our council members and the future of our community," said CAO Michael Graves.

He added all town staff wanted to applaud council for its past success, encourage their hopes and dreams, and they look forward to assisting them in their future accomplishments.

"In this moment, we appreciate and honour you."

Returning members of council are Mayor Brian Petrie, Deputy Mayor Lindsay Wilson and Councillors Kristy Van Kooten-Bossence, Mike Bowman and Rick Eus. They are joined by a pair of new Councillors, Dave Cripps and Fred Freeman.

Petrie spoke following the declarations of office, where all members of council were sworn in, and he highlighted collaboration and achieving goals.

"I'm very proud of the last term of council and the position they left this new term of council to take over. Ingersoll went to the polls and returned what is probably going to be the most experienced and accomplished council in all the county."

He thanked town staff for their hard work, dedication, and success in getting the job done.

"The people of Ingersoll should be very proud of the very high calibre staff the town has and the work they do."

Petrie also pointed to the Multi-Use Recreation Centre, which is now under construction, with the foundation complete and steel beams ready to go.

"We went out there the other day to take some video of the progress and tag along with our CAO and staff. I had to turn to Mr. Graves and say thank you. I don't think the residents of Ingersoll fully understand the amount of work that has gone into making that happen. Not just the concrete in the ground, but that land was in another municipality."

He added it took several years to negotiate the donation of the land and then complete the necessary boundary adjustment with South West Oxford.

"These things don't happen overnight, and we need very skilled people to guide us through the process, and we have that here in Ingersoll."

Petrie also thanked the strong relationships the town has with the community, including its service clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, and the BIA.

"It's a great source of pride to see the type of people that we have who call Ingersoll home who are willing to give up their time to volunteer and work on projects collaboratively to make them even better. The Food Project is an excellent example of that. We couldn't make the community what it is without our service clubs."

He added he is looking forward to working closely with council and has full confidence in its ability to work together to reach goals.

"I thank each and every one of you for your leadership in the community and I look forward to working with you."

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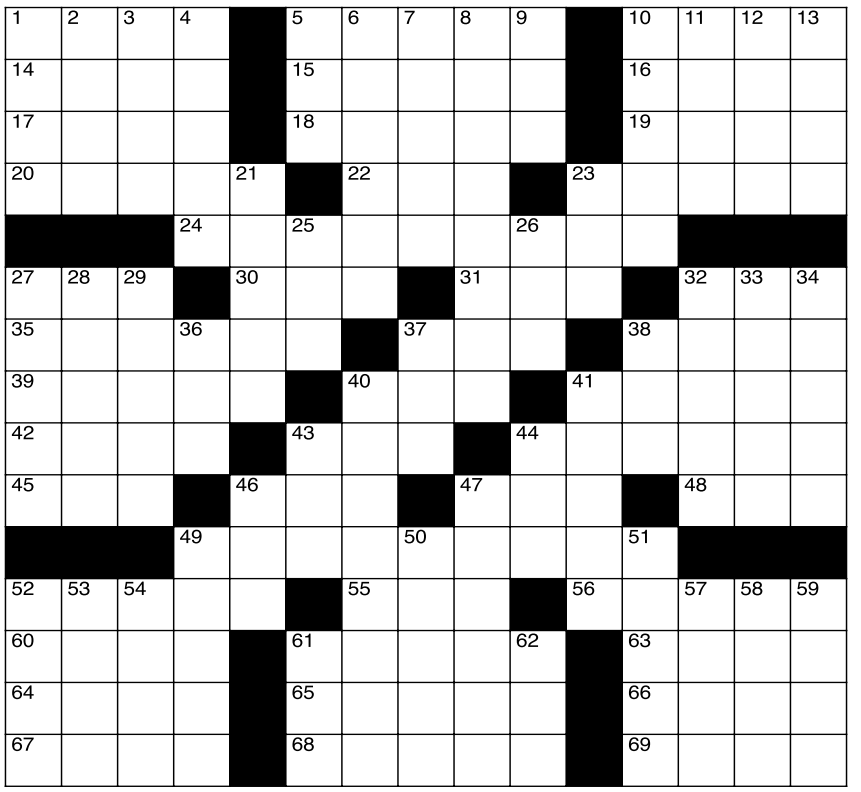

CLUES ACROSS

1. Perceive a sound
5. Pretends to be
10. Type of guitar
14. Actor Idris
15. A citizen of Iran
16. Creative
17. Keep under control
18. Weight unit for precious stones
19. You better call him
20. Fanatical
22. Male cat
23. Jewish spiritual leader
24. One who takes risks
27. A way to nail
30. Cool!
31. Progressive policy supporter
32. "Losing My Religion" rockers
35. Step-shaped recess
37. Round globular seed
38. Somewhat
39. Butterhead lettuces
40. Color at the end of the spectrum
41. Lines where fabrics are sewn together
42. Dodgers great Hershiser
43. Floor covering
44. Traveled aimlessly
45. Rocker Stewart
46. Body art
47. Congressman (abbr.)
48. No seats available
49. Categorizes
52. Iraq-Syria border town
55. Ballplayer's tool
56. Type of sword
60. Baseball team
61. Upper bracts of grass
63. Italian seaport
64. Ancient city in Syria
65. Shoelace tube
66. U. of Miami mascot is one
67. South American nation
68. "Nebraska" director Alexander
69. Upper body part

CLUES DOWN

1. German courtesy title
2. Ancient Greek City
3. Skin care manufacturer
4. A long-legged frog
5. Photo
6. Delivered a speech
7. Lute in northern Indian music
8. Decorated
9. Take a seat
10. Bottom layer
11. Type of horse
12. Ticket part
13. Defunct currency of Guinea
21. Challenges
23. Popular BBQ food
25. Subway rodent
26. By way of
27. Shady garden alcove
28. City in Egypt
29. __ and flowed
32. Large quantities of paper
33. Eurasian wheat
34. Act incorrectly
36. Layer of water right above sediment (abbr.)
37. Al Bundy's wife
38. Ocean
40. Large, round root
41. Sound units
43. Knock
44. Soak in water
46. Hot drink
47. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
49. Rumanian city
50. Come back from being down
51. Vaccine developer
52. Canadian law enforcers
53. Wings
54. "Perry Mason" actor Raymond
57. Small fry
58. __ Clapton, musician
59. Gamble
61. Semi-liquid food
62. Consumed food

Solution found on page 31

Woodstock pays tribute to fallen soldiers

Hundreds of residents, veterans, students, first responders and civic leaders gathered in Victoria Park on Wednesday morning for Woodstock's annual Remembrance Day Ceremony, held at the Cenotaph at 413 Buller St. The ceremony began at 10:30 a.m. and followed the city's traditional order of service, bringing together the community to pay tribute to the courage and sacrifice of those who served and continue to serve Canada during times of war, military conflict and peace. The morning opened with the pre-laying of wreaths at 10:15 a.m., followed by the march on the sentries at 10:35 a.m. and the walking march proceeding to the Cenotaph at 10:45 a.m. At 10:55 a.m., the crowd joined together for the singing of O Canada, followed by the Last Post. At 11 a.m., the community observed two minutes of silence, followed by a Canadian Harvard Aircraft fly-over, the reading of In Flanders Fields, and other traditions. The ceremony was organized with the help of Royal Canadian Legion Branch #55, the Oxford County Naval Veterans Association, City of Woodstock staff, local MP and MPP offices, emergency services and school boards.

This year's event carried a particular weight, as the community paused to offer special recognition to four Canadian Armed Forces members who were killed, and to the many others who were injured, in the fast-moving fire at Canadian Forces Base Wainwright in Alberta on Oct. 17.

The fallen were named as Sergeant Morgan Wong, Private Shaun Farrell, Private Aidan Goulding and Private Hayden Lykkemark. Their names were spoken aloud, their service was honoured, and a moment of remembrance was held for their families, their fellow soldiers, and all those still recovering from injuries sustained in the fire. Speakers noted that Remembrance Day has always honoured those lost in war, but also those who have died and been injured in service to Canada in training, in peacekeeping, and in operations at home and abroad.

Attendees stood on and beside the commemorative crosswalk at the corner of Graham Street and Buller Street, installed in 2025, which features a red and white striped pattern, the silhouette of a soldier, and the phrase "Lest We Forget" at each end. Downtown light poles also continued to display the commemorative banners first installed in 2023, honouring more than 60 local veterans from Woodstock who served in war and have now passed.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Wreath was laid by Brock and Visser, change to - Several community members and organizatons laid wreaths during the ceremony.



Wreaths were laid by the Knights of Columbus Council 3515 and CUPE 7575.



The Lament, a slow, mournful tune, was performed on the bagpipes during the Remembrance Day ceremony.



Oxford Elgin Research Coalition urges 2SLGBTQIA+ residents to complete survey

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

The Oxford Elgin Research Coalition held an open house at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 55 on Nov. 7 to highlight a Community Research Survey. It will be available until the end of the year. The drop-in event presented a slideshow with survey findings to date.

"The more voices that we get in this survey, the more we're able to use that evidence, the various experiences that people have to inform services, programs, and other community supports in the area," said Todd Coleman, a faculty member of Wilfred Laurier University and Woodstock resident.

