

Exeter Examiner

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Construction of new Dashwood firehall approved

JOHN MINER

Examiner Reporter

A project more than a decade in the making, a new Dashwood Fire Hall has been given the green light by South Huron municipal council.

A gallery packed with firefighters and their families broke into extended applause at the June 1 council meeting when a recorded vote was taken to award the tender for the fire hall.

All council members present voted in favour of the \$4.1 million project.

Agri-Urban Buildings Incorporated, the lowest of 14 bidders, was awarded the contract.

The new three-bay firehall is to be built at 177 Centre Street South in Dashwood with an anticipated completion date of April 19, 2027.

Council had budgeted \$3.5 million for the new firehall. To cover the additional cost of the project, council approved using money from the fire capital replacement reserve and a debenture.

Spriet Associates, the engineering firm that reviewed the tenders, said the results are considered competitive and reflective of current market conditions.

A staff report on the new firehall said it will provide efficiencies and a modern facility that focuses on health and safety of staff. There will be little to no impacts to the community during construction as the project will be on municipal lands, the report said.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 5



ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR SUPPORTS SOUTH HURON HOSPITAL

The Order of the Eastern Star has made the purchase of a piece of lifesaving equipment possible at the South Huron Hospital with a \$5,000 donation through the Florence Nightingale Home Foundation. Members of the order visited the hospital on June 10. The donation allowed the hospital to purchase a GlideScope, a piece of equipment that aids in intubation, making it vital for the hospital that regularly treats those who experience drowning incidents. Additionally, Exeter Chapter #222 donated another \$4,500 to support the South Huron Hospital Foundation.

(DAN ROLPH PHOTO)

Grand Bend gears up for Canada Day celebration

DAN ROLPH

Editor

With Canada Day right around the corner, the annual festivities in Grand Bend are set to be as exciting as ever.

Organized by a committee of local volunteers, this

year's event will take place on Wednesday, July 1, bringing with it a lineup of musical acts who will perform on the Rotary Community Stage, as well as what is being labelled by organizers as southwestern Ontario's largest Canada Day fireworks display.

"We enjoy doing it," said Grand Bend Optimist Club president and event organizer Paul Rivard. "There's

CONTINUED TO PAGE 11



Andrew Darling

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Community organizers excited to bring back South Huron Trail Run

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

The South Huron Trail Run is back this year after more than a decade.

The trail run will take place on Sunday, August 30, 2026, making its return after several years.

“We are pleased to bring back the South Huron Trail Run in 2026,” said Friends of South Huron Trail member Lorne Rideout. “People have missed this event and are very excited to see its return.”

The South Huron Trail Run combines an opportunity for beginners and more experienced runners, he said.

“The South Huron Trail Run is an event where runners can compete and

challenge themselves while also enjoying nature in a wonderful destination. Runners also know they are supporting a great cause by raising funds for the South Huron Trail system.”

The organizers of the run said they need volunteers leading up to the event and on race day. Those looking to volunteer are asked to reach out to organizers. Contact information is on the trail run poster at abca.ca.

There will be an 8-kilometre run which will cross Jones Bridge. There will also be a 3.25-kilometre run/walk which will cross Lions Bridge and Stirling Bridge.

Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. on race day.

The 3.25-kilometre walk/run starts at 9:30 a.m. The 8-kilometre run begins at

9:45 a.m.

To register for the trail run, visit RaceRoster.com.

Net proceeds of the trail run go to the South Huron Trail for future trail maintenance.

The South Huron Trail Run was held for more than a decade but has been absent for more than a decade before its return this year. Ausable Bayfield Conservation ran the event in 2004 to 2006. Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Huron continued the event between 2007 and 2015. Now, a group of community volunteers is organizing the return of the trail run.

More information is available on the South Huron Trail website southhuron-trail.com/south-huron-trail-run/.



Stay engaged this summer with the Alzheimer Society Huron Perth

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

The Alzheimer Society Huron Perth is inviting community members to stay connected, informed and supported this summer through a variety of free educational programs and social opportunities designed for people living with dementia, care partners, families and community members.

Living Well Series: One featured summer education session is “An Introduction to the Ontario Caregiver Organization” on July 7 co-hosted with MacKay Centre for Seniors at 1:30 p.m. This presentation highlights the important role caregivers play and introduces free programs, services, and resources available to support them. Whether you help with appointments, daily tasks or regular check-ins, this session offers valuable information and connections for caregivers.

Building on this foundation of support, the Alzheimer Society Huron Perth is also offering Care Partners: Dealing with the Feelings, a four-week series beginning July 22 at 1:30 p.m. This program expands on the caregiving experience by creating space for participants to explore the emotional side of care, share common experiences and develop coping strategies while connecting with others who understand the caregiving journey.

Additional summer education offerings include:

- Dementia and Travel – July 14 at 1:30 p.m. Learn practical tips and considerations for travelling while living with dementia or supporting someone who is.

- Driving and Dementia – August 18 at 1:30 p.m. Explore the relationship between driving and dementia, including safety considerations, planning ahead and available supports.

In addition to education programs, the Alzheimer Society Huron Perth will continue its popular Virtual Ukulele Summer Jams, offering participants a chance to connect through music and brain health. Sessions will take place online on June 23, July 28, and August 18 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. The society is also partnering with the Friendship Centre in St. Marys to offer an in-person ukulele jam on July 30 from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

All education sessions are free and open to the public. For details and registration for these online programs, visit www.bit.ly/ASHPEducationHour or click the Education Hour banner at www.alzheimer.ca/huronperth. For assistance, contact 1-800-561-5012 or email info@alzhp.ca.

Whether you are looking for information, support, connection, or simply a chance to try something new, there is something for everyone this summer.

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EDITORIAL

The spirit of Canada lives right here



DAN ROLPH

Editor

Every Canada Day, we see the same images of fireworks over Parliament Hill. We see the pictures of crowds gathered in cities for attention-grabbing and over-the-top celebrations that we've come to expect from the day that marks the anniversary of Canada's Confederation.

Canada Day brings with it moments of joy and celebration that many of us partake in every year, albeit on a smaller scale in communities like ours.

But through those celebrations, it is important not to lose sight of what we are celebrating in the first place.

Patriotism isn't about who waves the biggest flag or who shouts the loudest about proudly being Canadian. It isn't about pretending, and it isn't built on grand gestures.

In truth, patriotism is about the people right in front of you.

It is about the neighbour who shows up unannounced with a shovel in hand the morning after a blizzard. Its foundation is the coaches who volunteer, giving up their evenings and weekends so young athletes

can play a sport they love. Its heart is the people who quietly drop off groceries for someone going through a hard time, not looking for recognition.

These people are not performing patriotism. They are living it.

As someone who admittedly grew up in a city much larger than this community, I recognize that there is something truly special about belonging to a small town. In a big city you are a face in a crowd.

Here, you are a neighbour among neighbours. People know your name and will talk to you as you're shopping for groceries or walking on a trail. They will wave to you as you pass them on the street or ask you about your family with genuine interest.

That kind of connection is quietly extraordinary, even when it feels ordinary. And perhaps part of loving a place is being honest about it, too.

Small towns like ours are not perfect. At times they can be insular, and maybe slow to change.

Canada is also imperfect, and it carries with it a history that deserves honest reflection and contemplation. It's a history that reminds us that the work of becoming the country we want to be, the country we celebrate every year on July 1, is never truly finished.

At its best, Canada has always been built by people who recognize the challenges of their time and chose to be forces for change. When we look at our history, we can see that

spirit in great Canadians like Terry Fox and Viola Desmond.

But you don't need to dig into the history Canada's well-known figures to find that spirit. We can see it in our own community, and it is alive and well.

So, as we enjoy the festivities and celebrations this Canada Day, take a moment to look around at the community we are a part of and ask yourself what you can do to make it even kinder, more welcoming and more worthy of the people who call it home.

We stand on the shoulders of giants, whether or not their names make the history books. They are the ones who make Canada celebration-worthy.

Happy Canada Day.

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N E W S P A P E R

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Exeter Examiner Guiding Principles
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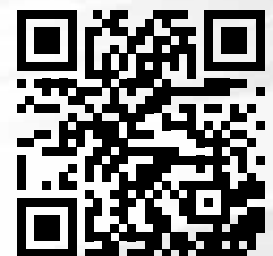
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5. Newspapers document history
6. Newspapers strengthen communities
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COMMUNITY

Body of missing swimmer recovered near Port Franks

DAN ROLPH

Editor

The body of a swimmer who went missing on Victoria Day weekend in Grand Bend has been found.

According to Lambton County OPP, the body of the swimmer, a 22-year-old from Nepal, was recovered on May 29 in Lake Huron along the shore in Port Franks.

The swimmer had been missing since a May 18 incident at Pinery Provincial Park.

In an earlier news release, police said officers responded to reports of a raft carrying five individuals on Lake Huron in distress. Two of those individuals swam to shore, while two others were able to make it back to the raft, all of whom were uninjured.

One individual remained missing fol-

lowing the incident.

Search efforts began soon after and were later expanded to include aerial and underwater search and recovery teams.

Around 2:30 p.m. on May 29, OPP and the Lambton Shores fire department responded to a report of a deceased individual spotted in Lake Huron in Port Franks.

The Office of the Chief Coroner and Ontario Forensic Pathology Service later confirmed the recovered body belonged to the missing 22-year-old from Nepal.

A statement from Lambton County OPP read, "The Lambton OPP recognizes the impact this incident has had on the individuals involved, their loved ones, first responders, and the broader community. The OPP would like to thank the public for their patience and support throughout the search effort."



(DAN ROLPH PHOTO)

The body of a swimmer who went missing on Victoria Day weekend in Grand Bend has been recovered in Port Franks. The search effort for the swimmer included an underwater search and recovery unit

Construction of new Dashwood firehall approved

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Coun. Aaron Neeb said residents of South Huron should be aware that the new firehall is not just Dashwood's fire station, but it is a fire station for the entire municipality.

"An adequate facility in Dashwood means improved protection for our volunteer firefighters, but also the entire municipality including Exeter, Huron Park, Centralia, Kirkton, Crediton, Shipka, Oakwood, Grand Cove and everywhere in between," Neeb said.

Neeb noted that part of the cost of the new firehall will be covered by development charges.

"Development charges aren't just for the municipality to collect money, they are to pay for services like our fire service."

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Fabulous Over 50 Club



We welcome your submissions for our **Fabulous Over 50 club**, where you can nominate a loved one to be featured in the Exeter Examiner. *Please send a photo and a brief description to info@exeterexaminer.com*

Exeter Examiner Photo Quiz



Who are you looking at?
By Judy and Barry Johnson



Don't you just smile when you see me in spring? I am a cheerful early bloomer. You can't miss my mounds of glossy green leaves with brilliantly sunny yellow flowers tilting towards the sky.

HINT: I grow in wet spots at the edge of streams and rivers. Some people think I'm a buttercup, my smaller relative, but I am much showier, just saying! I also am called a kingcup and more than a dozen other names.

This week's answers are found on pg. 34

WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

1. Who won the 2025-2026 Stanley Cup?
2. Who recently became the world's first trillionaire?
3. What is the first stage of the rain/water cycle?
4. In "Goodfellas", what character did Robert De Niro portray?
5. The thistle is the national flower of what country?
6. How did Oliver Tree die?
7. What is Duolingo's mascot?
8. Which dog breed was the first to have its evidence legally admitted in court?
9. In health, what does HDL stand for?
10. In what year did the first FIFA World Cup take place?

This week's answers are found on pg. 34

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Tuesday, June 23rd at the Crediton Hall.
Registration is requested to:
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Local rescue works to keep up with rising number of cats in need

DAN ROLPH

Editor

What started as a sanctuary for farm animals has become a busy rescue for cats in need of a home.

Heavenly Hills Animal Sanctuary in Lucan was created by Sonia Kastanis in 2000. She opened her property to neglected or abused farm animals, giving them seven acres to roam on and live out their lives in peace. Heavenly Hills has had llamas, chickens, goats, ducks, dogs and cats over the years.

"I've always loved animals, and we've always had animals," said Kastanis.

Now, more than two decades later, the love for animals remains at the heart of what Heavenly Hills does every day, but the local rescue has shifted to tackle what was revealed to be an area in need of their undivided attention.

Cats.

"It got so busy with the cats that it was impossible," said Kastanis.

At any given time, Kastanis said Heavenly Hills is caring for around 200 cats. Though based in Lucan, Heavenly Hills doesn't keep its cats on-site, instead opting to work alongside fosters and local stores while searching for new homes for the cats coming into their care.

"It's nuts," said Kastanis. "It's a lot, but it's made possible with all of the help of the volunteers and the fosters. Without them, it's impossible."

The cats coming to Heavenly Hills are brought to them from places throughout the region, including from Huron, Lambton and Middlesex counties. Kastanis said the cats may come from anywhere from a barn to a hoarding situation, and that they are all in need of safe, loving homes.

"They come from everywhere," she said. "We've had Grand Bend, the God-

erich area. There's not many rescues in those areas, so they call us.

"We get calls from all over the place just for help. We do our best."

Kastanis said the number of cats coming into their care has grown over the years, but she said the rescue saw a spike particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic — a spike that has continued to keep Heavenly Hills busy.

"There's always been tons of cats, but it's beyond belief," she said. "It's getting to be more and more. It just never ends."

With the closure of the Ontario SPCA Huron Animal Centre in Goderich in 2018, local options to find help for strays have become limited to the few remaining independent rescues operating in the region.

At Heavenly Hills, every cat that is adopted through them is spayed or neutered and receives its shots, flea treatment and deworming, which is covered by their \$300 adoption fee.

"Nobody leaves without those," she said.

Though Kastanis said they aim to keep the cats they care for in the area as they're being fostered, she said those looking to adopt may come from anywhere.

"If the application and the family is great, it doesn't matter where they come from," she said.

Kastanis said people are often surprised to learn about the amount of spending required to cover veterinarian bills and other expenses. Though spaying and neutering is discounted, other treatments are usually at full price, while prices for various necessary everyday items only add onto the bills.

"We could spend \$1,000 on one cat, and then we're only charging the minimum adoption fee," she said. "All of that is out of pocket, so we have to make that up somehow.



(HEAVENLY HILLS ANIMAL SANCTUARY PHOTO)

Terra and Taffy are just two of the cats up for adoption through Heavenly Hills. Those interested in finding their new best friend can contact Heavenly Hills at heavenlyhillsadopt@gmail.com.

"The struggle is real, financially. It's scary sometimes."

For Heavenly Hills, the costs associated with caring for the growing number of cats has left them needing to get creative to cover the bills, leading to the opening of Blooming Hills Boutique.

Opened at 14636 Elginfield Road in Lucan, Kastanis sells home goods at the boutique, with all proceeds going toward supporting Heavenly Hills. The boutique's selection includes artificial plants, garden decorations, household décor and plenty of cat-themed items to fit their ongoing mission.

"Anything that we sell here just goes directly to help all the cats," said Kastanis.

Looking ahead, Kastanis said she hopes to hold a grand opening event for the boutique in the coming months. She said she also would like to turn the boutique into more of a destination for visitors, adding tables and chairs where

guests could enjoy a cup of coffee while stopping by to support the rescue.

Blooming Hills Boutique is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Kastanis said Heavenly Hills is always looking for support in the form of volunteers as well, particularly those willing to foster cats. Other volunteer opportunities include event setups and transportation.

"We always need fosters," she said. "We're always looking for fosters."

For Kastanis, the work is demanding, costly and seemingly never-ending. But even with the number of cats coming to Heavenly Hills reaching new heights, the goal remains giving every cat a chance at finding a safe and loving home.

For more information about Heavenly Hills Animal Sanctuary, visit their Facebook page [@heavenly.hills.animals](https://www.facebook.com/heavenly.hills.animals).

Rebuilding ridership priority for Huron Shores Area Transit

JOHN MINER

Examiner Reporter

With funding secured for the next five years, Huron Shores Area Transit (HSAT) aims to rebuild ridership, install more bus stop shelters and improve the efficiency of the service.

In a presentation to South Huron council, HSAT transit coordinator Susan Mills reported that ridership on the bus service dropped by 17.8 per cent in 2025 compared to 2024.

Mills attributed the decline to the federal government's reduction of international students and an eight-month suspension of marketing promotion due to uncertainty over funding.

"We have lost a little bit of traction," Mills said.

Despite the drop in ridership from 25,587 in 2024 to 21,028 in 2025, Mills said ridership remained strong and in line with other rural bus services.

Launched in December 2020, Huron Shores Area Transit runs three routes connecting South Huron, Lambton Shores, Bluewater, Plympton-Wyoming and

Kettle and Stony Point First Nation with London, Sarnia and Goderich.

There are three bus stops in Exeter, along with stops in Dashwood, Huron Park, Centralia and Grand Bend.

HSAT discontinued a route in 2025 that ran from Grand Bend to Strathroy through North Middlesex after North Middlesex withdrew from the service.

South Huron, along with the other partner municipalities and First Nation, have committed to supporting the service for the next five years with a total contribution of \$969,232.

HSAT has also secured funding of \$969,232 from the Ontario Transit Investment Fund, and \$1.3 million from the Ontario Gas Tax for Transit program. Fare and advertising revenue is expected to provide another \$1.5 million.

"There is definitely enough money coming in to sustain the service. Thank you for that," Mills said.

All transit systems in the province receive subsidies, including both small rural operations and large urban ones, she said. The average cost to the system per ride in 2025 was \$44.24.

HSAT increased fares in 2025 with the local cash fare increasing from \$5 to \$6 and the long-distance cash fare increasing from \$10 to \$12. Monthly passes were upped from \$120 to \$140.

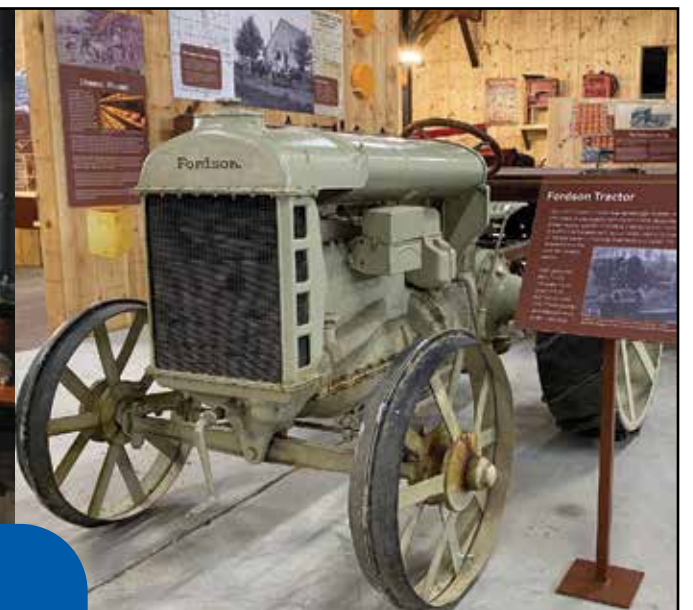
Seniors and veterans receive a 20 per cent discount while CNIB cardholders are free. Individuals with proven low-income status are eligible for a 95 per cent fare discount.

Passengers interested in the discounts must apply and live within a transit partner jurisdiction.

"That's not open to everyone. It's just open to our residents and they also must qualify for that."

HSAT planned to use a grant from the federal Rural Transit Solutions Fund to upgrade 23 bus stops with improvements such as cement pads, bus shelters, advertising panels, benches and bike racks. With inflation increasing product costs, the number has been trimmed to 13.

Mills said she is having discussions with Voyago, the bus company operator, about what it would cost to add an early morning route from London, arriving in Exeter around 7 a.m.



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Fire safety kits donated to South Huron fire department



(DAN ROLPH PHOTO)

An initiative that puts fire prevention kits in the hands of fire departments has donated materials to the South Huron fire department. The initiative, led by Medallion Group Insurance, equips fire departments throughout the region. The kits that come from the Fire Marchal's Public Fire Safety Council include everything from barbecue scrapers to can coolers that fire departments can distribute as they reach out to members of the community throughout the year to promote fire safety and awareness. From left are fire chief Jeremy Becker, Shawna Fournier of Medallion Group Insurance and South Huron Mayor George Finch.

Municipality of Bluewater

NOTICE OF INTENT TO PASS BY-LAW CONCERNING REMOVAL OF -H IN THE ZONING BY-LAW AFFECTING THE MUNICIPALITY OF BLUEWATER

TAKE NOTICE that Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of Bluewater will meet to pass the amending By-law on **Monday July 13th, 2026 at 6:30pm** in the Stanley Community Centre-Council Chambers, 38594 Mill Rd, Varna, ON NOM 2R0 to consider a proposed zoning by-law amendment to remove holding (-h) under Section 34 of the Planning Act.

PURPOSE AND EFFECT

The purpose and effect of this application for Zoning By-law Amendment (application #: BLU Z05-26) is to remove a -h symbol on certain specified properties within the Bayfield Settlement Area as upgrades have been made to the Bayfield Wastewater Treatment Plant granting additional capacity, and the Municipality has adopted a Servicing Allocation Policy to ensure orderly development in line with available servicing. The -h symbol is proposed to be removed from parcels that are currently zoned R1-27-h. This holding zone was applied to the following lands through a zoning by-law amendment application in 2024 due to limited sewage capacity and allocation; the holding zones can now be removed:

- STANLEY RANGE N PT LOT 5 RP; 22R5091 PART 2 (26 Cameron St)
- PLAN 154 LOT 11 (Tuyll Street)
- RANGE D PT LOT 3 AS RP; 22R3475 PART 1 (David St)
- RANGE D PT LOT 3 AS RP; 22R3475; PART 2 (David St)
- RANGE D PT LOT 3 AS RP; 22R3475 PART 3 (David St)
- RANGE D PT LOT 3 AS RP; 22R3475 PARTS 4 & 5 (David St)
- RANGE D PT LOT 2 AS RP; 22R3749 PART 2 (David Street)
- RANGE D PT LOT 2 AS RP; 22R3749 PART 1 (David St)
- PLAN 152 PT LOT 2
- PLAN 151 LOT 14 (41 Howard Street W)
- PLAN 151 LOT 2 (12 Tuyll St)
- PLAN 153 LOT 6 (1 Jowett Ln)
- PLAN 147 PT LOT 55 RP; 22R3525 PART 1 (Colina St)
- PLAN 150 LOT 52 (Dow St)
- PLAN 150 LANE (Dow St)

FOR MORE INFORMATION about this matter, including information about appeal rights, contact the Municipal Office at the address below or the Planning Department at planning@huroncounty.ca (1-888-524-8394 ext. 3). More information can be reviewed here: www.municipalityofbluewater.ca. Council meetings are held in person. In person attendance is recommended, however virtual attendance may be requested. Persons wishing to participate in the planning process are strongly encouraged to send their comments, questions or concerns via email to planning@huroncounty.ca or to planninginfo@municipalityofbluewater.ca. For those who wish to attend (in person or electronically), please contact Lindsay Johnstone, Planning Coordinator at planninginfo@municipalityofbluewater.ca (519-236-4351 x 235)

Dated at the Municipality of Bluewater this 10th of June, 2026
 Chandra Alexander, Clerk
 Municipality of Bluewater
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Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation offers \$1,000 student environment grant

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

Community leaders, fund holders, voluntary Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF) is offering a \$1,000 Student Environmental Grant in 2026.