The survey, run in collaboration with Elgin County Pride, Oxford County Rainbow Coalition, Laurier, Southwestern Ontario Public Health, and Social Inclusion and Health Equity Research Group, is asking 2SLGBTQIA+ members living in Oxford and Elgin counties who are 16 years old and over to share their experiences. The last survey of its kind was done in 2016, before Southwestern Ontario Public Health merged Elgin and Oxford Counties, as well as St. Thomas.

In 2027, there will be town halls presenting final survey results at town hall meetings with Oxford County Pride and Elgin County Pride.

"That's where we'll have all the final findings so we can share them with the community," Coleman said.

In the slideshow, there was a slide indicating that while the 2SLGBTQIA+ community has more rights than in decades past, discrimination and hate also increased. Statistics Canada indicates that there's been a 75 per cent increase in hate crimes reported to police, from 265 in 2019 to 463 in 2021. Oxford County saw hate-motivated vandalism, including Pride Flag thefts and damage to the Gunn's Hill Artisan Cheese property earlier this year, and other hate crimes occurred in Oxford and Elgin Counties in years prior.



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

Todd Coleman of the Oxford-Elgin Rainbow Research Team talking about the survey and the research so far behind the Community Research Survey, which asks 2SLGBTQIA+ members of Oxford and Elgin counties about their health and wellbeing.

"What we're doing is asking and surveying the community to see the reactions to those things. How they feel, how their health is, how their mental health and wellbeing is impacted as a result of some of these things but just broadly as well," said Coleman.

The survey will remain open until Dec. 31, 2026. To fill it out online, visit https://linktr.ee/ocecrainbowresearch or send an email to ocecrainbowresearch@outlook.com.

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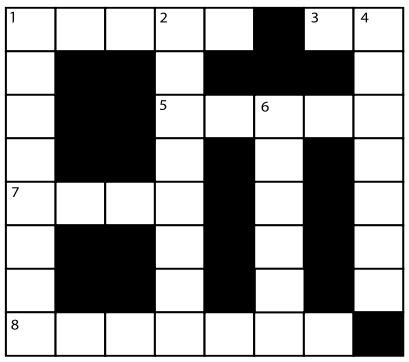

ACROSS
1. Use again
3. Opposite of "off"
5. Gain advantage
7. Basket on wheels
8. Arranging in categories

DOWN
1. Processes used or discarded materials
2. Least amount of length
4. Small paper cloths
6. Flag flown on a ship

Answers:
Across
1. Reuse 3. On 5. One-up 7. Cart 8. Sorting
Down
1. Recycles 2. Shortest 4. Napkins 6. Ensign

World FACT:

Doing this can protect millions of trees every year and keep forests healthy.

Answer: Recycling paper

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The Ace Bailey Benefit Game is played at Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto. The game was the first all-star game in National Hockey League history.

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COMPOST

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Spanish: Bote
Italian: Barattolo
French: Bidon
German: Dose

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Susan Veenstra
Unifor Local 636
Retired Workers Chapter
Recording Secretary

Woodstock family donates half a million dollars to Woodstock Hospital



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Jim and Linda McNamara have donated $500,000 to the Woodstock Hospital's Diagnostic Imaging Department.

CONTRIBUTED

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

Grateful for the care they received and committed to supporting the community they have always called home, Jim and Linda McNamara have made a transformational $500,000 gift to the Diagnostic Imaging Department at Woodstock Hospital.

Jim was raised on a dairy farm near Otterville before moving to Sweaburg and working in Woodstock. For decades, he owned Jamieson-Hilts Insurance Brokers, a trusted local business. Linda grew up on a tobacco and asparagus farm in Norfolk County. She worked in the regional dairy industry before joining Jim at Jamieson-Hilts. Together, they built a life in Oxford County, where five generations of their family have called home.

Both Jim and Linda have been patients at Woodstock Hospital and have experienced the compassionate and professional care provided by its staff. "During each hospital stay, the care I received from every staff member was simply fabulous," said Jim.

The care they experienced reinforced something Jim and Linda have always believed: when you can help, you do. Their extraordinary $500,000 gift will directly support diagnostic imaging renovations and new equipment.

"Nearly every family in Oxford County will rely on diagnostic imaging at some point. This gift is our way of saying thank you to our neighbours, friends, and the community that has given our family so much over the years," added Jim.

Renovations are currently underway to upgrade two fluoroscopy rooms and replace the existing equipment with new technology. Fluoroscopy allows physicians to see real-time, moving images of structures inside the body, supporting many different procedures at the hospital, including orthopedic surgeries and specialized joint injections.

"The new fluoroscopy equipment will provide enhanced image quality for our patients," explained Jenn De Iuliis, Director of Diagnostic Imaging. "Because these units can also be used for some regular X-ray exams, they will help us improve access to imaging services when volumes are high."

Like all medical technology, diagnostic imaging equipment eventually reaches the end of its lifespan and needs to be replaced. Large diagnostic imaging systems like MRI, fluoroscopy, and

CT, represent major capital expenses for hospitals. Community support plays an important role in helping hospitals fund these upgrades and maintain the technology needed to provide high-quality care.

"Jim and Linda have a longstanding connection to this community, and their generosity will have an impact on countless patients and families requiring imaging procedures," said Jocelyn Jenner, Senior Development Officer with Woodstock Hospital Foundation. "Their gift helps ensure our dedicated and highly skilled teams have the tools they need to provide exceptional patient care close to home."

Woodstock Hospital Foundation extends its sincere gratitude to Jim and Linda McNamara for their generosity and commitment to the future of local healthcare. Their gift is an investment in the health of Oxford County residents for years to come.



Aging Well in Oxford

Age Friendly Oxford County hosted the free Aging Well Road Show on Nov. 17, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Woodstock's South Gate Centre. Designed for individuals aged 50 and older, as well as their family members, friends, and caregivers, the event focused on the theme of living well at any age.

The afternoon featured three presentations on topics important to older adults and their support networks, including tenants' rights, presented by the Oxford County Community Health Centre's Housing Stability Program. It was followed by Together We Thrive: The Power of Social Connection, presented by VON Oxford, and A Palliative Approach: What we all need to think about, presented by the Oxford Ontario Health Team.

In addition to the scheduled presentations, many local agencies participated to provide valuable resources and information. The Aging Well Road Show provided an opportunity for community members to connect with local services, learn practical information, and celebrate aging well in Oxford County.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Amy, coordinator from the Domestic Abuse Resource Team, informed guests in attendance of their available services.

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City of Woodstock swears in new council with three new members

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

The city held its inaugural council meeting on Nov. 16, where three rookies were sworn in alongside four veterans.

Mayor Jerry Acchione, Deputy Mayor/County Councillor Deb Tait and Councillors Kate Leatherbarrow and Connie Lauder are back around the horseshoe while City/County Councillor Kelly Gilson and Councillors Wes Mazur and Joe Brown are serving their first terms.

"I am honoured and humbled and more than a just little nervous to be here to be sitting here at this table," said Gilson, the former Oxford United Way boss. "I would very much like to thank my husband Jeff, my kids Connor and Cooper, friends, volunteers and the supporters who helped make this possible."

She added democracy is something no one should ever take for granted and thanked everyone who took the time to make their opinions known during the campaign by voting.

"It is my privilege to serve all the residents of Woodstock. My promise to each and every one of you is I will do my very best, always. I am committed to embracing this large learning curve to being present, prepared, inquisitive, collaborative, open-minded and willing to listen as I strive to make the best decisions for our community."

Brown said it was a tremendous honour to begin a new journey as a City Councillor.

"I want to sincerely thank everyone who took the time to vote, who supported my campaign, offered encouragement, knocked on doors, shared conversations and believed in me. Whether you voted for me or not, I want you to know I am here to represent all residents of Woodstock. Your trust is something I do not take lightly."

An emotional Brown also thanked his family.

"Thank you for your patience, your encouragement and your support throughout this journey. Campaigns take time, energy and commitment, and I couldn't have done this without you. This accomplishment belongs to you as well. Now, I have the privilege of being around this council table and I don't take that responsibility lightly."

He added Woodstock has tremendous potential, a great community, incredible people and an exciting future ahead.

"My commitment is to listen, ask questions, do my homework, be accountable and always remember the decisions we make affect real people and families. I know we won't always agree, but that's okay. What matters is that we work together, respect different perspectives, and make decisions with the best interest of Woodstock at heart."

Mazur said it is a tremendous honour to take a seat at the council table and said he is ready to honour his commitment to the people of Woodstock.

"Those weren't just words on a campaign trail. They were promises I sincerely made to our community and promises I do intend to keep. I promised to advocate for responsible spending, greater accountability, safer neighbourhoods and vibrant businesses. I also promised something equally as important, and that is to listen. Not just to those who checked my name on the ballot, but to everyone who calls Woodstock home."

Mazur agreed with his fellow councillors that they won't always agree on issues, but respectful dialogue, transparency and a willingness to work together are what's going to win the day. He also thanked his family for their support and said now that the campaign is over, the real work is beginning.

"I do not have every answer, and I'm not going to pretend every decision will be easy, but I can promise I will show up prepared, ask questions, work hard and explain my decisions. I am going to look to my colleagues for their advice…One thing I also want to point out is this seat I am in doesn't belong to me. It belongs to the people of Woodstock."