The deadline to apply is Friday, June 26, 2026, at 4:30 p.m.

ABCF chair Charles Miner said 14 students have received this award over the grant's history dating back to 2010.

"It's important to support students in their endeavours and this is one way we can do that," he said. He encouraged young people to apply for this opportunity for financial support for their studies.

The application form and complete details are on the abca.ca website on the Foundation's Projects web page abca.ca/foundation/projects/.

The \$1,000 Student Environmental Grant is awarded to a graduating secondary school student or a student enrolled in university or college. The student receiving the award is someone pursuing a

post-secondary education in a course of study related to conservation/environment. Examples are: biology; ecology; geography; forestry; fish and wildlife; agriculture; and outdoor education.

The student must be between 17 and 25 years of age and have a permanent address within a member municipality of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) watershed area, which includes Adelaide Metcalfe, Bluewater, Central Huron, Huron East, Lambton Shores, Lucan Biddulph, Middlesex Centre, North Middlesex, Perth South, South Huron, Warwick and West Perth.

Past winners of the Student Environmental Grant are: Ryan Finnie (2010); Raina Vingerhoeds (2011); Greg Urquhart (2012); Ryan Carlow (2013); Connor Devereaux (2014); Barb Alber (2015); Samantha Bycraft (2016); Marina Lather (2017); Ethan Quenneville (2018); Meghan Glavin (2019); Kirsten McIntosh (2022); Gwen Taylor (2023); Emily Dearing (2024); and Will VanDongen-Miles (2025).



(AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION AUTHORITY PHOTO)

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF) Chair Charles Miner presented the \$1,000 Student Environmental Grant award in 2025 to winning student Will VanDongen-Miles of Grand Bend. The Conservation Foundation is offering the \$1,000 grant for graduating secondary school students in 2026. The 2025 winner was a student at Fleming College where he has entered his second year of studies as a Fish and Wildlife Technician.

Are you interested in local government?

Huron County Candidate Information Session

Wednesday, June 24, 2026 • 6:30 p.m.

Libro Community Hall, 239 Bill Fleming Drive, Clinton ON

Session Agenda:

- **Welcome:** Susan Cronin County Clerk
- **Land Acknowledgment**
- **Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Presentation:** Jodi Morrison and Sebastien Haley, Municipal Advisors providing an overview of the 2026 Municipal Election for Candidates.
- **Huron County Clerks - Are you on the Voters List?** Presentation by Caitlin Gillis, Clerk for the Howick Township discussing voting methods
- **How to cast a ballot?** Presentation by Meaghan McCallum, Clerk for the Municipality of Huron East
- **Huron County Council:** Presentation by Susan Cronin, County Clerk providing an overview of Huron County Council.
- **Questions**



VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.GRANTHAVEN.COM

Grand Bend gears up for Canada Day celebration

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

so many people and so much planning.”

This year’s lineup of musical acts consists of a mixture of returning performers and artists new to the stage.

The Indigenous worship band Okama will be first on the stage at 2 p.m., followed by Africa DRC Music Band at 4 p.m.

Up next will be Jaboah at 6 p.m., a Latin and urban music band based in London, while the rhythm and blues, soul and funk band Journeymen of Soul will take to the stage at 8 p.m.

While speaking about previous Canada Day events, Rivard said the cultural diversity organizers have brought to the festivities in the past has created a tradition of diversity that reflects Canada, and that today’s organizers are aiming to continue that with this year’s lineup.

“They inspired us by their diversity,” said Rivard. “We wanted to continue that because that’s what Canada’s all about.

“They did amazing work, and we’re following in their footsteps.”

In addition to the many musical acts, the night’s musical lineup will be capped off by a performance of O Canada by the winner of Beachfest’s Karaoke Idol competition. The national anthem will then be followed by the fireworks display

at 10 p.m., which Rivard said can be viewed not only from the beach, but from the water as well.

In an age when fireworks displays are becoming more expensive, many Canada Day events are opting to cancel their shows. Rivard said the Grand Bend event has been able to keep the tradition alive thanks to the support of local sponsors and grants, representing a willingness from the community to come together to celebrate the day.

“These local sponsors that we have, we couldn’t do it without them,” he said.

Though the event will in many ways be similar to last year’s festivities, Rivard said one previous offering that isn’t returning this year is the Canada Day after party, which he said would have been challenging to host.

“Even though it was a wonderful concept, it’s just a Wednesday night,” he said. “We all have work, and kids have got to go to school the next day.”

Already looking to future celebrations, Rivard said organizers are planning to bring even more new bands to the stage in the coming years as they aim to offer a consistently fresh lineup.

“Next year, you’re going to see a whole new list,” he said.

For more information about Grand Bend’s Canada Day celebrations, visit canadaygrandbend.ca.

Exeter marks Pride Month by raising flag downtown



(DAN ROLPH PHOTO)

With June being Pride Month, South Huron celebrate the start of the month that recognizes the LGBTQ+ community by raising the Pride flag on the municipality’s community flagpole at the Exeter downtown parkette. The community flag pole was introduced by the municipality to provide a place for local groups and organizations to display flags, particularly as they mark notable moments throughout the year. From left are CAO Rebekah Msuya-Collison, clerk Alex Wolfe, legislative and licensing co-ordinator Kendra Webster, Huron County Pride chair Alex Jebson, Huron County Pride treasurer Jacob Bjerg and South Huron Mayor George Finch.

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Darlene has served on the panel for the Office of the Children’s Lawyer and as a Dispute Resolution Officer with the Superior Court of Justice.

Originally from Exeter and now returning home to serve Huron County, Darlene brings decades of big-city experience while sharing our belief that clients deserve clear advice, strong advocacy, and lawyers who genuinely care.

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Sobeys Grand Bend keeps community at its heart



(SOBEYS PHOTO)

Amy and Todd Vodden (store owners), Kelly Rooney, and Deputy Mayor Dan Sageman. Also present are Councillor Glen Baillie, and representatives of the Grand Bend Community Food Pantry, who received a donation from Sobeys.

DAN ROLPH

Sponsored Article

“It’s where I grew up. I’m comfortable here.”

That’s what Sobeys Grand Bend owner and operator Todd Vodden said when asked why he decided to pursue his grocery career locally.

Growing up just down Highway 21 in Port Franks, Todd and his wife Amy, who grew up in Clinton, are the forces behind the store in Grand Bend that has become a staple in the community since it opened more than 20 years ago.

For Todd, grocery store aisles have become something he’s deeply familiar with, having spent decades of his career working within them. He first entered the grocery business in 1997 in Sarnia, making the move to a position closer to home just a few years later at Grand Bend’s former IGA.

When Sobeys opened in 2003 and IGA closed its doors, Todd moved too, working as a grocery clerk at that time.

“I’ve been in Grand Bend for a long time now,” he said. “I worked my way up.”

Over the years, Todd’s career has put him in positions throughout the grocery store, eventually sending him for training in a Mississauga Sobeys location for about a year.

But when the opportunity finally came up to return home, he found himself back in Grand Bend as he stepped into a leadership role at the local grocer.

Over the years, Todd and Amy have been able to get to know the customers who walk through the doors as they are neighbours and friends, and Todd said having a connection to the community is essential to the business.

Since they opened their doors, Sobeys Grand Bend

has supported many local groups and causes, including charities like the Grand Bend Community Food Pantry, as well as events that bring the community together like the annual Canada Day concert and fireworks show.

“It’s fun for us to be involved in the community,” said Todd. “Grand Bend really sticks together. It’s quite surprising how tight people are here. It’s nice being involved in that.”

That connection to the community is strengthened even further by the staff, which consists of over 100 locals serving in roles throughout the store.

Despite being in the grocery sector for decades, Todd said the business itself has remained surprisingly unchanged throughout those years.

However, one of the biggest changes he’s seen in his career might be the most recent one — the major renovations to Sobeys Grand Bend, which are now completed.

“We’ve changed everything,” he said. “The whole store is new.”

Over five months of renovations, Todd said customers and staff have been walking into the store to find new surprises each day as work has continued inside, completely refreshing the store that had remained mostly unchanged since it opened more than 20 years ago.

“Every morning, you’d come into a new surprise,” he said. “It’s 100 per cent a brand-new store on the inside. There’s nothing left of the old store.”

With everything from the bakery to the produce section receiving a facelift and upgrades, customers who walk through the doors will find a grocery store that feels refreshed and revitalized.

In particular, Todd said he expects customers will be pleased to see the changes made to the store’s deli

and kitchen section.

As well, he said shoppers will be able to find fresh meat and seafood that is prepared on-site in the store.

“We have butchers who cut fresh meat and seafood at the store,” he said. “It’s not trucked in. Everything is done right here in-store.”

Since the renovations were completed, Todd said the feedback from customers has been very positive, and those who may have been away for months have returned to Grand Bend and discovered a rejuvenated and welcoming place to find their everyday needs.

“A lot of people who went south for a few months have come back and the store’s 100 per cent different now,” he said. “They’re surprised and happy when they come in.”

While continuing to serve customers can often present challenges for stores as they go through renovations, Todd said the hard work and dedication of their employees helped to ensure customers could continue to find the same experience they’ve come to expect from the local grocer.

“The employees really stepped up,” he said. “They took it very well, and I think they did an awesome job of keeping customers happy and running things smoothly.”

“All the customers were excited. They came in, asked questions, and there was a different vibe than what a lot of stores go through with renovations.”

Though the store may look brand new after five months of renovations, the people who make Sobeys a part of Grand Bend remain unchanged, and their commitment to serving the community remains as strong as ever.

For more information and store hours, visit sobeys.com/stores/sobeys-grand-bend.

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Sunset Community Foundation celebrates \$26,015 in South Huron community grants



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

South Huron Advisory Committee Members from left are Barb Down, Dave Frayne, Joanne Bowen, chair Laura Goulding, founder of SH Funds Tom Prout, Leanne Wiseman, Mary Peterson and executive director Lisa Reaume

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

Community leaders, fund holders, volunteers, local organizations and residents gathered Wednesday May, 27, 2026, at Ironwood Golf Club in Exter to celebrate another year of local generosity and community impact at the South Huron Community Grant Awards hosted by the Sunset Community Foundation.

This year, the foundation awarded 15 community grants totaling \$26,015 to support projects that will strengthen and enrich South Huron through investments in children and youth, health and wellness, education, environmental stewardship, arts and culture, food security and community inclusion.

“This year we were able to distribute more than \$26,000 to supportive agencies and groups that provide programs and events in South Huron and for the residents who live here. This growth is only possible because of the generosity of the people that live here, our municipal leaders.” said South Huron Advisory Committee chair Laura Goulding.

2026 Grant Recipients include the following organizations and initiatives:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of South

Huron received \$1,500 for their Family and Match Activity Support program.

- Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority received \$3,500 for their Roots to Canopy: Growing Connections Through Nature program.

- Huron County Library - Exeter Branch received \$1,950 for their Youth Advisory Group Kickstarter program.

- South Huron Arts Centre received \$2,000 for their School Arts program.

- Jessica’s House Hospice received \$1,000 for their Volunteer Ambassador program made partially possible by the Bourne Family Fund.

- West Coast Active Living received \$1,500 for their Grub Club program.

- Phil McNamee Charitable Foundation received \$1,495 for their Interpretive Signs at Serenity Nature Reserve program.

- Grand Bend Public School received \$1,000 for their Student Nutrition program.

- Make-A-Wish Canada received \$500 for their Wishes Are Medicine: Improving Children’s Health and Well-being in South Huron program.

- Gateway Centre of Excellence in

Rural Health received \$500 for their Benefitting Rural Area Volunteer Emergency Firefighters program.

- Huron Waves Music Festival received \$1,500 for their Candlelight Concerts featuring The Beatles and Taylor Swift.

- Huron Perth Public Health received \$2,000 for their Food for Families with Young Children Connected to Healthy Babies Healthy Children in South Huron program made possible by the Bourne Family Fund.

- South Huron Soccer Club received \$4,500 for their Goal Replacement at Wagner Field program, made partially possible by the Bob Down Family Fund.

- Blyth Festival Theatre received \$880 for the seasonal programming, made possible by the Mathers Family Fund.

- Avon Maitland District School Board received \$2,190 for their scholarship programs.

One of the many highlights of the evening was recognizing the local fund holders and recipients whose generosity continues creating lasting impact through permanently invested community funds. As part of the evening’s events, a light was shone on Bob Down and Cassie Greidanus as they sat down for fireside



The South Huron Soccer Club grant was made possible by Bob Down (Down Family Fund), here with his daughter Barb Down (SH Advisory and the new Brian J. Clarke Family Fund)

chats.

Down, a South Huron Fund holder since 2018, has now grown his Bob Down Family Fund to a level that allows him to handpick where his funds are targeted in the community. He sat down with Dave Frayne, a South Huron Advisory Committee Member, at the event.

When Frayne asked what made South Huron so special, Down stated that, “South Huron is the Garden of Eden.”

Attendees also reflected on the success of last year’s grants.

In 2025, South Huron Community Funds supported 14 grants and three scholarships totaling \$15,900, impacting hundreds of local residents through projects ranging from environmental education and arts programming to volunteer tax clinics that generated over \$1.58 million in tax refunds and benefits for modest-income residents across southern Huron.

“Community foundations create opportunities that continue giving back forever,” said Sunset Community Foundation executive director Lisa Reaume. “Every gift, every volunteer, and every partnership contributes to building stronger, healthier, and more vibrant communities.”

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It Takes a Village

There was a time when community wasn't something you scheduled—it was simply how life happened.



Neighbours stopped by unannounced. The coffee pot was usually on, an extra potato found its way into the pot, and there always seemed to be room for one more around the table. Children played across backyards and farm lanes. Grandparents, parents, children, aunts, uncles, friends, and neighbours gathered together, shared meals, celebrated milestones, and helped one another through life's challenges.

In small towns and rural communities, there remains a deep appreciation for those values. While the world has changed, our need for connection has not.

The benefits of strong social connections are well established. Research from Canada's National Institute on Ageing has identified meaningful social connection as one of the most important factors influencing well-being and quality of life as we age.

Perhaps that is one reason why intergenerational living is receiving renewed attention.

At its heart is a simple belief: every generation has something valuable to offer.

Older adults bring experience, wisdom, perspective, and stories. Younger adults bring energy, optimism, fresh ideas, and new perspectives. People living with different abilities, experiences, and life journeys contribute in countless ways that enrich the broader community.

Perhaps that is why the saying "it takes a village" has endured for generations. We know instinctively that life is better when people come together, support one another, and share both the joys and challenges that come with being human. We are, quite simply, better together.

Intergenerational living creates opportunities for relationships that might never have happened otherwise—and what a gift that is.

- A conversation over morning coffee.
- A shared meal around the table.
- A walk through the garden.
- Learning a new skill from someone who has spent decades mastering it.
- Sharing laughter, encouragement, friendship, and life experiences across generations.
- These moments may seem small, but they often become the foundation of belonging.

Relationships, purpose, and connection have always been important to quality of life. They matter when we are young, they matter as we grow older, and they matter everywhere in between.

Intergenerational living also reminds us of something important: every person has value, every person has something to contribute, and every person deserves opportunities for connection, purpose, and meaningful relationships.

For older adults, this may mean remaining connected to the energy and rhythms of a vibrant community. For adults with developmental disabilities, autism, and other forms of neurodiversity, it may mean opportunities to build relationships, confidence, independence, and community participation. For people living with dementia, it means remaining connected to everyday life in a home that understands dementia while continuing to honour the individual behind the diagnosis.

At its best, intergenerational living reflects something many rural communities have understood for generations: we are stronger when we come together. Not because we are all the same, but because we are different—and because those differences, when welcomed and valued, have the potential to make community richer for everyone.

At Highview Lucan, this belief is being put into practice.

Located at 139 Main Street in Lucan, Highview Lucan is a private intergenerational home where people of different ages and abilities live alongside one another as part of one shared home community. The home includes retirement living, dementia care, and Supported Independent Living for adults with developmental disabilities, autism, and other forms of neurodiversity.

The goal is simple: to create a place where people are supported to live with independence, connection, and purpose in daily life.

For more information about Highview Lucan, to arrange a tour, please visit [Highviewres.com](https://highviewres.com), call 1 (877) 777-6523, or email infoLucan@highviewres.com

Source: National Institute on Ageing (NIA), Toronto Metropolitan University. Research identifies meaningful social connection as one of the most important factors influencing well-being and quality of life as people age.





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COMMUNITY EVENTS



EXETER

The Exeter Legion is hosting a Canada Day Breakfast on July 1 starting at 8 a.m.

Breakfast is \$15 for adults, \$10 for children ages 5 to 12 and free for children under 5.

The breakfast will include early morning favourites such as eggs, toast, ham, sausage and pancakes.

The legion is also holding a cornhole tournament on July 4. The cost for a team of two will be \$30, and teams must register by June 27. The tournament will kick off at 11 a.m. and be a round robin format, with half of the registration fee being paid out in prizes.



GRAND BEND

In traditional Grand Bend fashion, Canada Day will be a big affair centred on the main beach and Rotary Community Stage. The festivities will begin on July 1 at 2 p.m. with performances by Okama, Africa DRC Music Band, Jaboah and Journeymen of Soul.

The national anthem will be sung at 9:55 p.m., followed by the annual fireworks display that can be viewed from the beach or by boat on Lake Huron.



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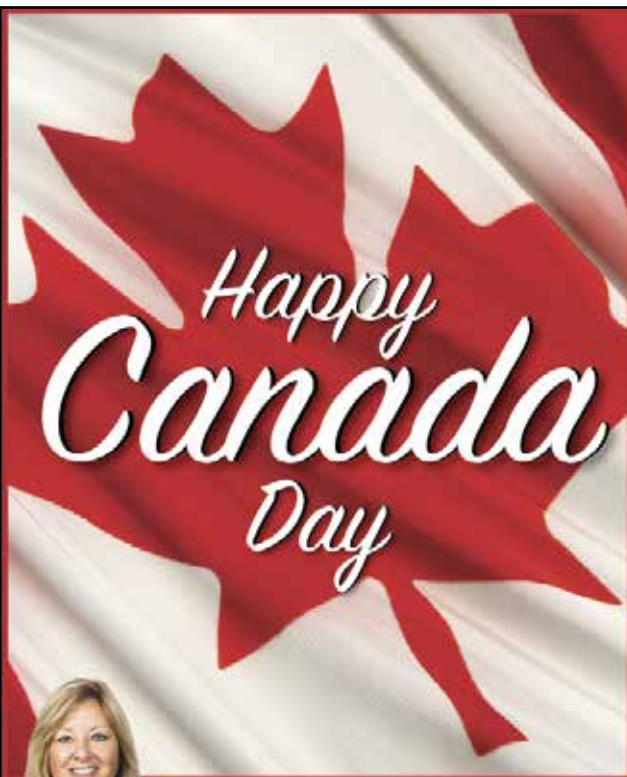
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Canada Day

LUCAN

Lucan's Canada Day events will be held at the Lucan Biddulph Community Memorial Centre. The celebrations will begin on June 30 with DJ Dave and live music featuring the Hardy Boys, starting at 8 p.m. Food trucks will be on hand for hungry attendees, and fireworks will start at 10 p.m.

On July 1, the festivities will continue with the annual Lucan Optimist Club Bike Rodeo at 10 a.m., with live music by Ben Heffernan and Jamie Shrier. Food trucks will be back in the arena parking lot for the day, and there will be free hot dogs and cake at noon.

Canada beatbox champion and Canada's Got Talent finalist Scott Jackson will be performing starting at 10:30 a.m.

Other attractions on Canada Day will include inflatables, facepainting, free public swimming and free public skating.



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Within my heart, above my home, the maple leaf forever

JASON RAMSAY-BROWN

Examiner Columnist

Canada Day approaches, and already many homes and businesses throughout the country have hoisted our flag in recognition. This year, thanks to the bizarre threats and rantings grumbling up from our southern neighbours, this routine celebration of our national identity seems all the more meaningful. As our sovereignty and culture are belittled and insulted, the sight of our flag waving in the soon-to-be summer winds should remind each of us how truly blessed we are to live in this country.

So, it's with some discomfort that I make a small confession here: gratitude may be top of mind when I see the flags dotting the landscape but, in the background, there's also a sense of some confusion.

The largest flag I saw yesterday flapped in front of an old Norway maple. Down the road, one hangs next to a Siberian elm. There are nearby flags surrounded by London plane trees, Austrian pines, and Japanese maples. Flags can be found flying above masses of Chinese silvergrass, others by

sprawling tangles of English ivy, and almost all cast their shadows on stretches of freshly cut Kentucky bluegrass.

Even the maple leaf on the very flag itself is of questionable identity. Compare its design to the leaves of any of our native maples and you won't find an exact match. The story goes that Jacques Saint-Cyr, the artist who designed the leaf back in the 1960s, created it to be easily recognizable from any angle. The end result is a symbol that many folks feel looks more like the leaf of a Norway maple than anything else.

Wandering our neighbourhoods you'll spot more tulips than trilliums. Invasive periwinkle is everywhere and wild geranium virtually nowhere. Lily-of-the-valley and goutweed run rampant where once would have grown such local beauties as blue cohosh, mayapple and bloodroot. Few things are as Canadian as maple syrup, yet the trees that produce the very best have been out-planted by their Norwegian counterparts in yard after yard after yard.

Our flags may say "Canada proud," but our gardens

say, "anywhere but here."

All the more distressing, the native plants vigorous enough to withstand displacement by blooms from Europe, Asia and elsewhere are often downgraded by us to the status of weeds. Goldenrods, one of the most important plants in our local ecosystem, is treated with particular hostility in my experience. Milkweeds, essential to the survival of monarch butterflies, fare little better.

It's almost as if we're ashamed of the natural beauty indigenous to the very soil we walk on every day. We seem to take more national pride in drinking a Timmies and spelling colour with a "u" than our own native landscape.

People can hardly be criticized for adoring the vibrant yellow pop of a daffodil or the great globes of beauty sported by a hydrangea. I myself have a huge soft spot for liliacs, the scent of which immediately brings back the very fondest memories of my mother. But there's a world of difference between appreciating the exotic and ignoring or even condemning the native.

Plants are not just deco-

rations, they are essential components of the great tapestry of life. They form a foundation on which rests the very ecosystems and food web that sustain countless creatures, us included. Colour and blooms, textures and structure, may bring us great joy when we glance out at our yards and gardens but, unfortunately, many of our most popular exotics offer little more than that. They feed nothing, or at best the nutrition they do offer is but a fraction of what could be made available by planting natives.

For garden centres, exotics are the bread and butter of the business. While showy foliage and dramatic flowers are no doubt leading reasons for this, the fact that many of these plants are often considered "pest free" here in Canada is an important reason as well. Customers paying a small fortune for a cart full of plants can get pretty disappointed when their purchases are chewed ragged by local wildlife and insects. This concern, however, excludes us from enjoying a treasure trove of truly Canadian (or at least Ontarian) moments.

There's endless amuse-

ment to be found in watching a blue jay wrestle with an acorn from a red oak. A bright yellow midsummer tiger swallowtail butterfly, contrasted against the distinctly-shaped leaves of a tulip tree, is an image made to burn itself into your memory forever. Discovering a nest of baby cottontails nestled by a black chokeberry is a thrill not only for the kids, but the young-at-heart as well. To me, sights like these are the truest sign I'm home. I'll take them over a patch of impatiens any day.