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Ingersoll pays respect at Remembrance Day ceremony

KYRAH SMITH

Echo Correspondent

On the morning of Nov. 11, Ingersoll residents gathered at Town Centre to remember and honour the lives of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church held a service followed by the Ingersoll Pipe Band leading a march toward Town Hall, where the ceremony took place. By approximately 10:30 a.m., first responders, military personnel, family members of fallen service members and residents had gathered, joining a large crowd to pay their respects.

Under mild, sunny skies, a welcome change from last year's snowy weather, attendees proudly wore poppies as the community came together in remembrance,

The ceremony began with an introduction and land acknowledgement, followed by remarks from Barb Jackson, president of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 119.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

On Nov. 11, the Ingersoll Pipe Band marched from St. Paul's Presbyterian Church to Town Hall, where the 2026 Remembrance Day ceremony would commence.

"What an amazing turnout," Jackson began. "Thank you to everyone. It takes commitment to remember everyone who has fallen, and we will remember them."

Mayor Brian Petrie spoke next, reflecting on the sacrifices made by generations of Canadians and the importance of keeping their stories alive.

"Ingersoll, it's an immense honour to be here, and such an impressive sight. We have gathered here today to pause, reflect and honour. The peace, liberty and democracy we enjoy in Ingersoll today were brought at a tremendous cost."

Petrie acknowledged that many never returned home, emphasizing that their legacy continues to live on. He also thanked veterans for sharing their stories and helping preserve this important history.

"Ingersoll stands with you. We acknowledge your sacrifice. They were not just soldiers. They were the town's sons, daughters, fathers, mothers and friends," he said, concluding with a reminder that "We will not forget."



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

Pictured are several of the many wreaths donated to the town's cenotaph on display for Remembrance Day in Ingersoll, 2026.

Students from Royal Roads Public School's Grade 7 and 8 classes followed, reading the iconic poem In Flanders Fields.

The ceremony continued with the singing of the national anthem, followed by the lowering of the flags and a moment of silence.

Wreaths were then laid as the names of participating organizations and individuals were called, each offering a tribute to those who served and sacrificed.

Following the wreath-laying ceremony, organizers extended thanks to the community and everyone who attended. Guests were invited to continue gathering at the Legion afterward for chilli and refreshments.

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Kiwanis brings the nostalgia with first-ever Retro Revival



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

On November 6th, Ingersoll's Kiwanis hosted their first ever Retro Revival. Pictured (from left to right) are dressed up Kiwanis members Randy Rosiak, Jane Cole, Karen Costello and Sam Horton.

KYRAH SMITH

Echo Correspondent

The Kiwanis Club of Ingersoll hosted its first-ever Retro Revival, bringing the community together for an evening of nostalgia, entertainment and fundraising on Nov. 6.

Held at the Elm Hurst Inn from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m., the event welcomed 85 guests, who were invited to dress up and relive decades of music, art and collectible memorabilia.

"We wanted to change it up this year," says Jane Cole, Kiwanis member and co-organizer of the event. In previous years, the club hosted its annual Winter Gala Fundraiser, but organizers decided it was time to try something a little different.

This year's proceeds will support local hospitals, the Food Project and Stevenson Children's Camp. Like previous Kiwanis events, Retro Revival offered plenty of photo opportunities, with decorations created entirely by club members.

"All of the decorating here was done by Kiwanis members," says Karen Costello of Kiwanis, who also took a moment to recognize the volunteers for all their hard work. "Thank you to everyone who has given or donated door prizes," she added, receiving applause from the crowd.

New to the event this year was a retro gaming setup hosted by Operandi Gaming Community. Guests had the opportunity to revisit classic consoles and games, including the Nintendo 64, PlayStation 1 and Namco Plug and Play Arcade.

The evening also featured finger foods, an on-site bar and a lineup of entertainment. Guests eagerly participated in trivia before the costume contest, where prizes were awarded for Best Dressed and Best Couples Costume. Among the prizes were a red-light LED mask and a $180 wine certificate from Batch.

The fun continued with Name That Tune, followed by a live auction, while DJ Alpha provided the music throughout the evening.

One of the night's biggest highlights was the raffle draw, which offered guests the chance to win a $5,000 travel gift certificate generously donated by Tillsonburg Travel. The certificate can be redeemed for travel anywhere in the world, and Savanna and Devin Grimwood were the lucky winners.

The remainder of the evening was spent dancing and mingling with fellow community members.

By the end of the night, the first-ever Retro Revival had raised an impressive $8,000 for its chosen causes.

"The Kiwanis Club of Ingersoll had a very successful Retro Revival Night," said Sam Horton. "We cannot thank enough the generosity of the community members who participated.



Guests enjoy an evening full of nostalgia, fun and charity. (KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

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Woodstock Ingersoll Echo SPORTS

SPOTLIGHT ON

WOODSTOCK NAVY VETS

Navy Vets inch close to .500 mark after second consecutive victory

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

The Woodstock Navy Vets find themselves in sole possession of ninth place in the Greater Ontario Hockey League's (GOHL) West Division after a 6-0 home-ice victory over Port Colborne on Sunday night.

Landyn Quirk made 29 saves for his first junior shutout while Kingston McPherson scored twice and added an assist to lead the offence. Robert Landry and Maddyx Chaput each had a goal and assist while Keaton Ferras and Jacob Scarpelli scored the other Vets goals. Sebastien Fortin and Colby Branton each chipped in a pair of assists. The Navy Vets outshot the Sailors 43-29.

Quirk was quick to thank his teammates for the shutout.

"The team in front of me was the main reason for the shutout today. Our defencemen were keeping them outside and not giving up many grade A chances, but when I did have them, I made sure I stayed sharp."

He added the work he has been putting into the mental part of his game is showing results.



(WOODSTOCK NAVY VETS PHOTO)

Navy Vets players Kingston McPherson (left) and Xander Zanier laid a wreath at the Cenotaph during Woodstock's Remembrance Day ceremony on Nov. 11.

"Staying sharp mentally is more important than the physical part because every goalie needs that."

Woodstock's record now stands at nine wins and 10 losses, and they are just a single point behind Strathroy with a pair of games in hand. They are two points behind seventh-place LaSalle and have a game in hand on the Vipers.

Last Thursday night, the Navy Vets travelled to Sarnia to face the worst team in the GOHL and squeaked out a 5-4 come-from-behind overtime win.

Josh Jodoin scored his third goal of the season 28 seconds into overtime with an unassisted effort. Woodstock trailed 4-2 halfway through the third period when Sebastien Fortin started the comeback with an end-to-end rush on a pass from Fortin. McPherson forced the extra period with his first of the season on the powerplay with six minutes remaining in the period. Xander Zanier and Fortin earned assists as Will McGregor and Will Wright scored the other Navy Vets markers.

Quirk made 20 saves in the Vets net while they pummelled the Legionnaires with an incredible 75 shots on goal. Sarnia, who lost every single game last season, has just one victory so far.

Woodstock's next game is Nov.20 when they host the LaSalle Vipers at the Reeves Complex at 7:45 p.m. On Saturday, the team will participate in the city's Santa Claus Parade before travelling to Listowel on Sunday for a 2 p.m. matchup with the Cyclones.

STANDINGS

WESTERN CONFERENCE	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	PTS	GF	GA
1 - ST. MARYS LINCOLNS	19	17	2	0	0	34	113	42
2 - ST. THOMAS STARS	20	15	3	1	1	32	80	45
3 - CHATHAM MAROONS	19	14	5	0	0	28	85	53
4 - LISTOWEL CYCLONES	21	12	6	3	0	27	81	69
5 - STRATFORD WARRIORS	17	10	6	0	1	21	58	57
6 - ELMIRA SUGAR KINGS	22	10	11	1	0	21	86	87
7 - LASALLE VIPERS	20	10	10	0	0	20	59	77
8 - STRATHROY ROCKETS	21	8	10	2	1	19	88	84
9 - WOODSTOCK NAVY VETS	**19**	**9**	**10**	**0**	**0**	**18**	**73**	**80**
10 - LONDON NATIONALS	20	8	11	1	0	17	69	84
11 - KOMOKA KINGS	21	6	15	0	0	12	68	89
12 - SARNIA LEGIONNAIRES	18	1	16	1	0	3	38	111

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Senior Red Devils looking to navigate competitive WOSSAA matrix

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

The Thames Valley Regional Athletics Southeast senior girls basketball 'matrix' leading to a championship confrontation between the Woodstock CI Red Devils and St. Thomas St. Joe's Rams may not have been inevitable.

But it didn't take an oracle to predict, and it's not revolutionary to think the rivalry may be resurrected and reloaded at Western Ontario Secondary Schools Athletic Association (WOSSAA) AA playdowns on Nov. 19, back at St. Joe's.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

St. Mary's Warrior Ayda Merkley (left) looks to move the ball against WCI Red Devil Aria Mazur-Flanagan.

The Red Devils set up a sequel to a four-point regular season loss with a solid 48-28 TVRA Southeast semi-final win over the St. Thomas Parkside Stampeders on Nov. 10 inside the WCI Devildome.

As well as qualifying WCI for the TVRA Southeast final, the win came with a WOSSAA AA berth.

"That game we had to win," said Red Devils guard Reese Crown.