Apologists will point out that local wildlife and insects are often spotted making use of exotic species. While this is certainly true, just imagine yourself at a buffet. On the left side of the room is an assortment of all your familiar favourites. On the right side, a line-up of dishes ranging from the uninspired to the completely unidentifiable. Take away the food on the left and you'll still work to find something to eat from the other side. Otherwise, we both know where you'll be filling your plate.

In an effort to help people replace some of their more harmful exotics with natives, the Ontario Invasive

Plant Council started to publish their wonderful "Grow Me Instead" series back in 2010. These free guides profile numerous common exotic species and offer up suggestions on native plants that would fill a similar role in the garden. Well worth downloading a copy from their website, ontarioinvasiveplants.ca, if you're considering adding a bit of local colour back to your property next time you plan to plant.

This Canada Day, I'm committed to celebrating not just the people and nation I hold so dear, but the very landscape that makes Canada, Canada. I already have a few northern spice-bush (*Lindera benzoin*) ready to sink in the soil. I'm even more excited to plant two dwarf chinkapin oaks (*Quercus prinoides*), a wonderful shrub that says "Lake Huron" like few others. I'm thinking of picking up an eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) and blue beech (*Carpinus caroliniana*) as well, as these species once dominated the long-gone forests where I live.

Next year, who knows, maybe I'll add a mast to the yard and unfurl a flag of my own.

July 1st | Live Music & Fireworks







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Grand Bend



Discovery Week 2026 brings medical students to South Huron Hospital

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

First-year medical students from the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry at Western University began their learning and training with South Huron Hospital as part of the 28th annual Discovery Week.

From June 1-4, Schulich Medicine physicians-in-training were welcomed as temporary members of the Exeter community. During their immersive, one-week placement at South Huron Hospital, the medical students familiarized themselves with teamwork and collaboration in the local health-care setting and had exciting opportunities to discover all the community has to offer.

Discovery Week is a long-standing program that gives all first-year medical students the opportunity to experience what life and health care look like in regional and rural communities across southwestern Ontario.

“Discovery Week gives medical students an opportunity to experience both the practice of rural medicine and the strong sense of community that makes Exeter such a special place to live and work,” said Huron Health System presi-

dent and CEO Jimmy Trieu. “By spending time alongside our physicians, staff, and community leaders, students gain a firsthand understanding of the rewards and impact of practising in a rural setting. We hope this experience inspires many of them to return in the future to build their careers and care for our community.”

During Discovery Week 2026, 190 Schulich Medicine students were placed in more than 30 participating communities, from Windsor to Owen Sound.

“Our community partners play a vital role in our students’ medical education by providing exceptional, first-hand, in-patient care experiences in rural and regional settings,” said assistant dean of distributed education at Schulich Medicine and Dentistry Dr. Victor Ng. “We are incredibly grateful for this long-standing partnership which prepares and inspires a cohort of physicians to practise in small and mid-sized communities across the province. Through this collaboration, Schulich medical students will develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for rural-regional medicine and health-care providers. Many also return to practise in the communities they trained in.”



(HURON HEALTH SYSTEM PHOTO)

From left are Johnny Li Tang, South Huron CAO Rebekah Msuya-Collison, Kiyan Sadeghi Janbahan, Mayor George Finch, South Huron Hospital volunteer and Huron Medical Recruitment Committee member Joanne Bowen and senior medical lab tech Alison Rammeloo.



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The Hub

June 10, 2026

Public Open House – London Road South Trunk Sanitary Sewer

Wednesday, June 10, 2026 from 4:30pm to 6:30pm at the South Huron Municipal Office, Verity Room, 322 Main Street South, Exeter

The public is invited to attend an Open House presented by the Municipality of South Huron to provide information and to respond to any questions or concerns regarding the proposed construction project in Exeter:

London Road South Trunk Sanitary Sewer (Snider Crescent, Huron Street West, and Mary Street)

If you have any questions regarding this work, please contact the Environment Services Department at 519-235-0310 (ext 230).

Notice: Lowering of water level at MacNaughton Park Dam

A structural inspection of the MacNaughton Park Dam is required every five years and is due to be performed this year. In order to carry out this work, it is necessary to lower the water level in the reservoir.

Starting on July 6, 2026 the drain valve will be opened to lower the reservoir water level. Once the level is lowered sufficiently, the inspection of the structure will take place and the reservoir will be slowly refilled. Depending on weather conditions, it is expected that the reservoir will be back to its normal level in a couple of weeks.

If you have any questions regarding this work, please contact the Environment Services Department at 519-235-0310 (ext 230).

2026 Water and Wastewater Services Rates

On March 16, 2026 Council gave third and final reading to By-Law #18-2026 Water and Wastewater Rates and Charges By-Law to repeal By-Law #66-2021. The charges set out in this By-Law take effect April 1, 2026. A full breakdown of the charges can be found on the municipal website *Water and Wastewater Rates*.

The base and consumption charges have increased. The debt repayment charge has been reduced. These charges are based on service size, please refer to By-Law #18-2026.

If you have any questions, please contact the Financial Services Department at 519-235-0310 Ext. 233 or go to SouthHuron.ca

Recycling Rates

Effective March 1, 2026

User Fees and Charges By-Law #77-2025, Schedule D—Environmental Service Fees, has been amended to eliminate residential recycling fees and amend ICI (Institutional, Commercial & Industrial) recycling fees from \$47.68/year to \$71.40/bin/year.

Decoration Day

The Annual Decoration Day Service will be held on Sunday, July 19th at 1:00 pm at the Exeter Public Cemetery. We are looking for readers, musicians and community members to help make the service special.

If you would like to take part, please contact cemetery@southhuron.ca or 519-235-0310.

Important Dates

Monday, June 15th

Public Meeting
5:00 PM (EST)*

Monday, June 15th

Regular Council Meeting
6:00 PM (EST)*

**South Huron Council meetings are open for in-person attendance and continue to be livestreamed.*

*See our website **Agendas, Minutes & Meetings** page or the South Huron Youtube channel at meeting time to access the livestream video link.*

A recording of the meeting will be available on the municipal Youtube Channel following the meeting.

South Huron Votes 2026

Exercising your right to vote

Voter turnout in local elections is very important. Municipal Governments are considered the government closest to the people. Municipal Council decisions focus on things that we rely on every day-local services, infrastructure, community growth, facilities and programming. Casting a vote gives members of the community a say in what the Council that governs their community looks like. We are very fortunate to have the right to vote so be sure to exercise that right. Take a couple minutes to check that you're on the voters list and update your information by visiting registertovote-on.ca.

Reminder: Nomination Period is now open! Anyone interested in running as a candidate in the 2026 Municipal or School Board Election may file a nomination form at Town Hall during regular business hours until 2:00 p.m. on Nomination Day, August 21, 2026.

For more information regarding the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election, check out the *Municipal Election* page on SouthHuron.ca, contact the Municipal Clerk at vote@southhuron.ca, or drop into the Clerk's Department at town hall (322 Main Street South, Exeter).

Our information is accessible!
Contact us if you require alternative formats.

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SPORTS

Exeter defenceman Jesse Debruyn signs with Windsor Spitfires

DAN ROLPH

Editor

When a 5-year-old Jesse Debruyn first stepped on the ice, the idea of playing in the Ontario Hockey League was little more than a distant dream.

But now, that dream has become reality with Debruyn signing with the Windsor Spitfires to an OHL scholarship and development agreement.

Debruyn, a 17-year-old student at South Huron District high school who grew up in Exeter attending Precious Blood Catholic school, will play his first full season with the Spitfires starting this September.

"It's really cool, knowing all the hard work has paid off and that your dream's come true, and you get to play in the OHL," said Debruyn.

Though his career on the ice may be sending him to some of Ontario's biggest arenas this coming season, the defenceman got his start on local rinks with the South Huron Sabres. He later made the shift to play AAA with the Huron Perth Lakers.

When Debruyn was selected by the Spitfires in the 2025 OHL draft in the 4th round, he signed with the Komoka Kings in the GOHL, where he played out a full season.

"Jesse is an all-around defenceman that can play in all situations" said Windsor Spitfires general manager Bill Bowler. "We expect him to continue to grow into

a prominent role."

In March 2026, Debruyn got called up by the Spitfires as they wrapped up their regular season, putting him on the ice for the first time in the OHL.

"I was a little nervous, but it wasn't too bad," he said. "It was really exciting.

"It was coming down to the end of the regular season. They had to get a couple of wins to win the division, so they were really important games."

Debruyn played six games for the Spitfires as they took the West Division title. Windsor then went on to the Western Conference finals, where they fell to the Kitchener Rangers.

For Debruyn, that experience provided a taste of life as a Spitfire, getting to meet his teammates and begin learning how they play and practice.

Now, the Spitfires are looking at the 2026-2027 season with a chunk of their roster leaving, and Debruyn noted it will feel like a fresh start for much of the roster next season.

"They're losing a lot of guys next year," he said. "It was good meeting them, but next year's going to be a lot of new people to meet. It's going to be back to square one for most guys."

Looking ahead, Debruyn said he has his sights locked on two priorities for the coming season — playing well and playing consistently.

"That's the main goal," he said.



(WINDSOR SPITFIRES PHOTO)

Exeter native Jesse Debruyn will play in the OHL for the Windsor Spitfires for the 2026-2027 season.

To make sure he's ready, Debruyn said he'll be on the ice and in the gym in the off season as he prepares for his first full season as a Spitfire.

Having gone from local minor hockey to signing with an OHL team, Debruyn said he hopes younger players will take

away one simple lesson from his journey. "Anything's possible," he said. "Keep working hard. All that hard work will pay off. Never give up, no matter what. You never know what's going to happen. Just keep going."

Hittalkers crowned champions in Mitchell



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Hittalkers returned home as champions on June 7 after a day of baseball action. Winning all three playoff games in the "A" Championships, the team that plays in the South Huron Ladies Slo-Pitch League pulled off a dominant 14-4 win in the final against Stratford. The tournament included 15 teams from throughout the region. In front from left are Abbey Ansems, Scottie Glavin, Halston Hodgins, Oaklyn Hodgins and Laura Peckham. In back from left are Hallee Schilbe, Amber Overholt, Leah Clausis, Paige Lightfoot, Morgan Denotter, Megan Hodgins, Delaney Coates, Stacie Hern and Ella Persons.

MINOR SPORTS SCRAPBOOK

(DAN ROLPH PHOTOS)



The South Huron District High School varsity girls slo-pitch team are Western Ontario Secondary Schools Athletic Association (WOSSAA) champions for the fourth year in a row. The team hosted the WOSSAA finals on May 28 in Exeter where they played against schools from throughout the region in an undefeated run that came down to a close 5-4 final against Stratford's St. Michael Catholic secondary school. The win qualified the team to compete in the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations' finals on June 8 and 9, where the team placed 7th overall. Pictured is Danica Rau as she runs for home in a May 28 match.



Rover Cloyie Schwartzentruber winds up a throw while playing in Exeter.



Lyla Moore prepares to swing as she watches a pitch come her way.



South Huron's Mya McCann slides safely into second in a May 28 match.



Aydin Dalrymple prepares a throw to first base to get an out.



Bria Passmore sprints for home in a match against Mitchell District high school.

COLUMNS

Dominion Day: A day to be proud and to reflect

BOB HEYWOOD

Examiner Columnist

The Dominion of Canada was constituted and born on July 1, 1867. That eventful day happened to be a Monday.

According to the Ottawa Citizen newspaper: "On Sunday, an hour before midnight, hundreds of our citizens were seen winding their way towards the drill shed and Major's Hill, determined to be present at the first welcome given the new Dominion. The main point of attraction was of course the bonfire on the ordinance lands. Here during Saturday, had been collected in an immense quantity of flammable materials — firewood, packing cases, tar barrels and other combustibles, all formed into a huge pyramidal pile, surrounded at the base by a ring of boulders, about which the expectant spectators flitted in the gloom.