A girl who self-admittedly didn't know what a layup was when she joined the Oxford Attack as a ten-year-old, the Grade 10 junior has developed through that and the London Ramblers and St. Thomas Shock programs to the point of being called up to initiate the offence at the senior level.

"It's a big step up," said Cowan, who paced the Red Devils' attack with a team-high 20 points. Brooke Halward added 14, including a pair of three-point field goals, and Natalie Sutherland contributed nine.

Crown's promotion is in line with both her abilities and WCI's successful bid to host the 2027 Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) senior girls' AA basketball championship tournament. The Red Devils will receive a host berth, but while building toward that event next season is in the back of the team's collective mind, qualifying in 2026 remains at the front of their agenda.

"OFSAA this year is the goal," declared Halward. "It's been the goal since Grade 9. We work toward it every single Monday to Thursday, and we've been executing so far this year. We're trying to make it a long run and a long season."

WCI's season will continue at WOSSAA, although entering as the TVRA Southeast second seed following a 52-41 championship loss to the Rams on Nov. 12 at St. Joe's. The Rams qualified for the final with a 36-16 win over the 6-2 Woodstock College Avenue Knights.

The Rams will open the four-team WOSSAA AA draw with a 12-noon tip-off against Stratford St. Mike's, while the Red Devils hit the court at 1:30 against TVRA Central champion London Clarke Road.

"Our goal was to qualify for WOSSAA," said WCI coach Eric Molinaro, fully aware the Red Devils are joining a draw of 'tough opponents that are well coached.'

As a younger senior team, Molinaro expects to be underdogs should WCI reach the final, where both a WOSSAA gold medal and provincial berth in Orillia will be on the line.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

WCI senior point guard Reese Crown (right) 'D's up' during the Parkside semi-final victory.

"We're going to have to play our best to win gold and get the opportunity," he stated. "Which would be an outstanding feat and pave the way for hosting OFSAA next year."

The WCI Junior Red Devils quest to join their senior counterparts at WOSSAA ended with a 41-28 TVRA Southeast semi-final road loss to the St. Thomas Parkside junior Stampeders on Nov. 10.

"It was a tough game, but we were never out of it," said WCI coach Jason Poole, who battled third-quarter foul trouble and shots that didn't drop along with a strong opponent. "Most other teams would have just folded, but these girls were tough as nails and got big stops to keep us in it."

Poole was coaching at the junior level for the first time in seven years, enjoying the experience along with appreciated support from Jon Empringham and Chris Coyle.

"I was really happy with the overall growth of the group from day one," Poole concluded. "They are an extremely enjoyable team to coach, with a lot of energy, spirit and positivity with each other."

The Red Devils qualified for semi-finals with a 46-28 quarter-final win over the St. Mary's Warriors Thursday, November 5. On that day, the Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers were eliminated by Parkside (33-13) and the Woodstock College Avenue Knights fell by a 44-32 margin to Aylmer East Elgin.

TVRA SOUTHEAST GIRLS AA BASKETBALL PLAYOFFS	
NOV. 12	
SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP	
ST. JOE'S	52
WCI	41
NOV. 10	
SEMI-FINALS	
WCI	48
PARKSIDE	28
ST. JOE'S	36
COLLEGE AVENUE	16
NOV. 5	
QUARTERFINALS	
WCI	46
AYLMER EAST ELGIN	26
COLLEGE AVENUE	33
WOODSTOCK HURON PARK	21
ST. JOE'S	39
INGERSOLL DCI	19
PARKSIDE	41
DORCHESTER	21
PRELIMINARY ROUND	
INGERSOLL DCI	27
WOODSTOCK ST. MARY'S	21
EAST ELGIN	44
ST. THOMAS CENTRAL ELGIN	24
DORCHESTER	49
TILLSONBURG	29

JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP	
NOV. 12	
ST. JOE'S	47
PARKSIDE	27
NOV. 10	
SEMI-FINALS	
PARKSIDE	41
WCI	28
ST. JOE'S	53
EAST ELGIN	33
NOV. 5	
QUARTERFINALS	
WCI	46
ST. MARY'S	28
EAST ELGIN	44
COLLEGE AVENUE	32
PARKSIDE	33
INGERSOLL DCI	13
ST. JOE'S	47
DORCHESTER	27
NOV. 3	
PRELIMINARY ROUND	
INGERSOLL DCI	51
CENTRAL ELGIN	36
ST. MARY'S	37
WOODSTOCK HURON PARK	30
DORCHESTER	42
TILLSONBURG	39

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Gridiron senior, junior Blue Bombers reflect on quality 2026 seasons

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

Rookie Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers senior football head coach Markus Lakotos could only have asked for one more thing from the Thames Valley Regional Athletics (TVRA) season.

"I'm disappointed with the way it ended," he said of a 35-7 loss to London South in the TVRA AA semi-final on Nov. 6 at St. Thomas's Password Park. 'But it was a great season overall."

Turnovers put the Bombers behind the eight-ball in the first half, cancelling drives which first might have tied the game, and secondly, brought it back to 14-7.

"They were both in the other team's red zone," said Lakatos, also alluding to a subsequent fake punt which did not succeed, eventually setting South up inside the IDCI ten-yard line. "I think the guys were in their heads after that."

Giving full credit to the Bombers' opponent, Lakatos said South had come to play, executing nearly flawlessly throughout the contest. Injuries to three of four wide IDCI receivers and also, temporarily, to quarterback Connor Thomson had not helped either.

"Sometimes the ball doesn't bounce your way," said Lakatos. "It's football, any given week, any given Sunday."

Lakotos played with the Woodstock Wolverines as a youth, joining the Blue Bombers program in high school, where he played quarterback. He took over the helm of an IDCI senior team which finished this season with a 3-1-1 record, gutting out a 3-1 win over St. Thomas St. Joe's in a road AA quarter-final matchup.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Ingersoll Blue Bombers quarterback Connor Thomson scrambles past a would-be London South tackler during the TVRA AA semi-final.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

From left, Jacob Gutierrez, Andrew Lindsay and Cody Fleming gang up to tackle a London South ball carrier.

"I'm incredibly proud of the guys," said Lakotos, citing a group which came to practice ready to learn and play. "Some of the most coachable kids I've met."

He also praised a coaching staff including defensive coordinator Logan Johnson, special teams Mike Saucier and Collin Wilson who was in charge of video and the line. Lakotos also reserved a special shout-out for staff advisor Ben Griffiths for both his presence on the sideline and work behind the scenes.

"We would not have a football program if it weren't for him."

Again, except for how the season ended, Lakotos could not have asked for anything more from 'a special group to be around.'

"I'm excited for next year," he concluded.

Junior TVRA AA Semi-Final
St. Thomas Parkside Stampeders 42
Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers 20

The game was closer than the final score said Blue Bombers junior coach Ben Griffiths, with inexperience contributing to two Stampeders recoveries on kickoffs playing a part in extending the scoring gap.

There was no room for miscues against a quality Parkside opponent, Griffiths continued; however, he also emphasized the achievement included a 4-1 regular season record, and a solid 35-14 quarter-final win over rival Aylmer East Elgin.

The fact the Blue Bombers fielded a comparatively young team represented not only progress through the fall 2026 season, Griffiths concluded, but promise for next year.

Echo

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Junior, senior Warriors qualify for WOSSAA AA boys volleyball

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

The Woodstock St. Mary's Warriors junior boys' volleyball team is not resting on its laurels.

True, the combination of avenging their only regular season loss to the previously undefeated St. Thomas Central Elgin Titans in the Thames Valley Regional Athletics (TVRA) Southeast AA championship match does represent a major accomplishment.

But while celebrating that achievement, coach Denys Reid's message at the following practice emphasized setting the team's collective sights higher.

"At the end of the day, you want to be champion of the whole region, not just one level."

The Warriors earned the right to compete for that regional level's Western Ontario Secondary Schools Athletic Association (WOSSAA) AA title with the aforementioned 12-25, 25-22, 25-19, 25-23 match victory over the Titans on Nov. 13 at Central Elgin.

"Our best games to date," said Reid, of a level of play which definitely met, if not exceeded, his high expectations.

St. Mary's had opened semi-finals that morning with a three-set sweep (25-12, 25-19, 25-12) of the St. Thomas St. Joe's Rams. The Titans eliminated the Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers, 5-3 through the regular season, by scores of 26-24, 25-16 and 25-21 in their one-versus-four semifinal.

Reid opened the season with a simple goal, continually getting better and playing harder in order to make the team's last game of the season its best. With that goal in mind, the Warriors were looking to improve the foundational basis of a potent offence, quality defence and a quality first pass during their final practices.

The junior Warriors were scheduled to open WOSSAA semi-finals on Nov. 19 at 9 a.m. against host Stratford St. Mike's. Gold and bronze medal matches were to follow at 12:30 p.m.

"There's still lots of tough volleyball ahead if we want to be WOSSAA champions," Reid concluded. "It's not going to be handed to us."

The senior Warriors also punched their ticket to the regional championship draw, defeating Oxford rival Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers in a tight come-from-behind semi-final match victory Friday, November 13, 22-25, 26-24, 25-23, 25-19.

St. Mary's will head into regional playdowns as the top TVRA Southeast seed following a 3-0 win over St. Thomas St. Joe's Rams in the TVRA Southeast final. The 6-3 Rams upset the 8-0 Central Elgin Titans in their semi-final (25-17, 18-25, 25-15, 25-23) before being swept by the Warriors. St. Mary's was scheduled to open WOSSAA AA playdowns in Stratford on Nov. 19 at 10:30 a.m. against host St. Mike's. Senior gold and bronze medal games are scheduled for 2 p.m.

The Warriors took their quarter-final match at home on Nov. 5 via a 24-26, 25-14, 25-21, 25-16 victory over visiting Aylmer East Elgin Eagles.

"We had a slow start, but we played well, hit well," said power Kingston McPherson at the time. "We're ready for semis."

"Slow start, but we picked it back up," agreed middle Ethan VanRooyen.

"They're really starting to gel," added coach Valerie Popovich prophetically following the win over Aylmer. "We're peaking at the right time."

TVRA SENIOR BOYS AA VOLLEYBALL	
NOV. 13 AT CENTRAL ELGIN	
CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL	
ST. MARY'S	3
ST. JOE'S	0
SEMI-FINALS	
ST. MARY'S	22, 26, 25, 25
INGERSOLL DCI	25, 24, 23, 19
ST. JOE'S	25, 18, 25, 25
CENTRAL ELGIN	17, 25, 15, 23
QUARTERFINALS	
NOV. 5	
ST. MARY'S	24, 25, 25, 25
EAST ELGIN	26, 14, 21, 16
INGERSOLL DCI	26, 20, 16, 25, 15
WOODSTOCK CI	24, 25, 25, 23, 8
ST. JOE'S	25, 25, 19, 25
ST. THOMAS PARKSIDE	21, 19, 25, 20
CENTRAL ELGIN	25, 25, 25
DORCHESTER	18, 23, 12
PRELIMINARY ROUND	
NOV. 3	
WOODSTOCK CI	26, 23, 25, 25
TILLSONBURG	25, 25, 16, 20
EAST ELGIN	25, 25, 23, 23, 15
WOODSTOCK HURON PARK	19, 21, 25, 25, 9
LORD DORCHESTER	3
WOODSTOCK COLLEGE AVENUE	1



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Warriors middle Kiefer Hager (foreground) looks to unload on a ball at the net.

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GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

Trois Rivières: a nice surprise along the St. Lawrence



PAUL KNOWLES
Echo Contributor

It doesn't require an extensive knowledge of French to figure out that the name "Trois Rivières" means "Three Rivers". That's good linguistics, but bad geography. Because this historic city's name is based on a 16th-century mistake.

In fact, there are two rivers – here, the Saint-Maurice flows into the Saint Lawrence. But the mouth of the Saint-Maurice is occupied by several islands, splitting this river into three outlets. The first European visitors mistakenly took those three "mouths" to indicate three rivers.

This was just one of a plethora of facts, anecdotes and stories we heard during one of the finest historical walking tours I have ever experienced. Jean-Phillipe Marcotte, of "Personare", was our guide as we strolled through the historic centre of Trois Rivières.

Trois Rivières is the second-oldest French-speaking city in North America, but it is not as well-known as the two larger cities located less than two hours away – Montréal and Québec City. Tourists tend to drive straight past Trois Rivières to get to the more popular destinations. But they are making a mistake.

Trois Rivières is has a deep and rich history, reaching back long before written records to the time before Europeans arrived. But it's also a city that offers a lot of modern-day delights to travellers. We were both surprised and impressed.

But back to the history. There are statues and monuments throughout the city, honouring the original European visitors to Trois Rivières, names that we remember from the history class: Samuel de Champlain, Radisson, Groseilliers, La Vérendrye – all noted explorers with strong connections to Trois Rivières.

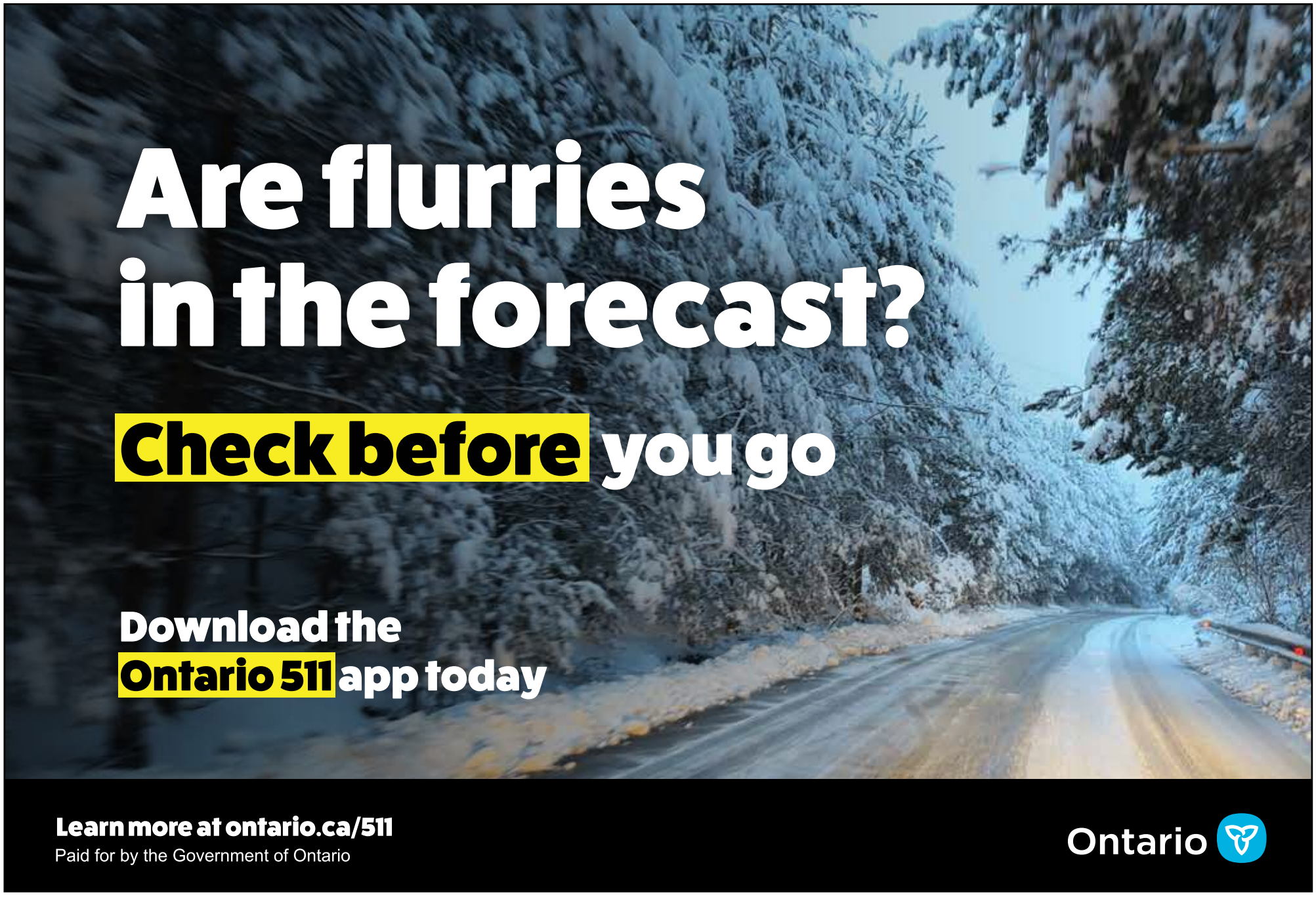
But my favourite was the monument to M. Laviolette,



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

Historic Trois Rivières: the Usuline Convent is shown at the centre of the photo, the former Anglican church in the right foreground.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 26



ROUTE TO THE PAST HISTORY

Remembering "Mr. Wilson"

SCOTT GILLIES

Echo Contributor

As we near the end of this month of Remembrance, let's look back on the life of a much-admired teacher at Ingersoll Collegiate Institute who served Canada during the Second World War.

In the early 1930s, Currie Wilson was on the teaching staff at the Ingersoll high school and besides his regular classes, his extracurricular duties included serving as an instructor with the school's cadet corps and as a coach for its rifle team.

His departure from the school received significant press coverage. The Woodstock-Ingersoll Sentinel-Review reported on April 27, 1942, that Lieutenant Currie Wilson was leaving the ICI teaching staff after being part of the school community for the past six years.

A special assembly was held in the school's gymnasium, which at the time was in a separate building next door. Principal C.L. Bole expressed the heartfelt regrets of the staff and student body as a whole.

After leaving Ingersoll, Lieutenant Wilson of the Oxford Rifles served on the west coast of Canada for a period of time when our local regiment was assigned to guard a heavy battery protecting Canada from potential Japanese attack. He was later transferred to the Windsor Ontario based Essex Scottish Regiment which had been previously decimated during the devastating attack on Dieppe in 1942.

The Essex landed in France in the days following D-Day. In late July of 1944 they were engaged in the Canadian infantry advance south of the French city of Caen. The memoir of fellow officer Major Stewart Hastings Bull recorded that they lost two of their commanding officers and Intelligence Officer Lieutenant Currie Wilson was taken prisoner when they were pinned down by heavy enemy fire from a Tiger tank during the German defense of Verrieres Ridge outside of Caen.