"When the last stroke of twelve sounded from the cathedral clock, the match was applied and in a few moments the whole pile was in flames, lighting brilliantly the entire Ottawa scene, while from thousands of spectators, rose three hearty cheers for the Queen, followed by three more for the Dominion of Canada. At that same late hour, a lusty peal was rung from all the city's bells, rockets and Roman candles set off, and a grand midnight salute of 100 guns fired by the Ottawa field battery."

The newspaper article went on to explain that the next morning, all roads leading into the capital became a continuous stream of vehicles (horse drawn of course) full of Carleton families ready to join in all

the festivities. Flags, festoons and colourful streamers adorned the city's public buildings and homes. A guard of honour from the Rifle Brigade awaited the vice-regal party which included Lord Monck, who was conferred with the honour of being Canada's first Governor General. Immediately a rifle salute resounded from Major's Hill. "The Governor then announced to the assemblage the dignities conferred on the delegates. The Honorable John A Macdonald to be K.C.B. and the Honorable Messrs. Howland, McDougall, Cartier, Galt, Tilley and Tupper to have the title of C.B." Canada as a nation was now formally on the world map.

Meanwhile, back in Huron County as Canada's first day as a nation began, according to the Goderich Huron Signal, a huge bonfire was started in the town square between midnight and 1 a.m. A few revelers stayed up all night, hoisting a huge white flag on the top of the American Consul's flag staff. They must have wanted to make sure that their Yankee friends understood that a new day was dawning for the "True North strong and free" — never to become the 51st state.

At daybreak, a party of artillery men fired five or six rounds from "Big Bess at the point." The boom of the canon was to awaken the population and summon them to a day of celebration.

The news account continued, "It was a splendid sight to stand at the square and look down West Street, the sidewalks of which were packed with a moving mass of human beings, all the way down to the bank of

the lake."

Seven companies from other Huron towns came together to form a battalion. The Exeter Infantry was present, led by Captain Hyndman, Lieutenant Spackman, Ensign Howard, three sergeants and 40 privates.

At 11:30 a.m. the order was given for the Military contingent to march to the square where several thousand proud Canadians had assembled. His worship Mayor Detlor, in a loud clear voice, read a stirring proclamation on behalf of Queen Victoria, uniting the provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick into One Dominion under the name of Canada. And as the old saying goes, the rest is history.

There was no established newspaper in Exeter until 1873, depriving us of any record of how that first Dominion Day was commemorated in our town. The fact that Exeter's military was in Goderich that day suggests that there was no celebration of account here. In fact, this writer was surprised as I researched, that the July 1 celebration seemed to be of little significance during the early decades of our existence. In Exeter and other Huron County towns the celebration of the Glorious 12th of July by the Orangemen received much more press than Canada's birthday.

In 1917, our nation was at war in Europe and the 50th anniversary of confederation was somewhat curtailed by the anxiety that comes with conflict. In fact, the front page of the Exeter Advocate on July 5, 1917, mentioned nothing of the nation's 50-year milestone. Instead, the top caption read

"British capture 12,000" while lower on the front page was the Roll of Honour for the past week. Five Huron County boys paid the supreme sacrifice that week, including two from Wingham, two from Blyth and one from Bayfield.

The news touched closer to home in South Huron with Private E.A. Oke of Osborne and Private James Hill of Hensall, both suffering from multiple wounds. A large imposing ad read "WANTED...ARTIL-LERY HORSES....will be inspected at J.D. Graham Stables at St Mary's on July 10."

The reality of war seemingly set aside the nation's milestone.

1907 was a quiet one in Exeter, with many of the town's residents fanning out to attractions in Grand Bend, Centralia and believe it or not, Elimville. For several years Centralia's big day was July 1, and in 1907 nearly 1,000 souls gathered on the spacious parsonage grounds to enjoy a sumptuous Strawberry Festival, where admission was 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for children.

Mel Southcott took the event in for several years. He used the Exeter Times to praise the Centralia ladies: "Specialists in culinary arts today cannot touch the tempting delicacies and expertise of those dedicated ladies."

Mr. E. A. Follick, baker and confectioner of Exeter, often set up a tent on the grounds selling homemade ice cream made in a hand-turned freezer. Three baseball games, along with foot races and music furnished by the Exeter band offered something for everyone. Many attendees lingered

into the evening to enjoy a splendid concert with Kate Elliott, N.E. Hicks and Mr. McLaughlin taking part. Those were horse and buggy days, so a horse drawn bus service was usually offered from Exeter to Centralia.

However, in 1927, we were in peace time, between the two world wars. The July 7 edition of the Times Advocate which had amalgamated the two local newspapers, announced boldly that the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation was a great success in Exeter. At 8 a.m. the chimes of the Trivitt Anglican church pealed their call as rung by faithful bellringer Louis Day. At 9 a.m. a large gathering of floats, decorated autos and bicycles and marching school children formed a parade 3/4 of a mile long. Headed by the town band and followed closely by the grand marshal Co. Sergeant Major H.A. Gambrill and the members of the town council, the procession was one of the finest that had ever been seen in Exeter. This entourage marched from Victoria Park to the school-grounds.

On arriving at their destination, a very impressive program was initiated with Reeve W.D. Sanders acting as chairman. W.R. Goulding led the assembly in the singing of patriotic songs and Miss Medd of town directed the pageant called "The Crowning of Canada" much to the delight of onlookers. Appropriate messages from the Governor General, the Premier and others were read and in conclusion Rev. Duncan McTavish gave a short but eloquent address of the 60-year history of our fledgling

nation.

One man from Osborne, reported that the preacher's oratory alone was worth coming to Exeter to hear. It is interesting to note that in attendance were several men who had cast their ballots in the 1867 election. These included Dr J.W. Browning, James Dignan, Wm. Russell, James Sweet, J.H. Medd, John Bell, Wm. Tapp, Samuel Essery, Thomas Hatter, Wm. Treble, John Stanlake and Wm. Bagshaw, all at least being octogenarians and probably all staunch conservatives — my assumption only, of course.

The 60th birthday commemoration was completed with a very appropriate thanksgiving jubilee service on the school grounds on Sunday afternoon, at which there was a large turnout. Mr. Goulding once again led a mass choir, while the message was given in four parts by the local clergy: first, commemorating the pioneers who settled here and laid the foundation; second, remembering the Fathers of Confederation; third, recalling those who gave their lives to preserve our freedom; and fourth, a prayer of divine guidance in the governing of our land. Bugler N. Hanningan played the Last Post, with the singing of O Canada and the national anthem bringing the festivities to a close.

The four themes of the clergy that day would attest to why Sir Leonard Tilley advanced successfully that Canada should be called a "Dominion." He lifted it from the words of the Psalmist "And He shall have Dominion from Sea to Sea." God Keep our Land, Glorious and Free.



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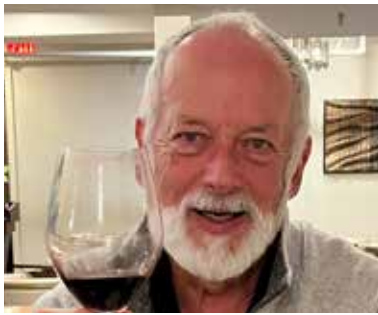
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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: An award-winning distillery arises from initial failures



PAUL KNOWLES

Examiner Columnist

“I failed.” What a depressing idea! But there are some great thoughts about failure that put it in an entirely different perspective. For example, Thomas Edison said, “I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.” And my literary hero, C.S. Lewis, wrote, “Failures are finger posts on the road to achievement.”

And what, you may ask, does this have to do with travel? Come with me to Saskatchewan, to meet a feisty woman named Barb Stefanyshyn-Cote. Barb and her husband, John Cote, are the founders and co-owners of Black Fox Distillery, located just outside Saskatoon.

Barb will tell you, with lots of witty anecdotes to prove the point, that Black Fox, now a notable success, was born out of a whole series of failures, mistakes, and mis-steps.

Today, locals and visitors alike enjoy the ambience, the events and the products of Black Fox. But it took a while to get here.

John and Barb are fifth-generation farmers. Their “roots” go back for generations, and they continue to be deeply committed to agriculture in

Saskatchewan. Both have studied and consulted on agricultural practices world-wide, and are recognized nationally and internationally for their industry leadership.

Once upon a time, they were grain farmers. But – and this where an Ontario perspective on agriculture may cause some bafflement – they only had 5,000 acres of land, and that was not enough for a sustainable operation.

So they pivoted, sold the 5,000 acres to a much bigger operator, and bought the property that is now home to Black Fox Distillery.

But they didn’t come there with any thought of creating an award-winning distillery. Barb explains that they tried growing vegetables, but that was not a success. They tried fruit, planting acres of orchards, but that, too, was a commercial failure.

Barb says that they then thought of creating a winery, but there was one hitch: “We don’t like wine.”

And thus, through trial and error, they arrived at the idea of creating a distillery. It’s named for a real black fox, one that took up residence one season on their original grain farm.

And although the idea of a distillery was new, their agricultural philosophy was bred in their bones. They explain: “We are proud to be part of a movement of pioneering craft distillers who advocate for terroir, believe in the provenance of place, and understand the ways in which soil, climate, and topography influence the bounty a land bears.”

They also argue that “ecology

and economy can live in harmony.” They state: “Through incorporating environmentally-conscious, efficient systems across our business we pledge ourselves to a more sustainable way of life.

“From ingredient production to distillation, transportation, packaging, and water conservation, our agronomic practices emphasize environmental stewardship and a love of the land. As its current custodians, we take seriously our responsibility to leave it better than when it came into our care.

“We recognize that each step of the production process has an impact on the land and those who work it. Better soil management leads to more fertile soil, better crops, increased biodiversity, and improved climate regulation.”

The couple brought all of their experience, their education – and what they learned from their initial failures – to the development of Black Fox Distillery. And, Barb explains, this worked almost too well – when they began to produce their whisky, and to win awards, they were accused of being “charlatans”. They are one of only two distilleries in the province making craft whisky from scratch, and some of the “experts” felt that their product was simply too good to come from a fledgling operation.

Barb says that there were two keys to the exceptional quality of their whiskies. First, they used a unique rye/wheat blend, producing an unusually dark whisky. Second, even in Saskatchewan’s climate, the whisky is aged in barrels kept out-



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Black Fox staffers, ready to make some whisky-loving customers very happy.

doors. The changes in weather actually promote the development of flavours. No one else is doing this.

They couple grow most of their source products right on the property, and use them for their whiskies, gins, and cocktails. They still have fruit, although they don’t grow fruit as an end product. They have a haskap orchard, rhubarb gardens, and are in the process of converting apple orchards into elderflower patches.

When we visited Black Fox, we tasted three excellent whiskies, and enjoyed an unexpectedly tasty haskap gin cocktail. We were certainly not the only visitors – the outdoor patio had welcomed a fair number of drop-in customers, including some who clearly knew and loved the place.

Black Fox offers a full menu of ways people can enjoy the

place. Of course, you can simply drop in. But there are also organized tours, mixology classes, organized tastings, and unusual “u-pick” opportunities – not apples or pears, but flowers (peonies, gladioli and others) and, in mid-September, a u-pick pumpkin patch.

You’re probably not going to travel to Saskatchewan simply to visit a distillery, no matter how much you enjoy whisky. But when you do visit the province – and there are an incredible number of reasons why you should – be sure to include a visit to Black Fox Distillery on your itinerary.

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



Black Fox whiskies are aged in barrels kept outdoors – a key to their unique flavours.



A flight of whiskies – a great way to sample the options on offer.