The battle has since been described by the website MapleLeafUp.net as follows:

"Although the two companies (the Essex Scottish and the Perth Regiment) had gone to ground, there was no protection for them there. The thick stand of grain offered concealment only. The stalks of wheat could neither turn aside nor stop the streams of 7.92mm steel-jacketed slugs slashing into flesh, bone and sinew. Nor could the grain stop the storm of white-hot, razor-sharp shrapnel perforating and slicing into their bodies as they pressed hard into the soggy soil in helpless desperation to escape death. The enemy, at full strength and in strongly set-up positions on the ridge, supported by mammoth 88mm-gunned tanks, knew exactly where the Essex had gone to ground, and poured everything they had at them. No amount of bravery could help the hapless infantry in that situation. To move forward was to die."

Fellow Ingersoll resident with the Essex Scottish, Trooper Ross Borthwick, whose parents lived on Bell Street, was killed in action during this same engagement.

Late in July of 1944, the local newspapers reported that Lieutenant Wilson was "missing in France", and it was presumed that had been taken prisoner.

Three years later, almost to the day, The Ingersoll Tribune reported that Currie had indeed been captured and sent to POW camp 'Oflag 79' near Braunschweig (aka Brunswick) Germany.

This three-storey former base for a German parachute regiment had been converted into a prisoner of war camp for officers in 1943. Many of the prisoners were British; men who had been captured in North Africa and Italy. Others included men from other parts of the British Empire and its allies. According to the Wartime Memories website, a few of the fellow officers who were incarcerated with Currie included 2nd Lieutenant Robert Norman Gutteridge, a Brit; Aussie Michael John Goldingham; American Captain Thomas Visger Miller, and member of the Polish Parachute Brigade Captain Jan K. Wardzala.

In 1942, while Wilson had joined the Oxford Rifles, he had made a second commitment in early June of that year when he married Norma Mae McIntyre. She was a registered nurse from St. Mary's then working at Alexandra Hospital. Their wedding made front page news of The Ingersoll Tribune.

Following the war, their family grew to include son Wilfred "Mac" Wilson and daughter Brenda. For a while Currie and Norma and their young family lived above the McBeath Funeral Home before eventually settling down at 336 Thames St. S.

Following his return home, Currie became active with the Ingersoll Kiwanis Club, joining the executive in 1951 with fellow second world war veteran George Lockart as its president and former RCAF pilot Tommy Lee was treasurer.

He maintained his connections with the Oxford Rifles as well, serving as president of the Officers Mess in 1954.



Currie Wilson. (CONTRIBUTED IMAGE)

He was also a fixture still with the IDCI cadet corps throughout the remainder of his career with the school.

During his more than four decades of service to the students of Ingersoll, Currie had taught physics, coached football, been a guidance counsellor and served as Vice Principal alongside of fellow Army officer and school principal J.C. Herbert.

Described by many as a perfect gentleman, "Mr. Wilson" was highly regarded by both staff and students at both the Ingersoll Collegiate Institute and Ingersoll District Collegiate Institute. He retired as vice principal of IDCI.

Born in 1913 in Brampton Ontario, Wilfred Currie Wilson passed away in 1991 and was buried in the Harris Street Cemetery. Norma, his wife, lived to the ripe age of 92, passing away in 2010.

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Echo

Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. Jiminy Cricket first appeared in what book?
2. The apostle Paul was called by Jesus on the road to which city?
3. What items did the Stamp Act levy a tax on?
4. What is the layering process of making pastry called?
5. Who is the villain in "A Nightmare on Elm Street"?
6. The 1976 Summer Olympics were held in which city?
7. What bird can swim but cannot fly?
8. Where do "Yoopers" live?
9. SpongeBob SquarePants lives in a house shaped like what?
10. What is Wales' national dish called?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

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OFA VIEWPOINT

AGRICULTURE

Newly elected municipal councils offer fresh opportunities for farmers

MARK REUSSER

Director, Ontario Federation of Agriculture



Dufferin Federation of Agriculture - Orangeville Mayor & Deputy Mayor Debate event. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Nearly four in 10 members of Ontario's newly elected municipal councils are new to municipal government, and almost half of the mayors and other council heads who ran for re-election were defeated.

Those numbers, from an analysis by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, show just how much has changed at the local government level. For farmers, that presents an opportunity to build relationships with the people who will help shape the future of our communities over the next four years.

Municipal councils make decisions about roads, drainage, land use planning, property taxes and other issues that directly affect how we farm. With so many new people taking office, we have an opportunity to help them understand the role agriculture plays in their communities and what farm businesses need to succeed.

I farm in Waterloo Region, and through my involvement as board director with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), I've had many opportunities to work with municipal politicians over the years.

One thing I've learned is that they're regular people who care about their communities and want to make good decisions. They can't be experts on every issue, though, and that's where we as farmers have an important role to play.

We know what it's like to move large equipment on busy roads, deal with land drainage problems or try to expand a farm business while navigating municipal regulations. These are practical realities that aren't always obvious to someone outside of our sector.

Farmers make up a small percentage of Ontario's population, even though we own and manage a significant amount of land, and we can't expect our municipal representatives to understand agriculture if we don't take the time to talk to them.

I was particularly pleased to see fellow farmers elected or re-elected to municipal councils across Ontario this fall, including three of my colleagues on OFA's provincial board. Having farmers involved in local government brings practical agricultural experience directly to the council table.

Of course, running for office isn't the only way farmers can get involved.

Here in Waterloo Region, our local federation of agriculture helped organize three candidate debates during the campaign this fall that attracted approximately 500 people. Many other federations hosted similar events. They're good examples of how farmers can get involved in local government, but those conversations shouldn't end when the votes are counted.

I encourage local federations to invite their newly elected representatives to a meeting or arrange a farm tour. Individual farmers can do the same to start building those relationships. Don't wait until there's a problem or a controversial issue before making contact.

In my experience, nothing beats a face-to-face conversation. It's much easier to explain why a particular road is difficult to navigate with farm equipment when you can stand beside it and show someone exactly what you mean.

A visit to a farm can also help municipal representatives understand the investments farmers make in their businesses, the jobs they support and how local decisions can affect their ability to operate and grow. It's also an opportunity to talk about what agriculture contributes to the community, not just the challenges we face.

And don't overlook municipal staff. They're often the people farmers deal with directly on matters like drainage and planning applications. Their advice also helps shape council decisions, so it's important they understand the practical realities of agriculture.

OFA has resources to help with these conversations. Our municipal election toolkit is still useful even though the campaign is over, and our Agriculture Matters guide provides information about farming and agricultural issues specifically for municipal councillors and staff.

We won't always agree with the decisions our municipal councils make. But if we want those decisions to reflect the realities of farming, we need to do more than speak up when something goes wrong. We need to make the effort to build relationships, share our knowledge and help the people making those decisions understand our businesses.

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Scan for Project Website:

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
Centreville Dam Class Environmental Assessment

NOTICE OF INTENT

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA), through their consultant team led by Onterris Canada Inc., is undertaking a Class Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Centreville Dam located in the Township of South-West Oxford (SWOX), within the Hamlet of Centreville. The dam and associated reservoir are located on Foldens Creek (aka Foster Drain), approximately 3 km east of the Town of Ingersoll. The map below shows the location of the study area.

While a dam and reservoir have existed on the current site since the 1830's, originally constructed as a grist mill, the last major upgrades to the existing dam were completed in 1955/56. The reduction of provincial funding to conservation authorities in the early 1990's led to the sale of the property to the Township of South-West Oxford, though maintenance of the dam remains a UTRCA responsibility.

The dam is approximately 75 m long, with primary flow control provided via a two-bay, 8 m wide concrete spillway structure and earthen berm embankments on either side. The overall height of the dam from the crest of the spillway to the invert of the downstream channel/creek is 5.5 m. The extent of reservoir level and discharge flow control is limited to two stoplogs resting atop the concrete sill structure that is itself approximately 3.4 m above the concrete spillway.

A Dam Safety Assessment (DSA) of the structure, commissioned by the UTRCA and completed in 2007, categorized the structure as a "Small Dam" having a "Very Low" incremental hazard potential (IHP) for both flood and earthquake conditions. Despite the resultant inflow design flood being the relatively small, 50-year, 8-day spring snowmelt event, the dam does not have the capacity to pass the design flood without overtopping. From a structural perspective, the upstream and downstream faces of the earthen berm embankment have been identified as eroding, over-steepened, and thickly vegetated and neither meet slope stability acceptance criteria. Spalling and deterioration of the concrete control structure elements were also identified.

The rectification of identified structural and flood conveyance capacity deficiencies requires that a Class EA process that includes public consultation be undertaken to characterize the project's environment and assess various alternatives to the long-term management of the structure and surroundings. The project will be carried out under the Conservation Ontario Class Environmental Assessment for Remedial Flood and Erosion Control Works document.

The Project Team invites public input and will incorporate comments and considerations into the planning and design of this project. The public will be notified in advance of Public Information Centres that will be held to present information on the project and receive public feedback. To submit comments, request further information, or to join the project mailing list, please contact:



David Proracki, P.Eng.
Project Engineer
Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
1424 Clarke Road
London, Ontario, N5V 5B9
Tel: 519-451-2800 Ext. 330
Fax: 519-451-1188
prorackid@thamesriver.on.ca

Scott Robertson, P.Eng.
Senior Water Resources Engineer
Onterris Canada Inc.
650 Woodlawn Road West, Unit 7B
Guelph, Ontario, N1K 1B8
Tel: 226-314-1962
srobertson@onterris.com

Trois Rivières: a nice surprise along the St. Lawrence

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

apparent founder of Trois Rivières. I say "apparent" because there is scant evidence of the illusive M. Laviolette. Our guide admitted that "we don't have a clue" who M. Laviolette is. In fact, "for a long time, Trois Rivières did not have a founder." But while the city was founded in the early 1600's (there had been French fur traders in the area since 1585), M. Laviolette was not acknowledged as the city founder until centuries later.

In fact, as Jean-Philippe told us with a laugh, as we stood before the bust of M. Laviolette, it is generally agreed that even the name is not the real deal. It's probably a nickname; it translates as "The Violin".

But the rest of the story of Trois Rivières is undoubtedly more historically accurate. And that story unfolded as we walked around the surprisingly well-preserved historic parts of the city. This in spite of a 1908 fire that destroyed hundreds of homes in part of the city centre.

Although the fur trade was the original impetus that created most of Canada's historic cities, Trois Rivières soon had other enterprises on the go, as well. This was the site of what might have been the first forge in North America. Later, Trois Rivières became an important ship-building centre (a historic reality that has an echo in one of today's important economic drivers – the cruise ship port).

Later still, lumber mills dominated the local economy – which was temporarily good for employment and financial gain, but terrible for tourism because of the incessant odors created by the pulp and paper factories.

That business thrived for decades; massive numbers of logs were still being floated down the Saint-Maurice River until the mid-1990's.

Today, that business is almost entirely gone. But here's where Trois Rivières again emerges as an impressive community – on the site of some of the pulp and paper mills stands a state-of-the-art entertainment centre, the Cocego Amphiteatre. The Amphitheatre has hosted performers ranging from Céline Dion, Bryan Adams and Burton Cummings to Cirque du Soleil. It's an impressive space – but in my historically-focused opinion, it's not the most impressive building in town. That one was once home to nuns.

Trois Rivières is still home to dozens of historic buildings, and the city has a program that funds up to 50% (capped at $40,000) of the costs of restoring homes to their original form. Many have taken advantage of this, and walking the streets of Trois Rivières can feel like journeying back in time.

The most impressive structure is probably the Ursuline Convent. The Ursuline nuns played a prominent role in the history of the city. Today, they no longer occupy the palatial building that once housed the Convent, although there is still a small group of Ursulines in Trois Rivières. The Order sold their Convent, chapel, school and more to the city for $1, on the condition that the building could not be converted into condominiums. Instead, it houses a museum, classrooms for students ranging from kindergarten to university age.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

A statue honouring the perhaps fictional founder of Trois Rivières, M. Laviolette.

Trois Rivières is a city of stories, ranging from its probably fictional founder to community-minded nuns to Ezekiel Hart (1770-1853), a Jewish entrepreneur elected to represent the city in Québec's legislative assembly, but who was not allowed to serve because he was a Jew. So the city re-elected him, twice more.

And that's the kind of informed determination that has made this city what it is today – an often-bypassed destination well worth your time.

Paul Knowles is an author and travel writer, and Past-President of the Travel Media Association of Canada. To contact Paul about travel, his books, or speaking engagements, email pknowles@golden.net.

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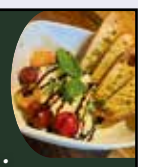

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COMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 24 | 1 PM
SACRED HEART PARISH EUCHRE
Henderson Hall, 133 John Street Ingersoll
We invite everyone to join us for a Euchre afternoon. Refreshments provided.

NOVEMBER 21 | 11 AM - 2:30 PM
FAMILY FUN DAY
Emmanuel Reformed Church, 170 Clarke St. Woodstock, ON
Penny Sale - Silent Auction - Bake Sale - Games for all Ages - Delicious Soup - Chili - Hot Dogs - Buns - Yummy Desserts - Drinks. FREE ADMISSION - EVERYONE WELCOME.

NOVEMBER 25 | 7 PM
OXFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY FLIGHT LIEUTENANT OLIVER BROCK ROBERTSON, DFC
Chartwell Oxford Gardens 433 Devonshire Ave. (Main Entrance)
Born in Innerkip and raised in Norwich, Flt. Lt. Robertson and his crew flew 28 missions as part of the 97th Squadron ("The Pathfinders") of RAF Bomber Command in WW2. Come join Bob Van Wyk as he recounts the history of O.B. Robertson, his brave crew and their heroic missions in honour of their memories and service on Remembrance Day and everyday. Free Event, No Registration, Parking, Donations Welcome! www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.ca or email us at info@oxhs.ca

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NOVEMBER 27 | 7 - 9 PM
NOVEMBER 28 | 9 AM - 2 PM
WHIMSICAL WINTER MARKET AT SOUTH GATE CENTRE
191 Old Wellington St S, Woodstock, ON
VENDORS ~ HOLIDAY BAKING ~ SANTA'S SECRET SECONDS ~ NANA'S BOUTIQUE ~ HOLIDAY GREENERY AND POINTSETTIAS ~ SILENT AUCTION ~ WOODSHOP TREASURES. FREE ADMISSION

DECEMBER

DECEMBER 5 | 10 AM - 1 PM
ST. PAUL'S CHRISTMAS MARKET
St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 56 Thames St. S., Ingersoll
Join us for a festive market
to include a Penny Sale (Draw at 12:30 pm), Treasure Chest,
Local Craft Vendors, Christmas candy, cookies, frozen fruit pies, turkey pies, frozen soups, casseroles & cabbage rolls. It will be a wonderful day to pick up your favourite treats and gifts and share the festive spirit. We hope you can join us!

DECEMBER 5 | 1 - 4 PM
CEDARVIEW RETIREMENT HOME ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR
511 Finkle Street, Woodstock
Free Event.

DECEMBER 5 | 9 AM - 2 PM
CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR
560 Dundas Street, Woodstock
Baking table, Homemade Candy, Shortbread, Shepherd pies, Turkey pies, Christmas pudding, Preserves, Jewelry, Attic Treasure and Vendors.

DECEMBER 8 & 22 | 1 PM
SACRED HEART PARISH EUCHRE
Henderson Hall, 133 John Street Ingersoll
We invite everyone to join us for a Euchre afternoon. Refreshments provided.

DECEMBER 12 | 9 AM - 1 PM
CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE HOMEMADE HOLIDAY TREATS
St. James' Anglican Church: 130 Thames St. S., Ingersoll
Proceeds supporting several local charities.

DECEMBER 13 | 2 PM
ENJOY DICKEN'S "A CHRISTMAS CAROL"
Old St Paul's Church, 723 Dundas St. Woodstock.
That classic tale of villainy and redemption, as read by Stephen Bourne with musical arrangements by Stephanie Tulloch and James Turner. Adults are only $20.00 and kids under 12 are free.

ONGOING CLASSES, CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

SECOND THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH (SEPTEMBER THROUGH JUNE) | 7 PM
JOIN THE WOODSTOCK COIN CLUB!
Friendship Room at St. David's United Church 190 Springbank Ave, Woodstock, ON
Are you looking to make sense of your collection? Want to meet local folks who truly know your worth? Whether you are a seasoned numismatist or just found an old jar of coins, we want to meet you. Come trade stories, share your treasures, and talk shop with fellow collectors. WEBSITE: woodstockcoinclub.ca, EMAIL: woodstockcoinclub1957@gmail.com, FACEBOOK: Search "Woodstock Coin Club"

WOODSTOCK SEA CADETS AND NAVY LEAGUE CADETS ARE FREE PROGRAMS
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SEA CADETS:
12 – 18 years Tuesdays 6:30 – 9:00 pm
Contact: 153sea@cadets.gc.ca

NAVY LEAGUE CADETS:
9 – 12 years Wednesdays 6:30 – 9:00 pm
Contact: nlccunicorn@navyleagueon.ca

EVERY 3RD THURSDAY | 5 - 7 PM
ARTISTS OPEN MIC | POETRY, PROSE, MUSIC & MORE
Blueink Bookstore & Cafe, 491 Dundas Street, Woodstock, ON
www.blueinkbookstore.com. Go to "Events" Tab for information and to register

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EVERY OTHER FRIDAY | 1 - 4 PM
BE FALL-ISH AND COME TO 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! September 4 & 18, October 2, 16 & 30, November 6 & 20, and December 4.

3RD TUE. OF MONTH | 6:30 - 8:30 PM
CAREGIVER CONNECTION
Revel Realty Woodstock, 111 Huron Street (Virutal/ hyrbid 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 or email 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.

2ND TUES. OF MONTH (SEPT. TO MAY) | 2 - 4 PM
4TH 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 dheaton3e3@gmail.com. Website: http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford

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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.

3RD 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 or oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca. We are also on Facebook: Parents for Children's Mental Health ~ Oxford County

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VON OXFORD SUPPORTIVE CARE PROGRAMS
Navigating any form of grief can feel overwhelming; however, with the right support, guidance, and education, individuals can discover a pathway to healing.
VON Oxford Supportive Care Programs offer assistance for grief stemming from various circumstances, such as the death of someone, caregiving, serious illness diagnoses, and life transitions. Through education, connection, and compassion, our programs create a safe space for individuals to explore their emotions and learn effective coping mechanisms during the grieving process
Contact us today to learn more about VON Oxford Supportive Care Programs. Email: oxford.griefsupport@von.ca, Phone: 1-888-866-7518. All Programs are Free-of-charge.