ABOUT TIME AND TIMES: Daniel and Estrella Part II



JUDY FINKBEINER JOHNSON

Examiner Columnist

My paternal grandparents Daniel and Estrella Treitz Finkbeiner began their married life on Christmas Day in 1918. They lived through two World Wars, a deadly pandemic that began here with soldiers returning from the First World War, horse-and-buggy days to airplanes, to cars that broadened their world. Radios gave way to television, and the party line of shared large wall phones to dial phones.

My grandmother lived from a child hearing nursery rhymes about the man in the moon, to seeing televised images of astronauts setting foot on the moon, touching the lunar surface.

They lived through periods of fantastic inventions that improved people's everyday lives, through fearsome times that threatened people's lives and livelihoods, through times to celebrate and times to mourn. Turbulence and tranquility — the seasons of human life. On their farm their horses were replaced by tractors, and coal oil lanterns for house lighting were replaced by electric lights at the flip of a switch.

In the early decades on the family farm and when I was a young child before running water in the farmhouse, water came out of the well, pumped by hand into large pails. It took a great deal of labour to have a wonderful hot bath then, pumping the water at the well, carrying heavy pails of chilly water into the house, heating it on a wood stove and carefully carrying the hot water to fill a round metal tub.

What a treat it must have been later to turn on taps to fill a long tub and stretch out for bathing!

They went from Grandpa slaughtering a rooster that they had raised when preparing for a Sunday dinner for guests (as a child, I thought this strange often after hearing the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" in the sermon at church a couple of hours earlier) to Grandma enjoying take-out

from Exeter's Colonel Saunders Kentucky Fried Chicken beginning in the 1980s.

Early telephones

The large wooden telephones on the wall fed into lines on their country road, and several families were on one line. Each household had a different telephone ring, a combination of long and short tones. A particular ring was the cue to pick up the earphone to listen and talk into the receiver. If you needed the phone quickly you would have to interrupt whoever was already on the line and ask them to hang up so you could reach the operator in the closest town where she operated the switchboard plugging in lines, and often sharing local news and sports scores.

My grandpa's sense of humour was illustrated on a particular occasion when he wanted to have a private conversation but knew that a particular woman on the line had a very inquisitive nature and couldn't resist listening in. For her, it was almost like the entertainment of the soap operas that came much later on television.

Grandpa was annoyed and loudly told her that the pie she had in the oven was burning, and to get off the phone to take it out! Of course he had no knowledge of any baking going on, but perhaps there actually was, there was an "oh no," and a click of the phone going down.

Everyday religion

Spirituality was very important for the couple. They started every day in their home with Bible scripture readings and kneeling in prayer and ended each day kneeling bedside for their evening prayers.

Church was attended every Sunday in Crediton, in their early marriage called the Crediton Methodist Church, now known as Zion United. Local families sat in their family "pew," still the practice as long as I lived on the family farm; no regular churchgoer would ever dream of sitting in someone else's pew. I first sat in a pew on the other side of the church for a funeral when I was 62 years old!

The first years on that Crediton farm for Estrella and Daniel were a time of conflicting emotions. There was the happiness of beginning their married life together in 1918, and by 1922 they already

had two of the four sons that would join the family. Their eldest son died within days of becoming ill with meningitis in 1925. That cast a long, dark shadow over the parents, and the next son, my almost 3-year-old father.

The eldest boy's body came home by train to Centralia from a London hospital and soon my grandmother returned to that hospital on the train carrying her terribly ill youngest son at the time, still a baby who fortunately survived his illness.

Everything on the farm changed at that time. Estrella couldn't bear to stay in the farmhouse that had been such a happy place and now would never be the same. She left the farm to grieve and recuperate, taking the baby with her to live with her retired father in Crediton for what turned out to be a few months. My 3-year-old father stayed at the farm with his father, each of them grieving for the boy who passed away and dealing with their worry and the added loss for a time, for a beloved mother and wife and the baby.

My father remembered the dark evenings alone in the house as his dad did the chores in the barn. He watched for lantern light bobbing from the barn, signaling the return to the house.

Decades later, I did the same, at the same summer kitchen low window, waiting for my mom and dad to come back to the house and turn on the light of the lamps that were too dangerous to leave on for a child alone there.

Horse and car tales

Until well into the 1920s, once the snow was deep enough to cover the rail fences, it was a much shorter trip from the family farm to Crediton. The horses would

draw the buggy that I remember seeing in the driving shed on the farm, through the fields rather than by road. A heavy blanket warmed legs for the trip. On the church grounds on Sundays, there was a long shed for the horses to take shelter while the hour-long 10 a.m. service and the after-service, neighbourly news catch-up was happening.

With the arrival of cars, horses got to stay in their stalls or pastures for excursions to church and further afield. My grandfather purchased a driver's licence from a local store, a simple process in the day. Although he was an expert horse and wagon, buggy or cart driver, and even used the farm blacksmith shop to shoe those animals, mastering the automobile took a bit of time.

On one of the first trips to church, the car ended up off the road, down the incline to the ditch, too far to be driven back up. My dad, who was in the back seat, told me that Daniel asked Estrella to get behind the wheel while he got out to see if the car was okay. My father's opinion was that more damage was done to his father's ego than to the car, which was intact. When others on the way to church pulled up

to help, they assumed that his mother had been driving!

As a child, I definitely preferred when Mom or Dad delivered and brought me home from my grandparents when they retired to Exeter, but sometimes Grandpa did. The family was generations-long steeped in religion, firmly believing in the power of prayer. One memory is still movie-screen vivid.

Before we were out of Exeter Grandpa had already ignored the rule of the road and didn't have the right-of-way to proceed, so a younger driver cut him off. "No respect for their elders," he fumed. Grandma shut her eyes and prayed for the rest of the short trip to the farm, invoking higher powers. I kept both my options and my eyes open, ready to shout "STOP," planted my feet firmly on the floor of the back car seat and my hands on the back of the front seat. I hoped that it wasn't so busy in heaven that Grandma's prayers wouldn't be heard in time!

NEXT COLUMN

Wedding celebration silliness, shenanigans, and shivarees!

EXETER TOWN-WIDE YARD SALE

Saturday, June 20th

590 Albert Street	56 Hill Street	88 Sanders St West
40 Alexander Street	273 Huron Street	41 Sherwood Crescent
57 Alexander Street	73 Huron Street East	65 Snider Crescent
182 Andrew Street	142 Huron Street East	4 Somerset St
220 Andrew Street	215 Huron Street East	15 Somerset St
315 Andrew Street	283 Huron Street East	72 Thomas Street
322 Andrew Street	132 Huron Street West	123 Thomas Street
58 Anne Street	187 Huron Street West	162 Thomas Street
182 Anne Street	287 Huron Street West	74 Victoria Street West
71801 Bells Line	94 John Street	76 Wellington Street West
306 Carling Street	140 John Street Multi Family	36 William Street
310 Carling Street	67 John Street E	109 William Street
318 Carling Street	23 Kalisch Avenue	112 William Street
355 Carling Street	43 Kalisch Avenue	117 William Street
51 Church Street Multi	9 Kingscourt Crescent	130 William Street
249 Churchill Drive	306 Marlborough Street	317 William Street
274 Churchill Drive	329 Marlborough Street	365 William Street
253 Darling Blvd	167 Mill Street	491 William Street
424 Edward Street	375 Motz Blvd	
17 Gidley Street	309 Pryde Blvd	
77 Gidley Street	417 Pryde Blvd	
78 Gidley Street	6 Redford Drive	
150 Gidley Street	87 Riverside Drive	
49 Greene Street	116 Sanders St East	
157 Hazelton Lane	69 Sanders St West	
234 Hazelton Lane		



MENTORING MATTERS: A simple hour, a lasting impact



AMY WILHELM

Examiner Columnist

A few months ago, I shared information about Traditional Mentoring, our most well-known mentoring program. However, it is just one of the many ways we support local children and youth.

In addition to Traditional Mentoring, we offer In-School Mentoring, Big Bunch, and three youth empowerment programs — Go Girls! Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds; Game On! Eat Smart, Play Smart; and DISCOVER: The POWER of Me! Each program provides unique opportunities for young

people to build connections, develop new skills and reach their full potential.

With the school year wrapping up, we are already preparing for our 2026–2027 In-School Mentoring program. This valuable program connects students with caring adult mentors who meet with them for one hour each week during the school day. Through games, activities, conversation and shared interests, mentors provide friendship, encouragement and positive role modelling. These one-to-one relationships help students build confidence, strengthen social and emotional skills, and develop a greater sense of belonging, while empowering them to reach their full potential.

Our In-School Mentoring program is offered in 25 schools across five school boards throughout our service area. During the 2025–2026 school year, we supported 18 mentoring matches, provid-

ing local youth with opportunities to build confidence and develop meaningful relationships. We are also proud to collaborate with local secondary schools, including South Huron District High School, St. Anne’s Catholic Secondary School and St. Marys DCVI, where high school co-op students volunteer as mentors, serving as positive role models and supportive influences for younger students

Behind the scenes, our mentoring co-ordinator helps ensure the success of every In-School Mentoring match by providing ongoing support, regular check-ins, resources and activity materials for mentors and mentees. At its core, In-School Mentoring helps young people build confi-

dence, form positive relationships and reach their full potential through the guidance and encouragement of a caring mentor during the school day.

I’ll close with these encouraging words from one of our outstanding In-School Mentors: “I visit Maddyson at her school just once a week for one hour, and we are always able to find something fun to keep us busy during our visits. Maddyson is ten years old and loves to play outdoors, so we spend many visits out on the playground. If it is too wet to go outdoors, we play card games and do craft projects. Maddyson likes hav-

ing a visitor at school because she gets an opportunity to play and grow with someone who is there especially for her, and having that kind

of friend makes her feel confident and special. My experience as an in-school mentor has been wonderful, and it is all due to the great kids that BBBS has connected me to.”

Do you have one hour a week to make a difference? Interested in learning more about In-School Mentoring? Join us in helping reach more local youth — get involved today and help us grow stronger together as #BiggerTogether.

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BACK IN TIME

25 Years Ago

The organist at Crediton United Church for the last 25 years, Doug Lewis, is retiring. He is known as the Master of the Keys.

40 Years Ago

June 25, 1986 - Xavier Boogemans and Dave Desjardine of Grand Bend successfully completed a trip across Lake Huron from Sanilac, Michigan to Grand Bend on Sunday in a canoe. The trip took them a total of nine hours.

Cadet Chief Warrant Officer Steve Dalrymple was named top member of the Huron-Middlesex Cadets at Thursday's an-

nual inspection at Huron Park.

55 Years Ago

June 23, 1971 - 25 years ago, Alf Smith of Crediton played defence with the Humber Summit hockey team. Saturday at Nobleton, Mr. and Mrs. Smith attended a reunion banquet at which all members of the team were present except two lost by death, Mrs. Smith's brother and the team member. The team won the ORHA intermediate "A" championship in 1947 and thereafter disbanded.

A community project to attract a doctor to Grand Bend has paid off two-fold. Medical Centre secretary Jack Menzell said Dr. Sean Trapp and

Dr. Liam O'Connor will arrive from Ireland in time to start working about July 15..

65 Years Ago

June 22, 1961 - Superintendent Alice Claypole and board president Ray Morlock greeted citizens who inspected the addition to South Huron Hospital following Sunday's opening. Health Minister M.B. Dymond made the official opening.

R.E. Russell has purchased from W.J. Beer the brick building on the corner of Main and James streets in which he has been carrying on business since Mr. Beer's retirement.

80 Years Ago

June 25, 1946 - Fishermen Tom Penhale, Bob Fletcher and Alvin Willert came home from Chesley Lake this week with a nice catch of 15 pike and pickerel. Mrs. Cornelius Verkerk of R.R. 1 Exeter gave birth to twin boys on Monday. The second one to arrive was the 1,000th baby born at South Huron Hospital.