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

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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 for more information.

COMING EVENTS

OXFORD COUNTY BRANCH OF ONTARIO ANCESTORS

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!

BEACHVILLE LEGION EVENTS:
434852 ZorraLine, Beachville

WEDNESDAYS | 7-8 PM
GENTLE CHAIR YOGA

WEDNESDAYS | 7:30 PM
HUMP DAY DARTS, FREE POOL

THURSDAYS | 7 PM
EUCHRE

FRIDAYS | 7:30 PM
DARTS (REGISTRATION AT 7. PLAY AT 7:30), FREE POOL

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

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NOVEMBER 25 | 4:30 - 6 PM
OX ON THE RUN MOBILE LIBRARY

DECEMBER 4 | 5 PM
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DECEMBER 5 | 7 - 11 PM
KARAOKE

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

MONDAYS
CADETS

TUES, WED, THU & FRI
DART NIGHT

No darts no November 27th. Private Function. Canteen is open till 5pm

THURSDAYS | 1:30 PM
SHUFFLEBOARD

SATURDAYS | 7 - 11 PM
EVENING ENTERTAINMENT:
NOVEMBER 21ST - FLASHBACK

NOVEMBER 28TH - RANDY THOMAS

NOVEMBER 29 | 5 - 6 PM
FAMILY DINNER

Roast Beef plus dessert for more details contact the branch 519-537-3112 or email rclbranch55@rogers.com.

DECEMBER 6 | 9 - 11:30 AM
ANNUAL SANTA BREAKFAST

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BLACK FRIDAY SALE

Riddles

No matter how little or how much you use me, you change me every month. What am I?

A calendar.

What runs around the whole yard without moving?

A Fence.

What do you see once in June, twice in November, and not at all in May?

The letter "e."

What five-letter word has one left when two letters are removed?

Stone.

Spelled forwards I'm what you do every day, spelled backward I'm something you hate. What am I?

Live.

What occurs once in a minute, twice in a moment, and never in 1,000 years?

The letter "M."

What is at the end of a rainbow?

The letter W!

Sudoku

by PeterS 2026

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

Solution found on page 31

Featured Pet



TINKERBELL

Nominate your pet to be a Featured Pet by emailing info@theecho.ca

Word Search

WHAT'S POPPIN'

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

AIR
BAG
BUCKET
BUTTER
CARAMEL
CHEESE
CORN
CRUNCHY
FLUFFY
GARLAND
HULL
KERNEL
KETTLE
MICROWAVE
MOVIE NIGHT
OIL
POPPING
SALT
SEASONING
SNACK
STOVETOP
THEATER

CLASSIFIEDS

OBITUARY

JAMES (JIM) DONALDSON



James (Jim) Donaldson, 78, passed away at his home on November 3, 2026. His family is saddened by his passing and will forever cherish the memories they shared with him.

Jim was the loving husband of Anya for 55 years. He was a proud father to Tanya Waters (Gord) and Reagan (Erica), and a loving grandfather to Katelyn (Tyler), Gregory (Sylwia) Waters and Carsen Donaldson.

He will also be fondly remembered by his siblings, Peggy (Reg) Searles, Ted (Gail) Donaldson and Penny (Barry) Mulvey. Jim was predeceased by his parents, Stanley and Pearl Donaldson, and his sister, Betty and her husband Les Knott.

Jim graduated from the Diploma in Agriculture Program at the University of Guelph and went on to build a successful career as a Swine Export Specialist. His work took him to many countries around the world, where he developed lifelong friendships and lasting connections.

Jim was always at the heart of keeping family and friends connected. He took great pride in planning gatherings and making sure those near and far stayed in touch.

In keeping with Jim's wishes, we are hosting his last party! Please join us for a Celebration of Life in his honour at Craigowan Golf Club on Sunday, November 29th, 2026, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to St. Joseph's Health Care London in support of research into Microscopic Polyangiitis. Rheumatology Department Attention: Dr. Lillian Barra St. Joseph's Hospital, 268 Grosvenor St., D2-101, London, ON N6A 4V2

TREES

For Sale: Shade Trees; Maples, Oaks, Birch, Beech, Honey Locusts, Elms, Magnolia, Hydrangea Tree, Tulip Tree, Crab apples, Ivory Silk Lilac, Chanticleer Pear, Golden Weeping Willows and more. Apples, Pears, Peaches, Plums, Apricots, Nectarine, Blueberry, Haskap etc. Lots of healthy strong Spruce, Cedars and White Pine for your privacy hedges and windbreaks. Hundred of flowering shrubs.
Reg Hours 7am- 6pm Mon-Sat at Martins Nursery c/o Emanuel Martin. 42661 Orangehill Rd., Wroxeter, ON

WANTED

Old firearms for $$$, especially Lee Enfield 303's, and older Winchester's, have P.A.L., I am local. Please call 1-867-993-3911 or email thirtypound@hotmail.com

COW AUCTION



Herd Dispersal Live Auction Sale

of 135 Bred Cows/Heifers

Saturday November 21, 11:00am

to be held at 554447 Mono-Amaranth TLine, Mono, ON
Preview on day of sale, or by appointment

Directions: Go west through Orangeville on Hwy 9 to County Rd 16 (Veterans Way at Greenwood Cemetery), turn north 5 miles to farm on East side. OR From Shelburne go east on Hwy 89 for 2 miles to Mono-Amaranth Townline, turn south & go 5 miles to farm on East side.Townline, turn south & go 5 miles to farm on East side.

Cattle: (79)Heifers: (18) Char, (17) Blk Simm, (33) Angus, (11) Red -1st time calvers, bred Angus & Limo, vacc. **(18) X-bred Heifers** - bred Black Angus, vacc. **(17) Angus Heifers** - bred Black Angus. **(10) Blk Angus cows** - all bred Black Angus, vacc. **(8) Charolais Cows** - bred Charolais, vacc. **(3) Mixed Cows** - with calf at side, vacc.
All Cows will be preg checked prior to sale.
Lunch Booth
Washroom Available
Terms & Conditions: Cash or cheque with proper I.D. on day of sale. Owner & Auctioneer will not be responsible for any accidents or loss on day of sale. All announcements on day of sale will take precedence over printed ads.

Auctioneers: Kevin McArthur (519) 942-0264
Scott Bessey (519) 843-5083
Email: mcarthurbessey@gmail.com
www.theauctionadvertiser.com/KMcArthur
- full listing & photos

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7. Penguin
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9	8	7	4	5	2	3	1	6
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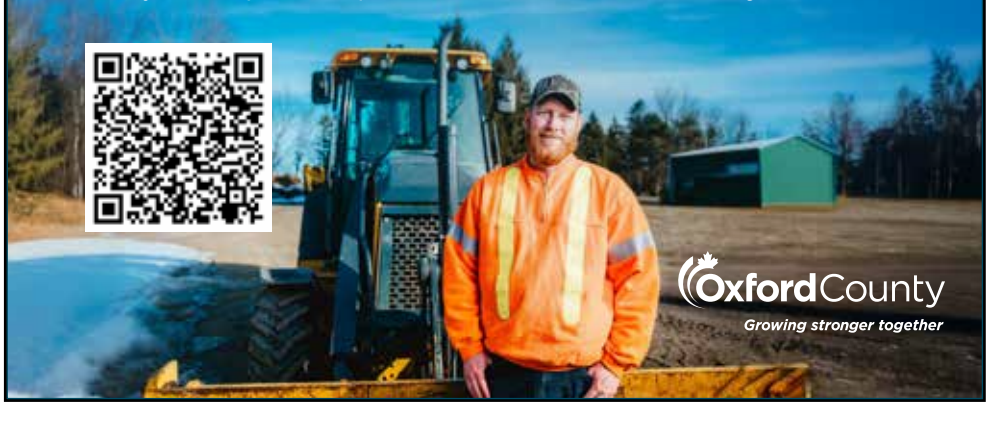
Please note, afternoon shift hours may be applicable during the winter season.

This role includes maintaining culverts, roads, roadsides and safety devices, and performing winter control activities, including snow plow operation. Valid Class D license with Z endorsement is required.

Apply by December 1, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.

Resumes are only accepted via email at hr@oxfordcounty.ca.
Please include the competition number in the subject line.

Full job description and qualifications, visit **www.oxfordcounty.ca/careers**



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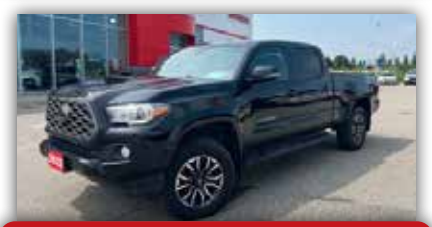

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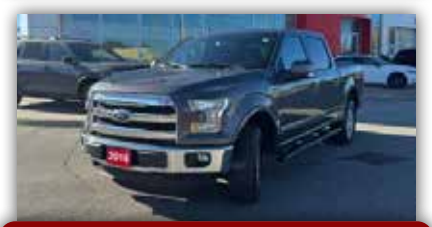

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