105 Years Ago

June 25, 1921 - The Odd-fellows on Sunday afternoon drove out to the cemetery and decorated graves of their departed brethren. The ceremony was conducted by Noble Grand Fuke, Past Grand Snell and Past

Grand Creech as Marshall.

130 Years Ago

June 25, 1896 - Remove campaign buttons and other ensigns from the lapel of your coat. The penalty for wearing such is \$100 or in default three months in jail.

The cornerstone of a new building to house the Evangelical Church congregation in Crediton was laid Sunday morning with an estimation of more than 1,000 persons on the church grounds.

Richard Delbridge of Usborne Township brought a large strawberry to the Times Monday afternoon. It was grown in his own garden and measured nine inches in circumference and almost filled a large cup.

SOUTH HURON COUNCIL BRIEFS

JOHN MINER

Examiner Reporter

United Way support increased

South Huron council has agreed to increase its funding for United Way Perth-Huron with an annual contribution of \$35,000 a year for the next five years.

Council made an initial grant to the United Way in 2021 of \$10,000. The next year it increased the amount to \$30,000 a year for five years. In a presentation to council in May, United Way Perth-Huron director Ryan Erb said the agency faces increasing costs to provide services and there is an increasing demand.

In South Huron, United Way Perth-Huron supports the South Huron Connection Centre, Huron Turning Point and an Access Centre for programs operated by the Huron Perth Children's Aid Society and The Well Youth Hub.

BIA engagement procedure endorsed

A new procedure for engaging with the Exeter Business Improvement Area (BIA) has been endorsed by South Huron council.

Citing the major impact projects have on businesses, the BIA earlier this year requested council consult with it before the first construction tender is let. The policy adopted by council states that where feasible, before detail design is finalized, the municipality may

request BIA input on specific concerns and suggested mitigation ideas. During construction the municipality will continue direct communication with affected businesses and property owners and may maintain regular liaison with the BIA.

Nothing in the procedure requires the municipality to adopt all BIA recommendations or creates a joint decision-making structure.

Contract awarded for Huron Park sewage station upgrade

A contract in the amount of \$4.1 million has been awarded to Finnbilt General Contracting to upgrade the Huron Park sewage pumping station.

When the project is complete, it is expected that repair and maintenance costs will be reduced. A staff report stated the construction will have little to no impact on the public or businesses in the area of the project as the pumping station is in a low traffic area.

Sewage flows will be maintained throughout construction with no impact on customers served by the station. In recommending Finnbilt, GEI Consultants said Finnbilt is a reputable and competent contractor.

Drinking water system achieves top rating again

An inspection of the South Huron drinking water system by Ontario's Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks has found the system was in full regulatory compliance.

The ministry put the risk rating for the system at 0.00

per cent and gave it a 100.0 per cent final inspection rating.

It is the 17th consecutive year the South Huron system has been given the highest percentile rating and the 15th time it has achieved a 100 per cent inspection rating. A report to council by Alyssa Keller, South Huron environmental services manager, said the results are only possible with the extraordinarily dedicated, competent frontline staff and unwavering support of council.

Heritage building grant program backed

South Huron is adding its support to calls for a provincial grant program to encourage creation of additional housing units within heritage buildings.

Advocated by the Architectural Conservancy Ontario and backed by some municipalities, the Heritage Helping Housing Building Grants program would provide matching grants to heritage property owners to create new housing units in under-utilized heritage buildings.

Speaking in favour of establishing the \$10-million per year program, Coun. Aaron Neeb said it would not only create more housing, but keep heritage properties from being demolished and ending up in the landfill.

Coun. Marissa Vaughan said heritage house owners are hogtied in their ability to make improvements and a grant could help.

"I think it is a great idea."



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11:00 am Family Worship Service

Facebook: ZionDashwood
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Annual Meeting Announcement

Alexandra Marine & General Hospital and South Huron Hospital

Thursday, June 25, 2026 | 7:00 p.m.

White Carnation Banquet Hall, Holmesville

Members of the public are welcome and can attend in person or via Microsoft Teams; RSVP to alana.ross@amgh.ca

Members of the Hospital Corporations shall be entitled to vote at the Annual Meeting.



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Matt Den Hollander Broker/Owner, Rick Lobb, Broker of Record/Owner, Jeff Bauer, Broker/Owner & Staff at Royal LePage Heartland Realty, take pride in announcing the New Sales Representative registered to our Exeter Office.

10 years of real estate experience, Rhonda Ross is proud to serve Huron County with Royal LePage Heartland. Known for her honesty, compassion, and dedication, Rhonda has built a reputation as a top-producing REALTOR® who always puts her clients first. Her commitment to exceptional service earned her the prestigious Royal LePage Award of Excellence. In 2025, Rhonda and her husband Jeff relocated to Exeter to be closer to family and quickly fell in love with the welcoming communities of Huron County. She believes real estate is about more than buying and selling homes—it's about community, helping people navigate important life transitions with confidence and care. Whether you're buying your first home, downsizing, relocating, investing, or simply seeking trusted advice, Rhonda is committed to making the experience smooth, stress-free, and rewarding.

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OBITUARY

Hodgins



Donalda Kathleen "Donna" Passed away peacefully at Craigwiel Gardens, Ailsa Craig, on Monday, June 1, 2026, in her 93rd year.

Donna was predeceased by her beloved husband and best friend, Harry Max Hodgins (2004). Loving mother of Brian Hodgins and his late wife Debbie (2025), and Steve Hodgins and Rita Craig. Cherished grandmother of Nevin Hodgins and Megan, and proud great-grandmother of Oaklyn and Halston.

She will be fondly remembered by her sisters-in-law Joyce and Jeanette. Donna was predeceased by her brothers-in-law Bob, Earl, Charlie (Bess), Norm and Morley and her sister-in-law Dorothy Prout (Gerry). Predeceased by her half-brother Art Connor and his wife Donna, and by many nieces, nephews, extended family members, and friends.

Though she belonged to a generation often described as stoic, those who knew her best will remember her warmth, her sense of humour, her devotion to her family, and the pride she took in those she loved.

Special thank you to the team at Craigwiel Gardens for the care they provided to mom.

Private family arrangements have been entrusted to Denning's of Parkhill. Interment will take place beside Max in Parkhill Cemetery.

Those wishing to make a memorial donation are invited to consider the charity of their choice. *Online condolences may be left at www.denningfuneralhomes.com*



A structural inspection of the MacNaughton Park Dam is required every five years and is due to be performed this year. In order to carry out this work, it is necessary to lower the water level in the reservoir. Starting on July 6, 2026 the drain valve will be opened to lower the reservoir water level. Once the level is lowered sufficiently, the inspection of the structure will take place and the reservoir will be slowly refilled. Depending on weather conditions, it is expected that the reservoir will be back to its normal level in a couple of weeks.

If you have any questions in regarding this work, please contact the Environment Services Department at 519-235-0310 (ext 230)

Riddles

What has a face and two hands but no arms or legs?
A clock!

What is full of holes but still holds water?
A sponge!

What do you call cheese that isn't yours?
Nacho cheese!

What has one eye but can't see?
A needle!

Why did the golfer bring an extra pair of pants?
In case he got a hole in one!

What kind of tree fits in your hand?
A palm tree!

What has feathers but can't fly?
A pillow!

What do you call a sleeping bull?
A bulldozer!

What's orange and sounds like a parrot?
A carrot!

What do you get when you cross a snowman and a vampire?
Frostbite!

What did one ocean say to the other ocean?
Nothing, they just waved!

Why don't skeletons fight each other?
Because they don't have the guts!

Sudoku

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

Solutions on pg. 32

Pet of the Week 🐾 🐾 🐾

Enjoy the celebrations while keeping tails wagging and purrs happy!

Canada Day festivities are fun—but loud fireworks and crowds can stress pets. Keep them indoors in a safe, quiet space, and make sure ID tags are up to date. Safe pets, happy holiday!



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ASHE

Our pet of the week this week is Ashe. This 7-year-old cat came to Canada from Georgia and had to get used to our chilly winters. A sweetheart to her core, she regularly cuddles up to those she loves most, especially after they give her a little cheese.



Nominate your pet to be a Featured Pet by emailing info@exeterexaminer.com

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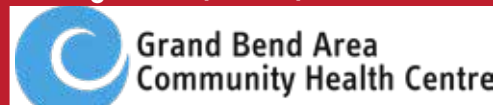
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G Z N F F A J H W H U O S C L E A K Q P
C C O M G W A K J Z E U A O B C T O G F
P H I X M N I R N V J Z J N D X I I N I
A R N Y P V A P A R A D E F T X O A C B
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JUNE

GRAND BEND AREA COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE JUNE PROGRAM

MON & THURS. 8:45-9:45AM Medium Low impact aerobic exercise that includes cardio, strength, & flexibility exercises. Community Room GBACHC. cmaxfield@gbchc.com

MON & THURS 10 – 10:45AM - High low impact aerobic exercise with Joy that includes cardio, strength, and flexibility. Community Room GBACHC cmaxfield@gbchc.com

MONDAYS & THURS 1:00-2 PM - Functional Fitness with Julie. Most gentle class for people with mobility issues. Hensall Arena and virtual in Grand Bend at GBACHC Mondays. Thursdays in person in Grand Bend Contact Julie at jdatars@gbchc.com

TUES & THUR. FRI. 8:30AM - Exercise Port Franks Community Centre. Line Dancing from 8:30-9 am. Medium Low impact aerobic exercises from 9-10 cmaxfield@gbchc.com

TUES & THUR. 6:00-6:45PM - Joys Evening Exercise Classes High low impact Community Room GBACHC. Saturday mornings from 10-10:45 am. cmaxfield@gbchc.com

WED. 10-11:00 AM - Walk & Talk Hensall Arena. Contact Grace at gbonnett@gbchc.com. Fun social walking program with coffee and chatting to finish

WED. 9:20-11 AM - Pinery Walking Group. Meet at the Lambton Heritage Museum parking lot 9:00 am. Email Lindsey lindseyashworthducharme@gmail.com

THURSDAYS 9:30-12AM - Early On program free program for adults with children birth to 6 years. Adult Day Wing, GBACHC. Summer program at Optimist Park. Contact earlyonchildcare.ca or 519-786-6161 x 9226.

FRI. JUNE 12, 19 & 26TH - "Vinyasa Yoga and Chair Yoga" GBACHC in Community room. Vinyasa at 8:30am, Chair at 9:45 am. Con-

tactcmaxfield@gbchc.com

SATURDAYS 8:30-11:30 AM - Walk In Medical Clinic Gbchc . Open to anyone in the community who needs medical attention (Not an Urgent Care or Emergency Centre). For more information of any of these programs contact Cindy Maxfield at cmaxfield@gbchc.com

TUES., JUNE 16 - 7PM - Enjoy live jazz & soulful candlelight reflection. The Nevin Campbell Trio. Jazz Vespers. All ages event. 25 Main St., Grand Bend.

THURS., JUNE 18 4-7PM - 5th Strawberry Social. Good Neighbours of Bluewater presents 5th Strawberry Social. Thurs., June 18 -4-7pm. Entertainment by the Bayfield Ukulele Society. St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 22 Goshen Line S. Zurich.

JUNE 20 - EXETER TOWN-WIDE YARD SALE. Exeter. Great deals on collectibles, treasures and other good stuff at Exeter's town-wide yard sale.

SAT, JUNE 20 - White Squirrel Cares Foundation. Rock the Range. Newfoundland Kitchen Party Edition. White Squirrel Golf Club. Music by: Off the Rock Canada's Great Big Sea Tribute. In support of Magnetic Moments Campaign.

SUN, JUNE 21 - 10 AM. Charity Fun Competition. Participants can try their hand at rifle, handgun, skeet, and trap events — all while supporting SafePet Ontario, an organization that helps pets stay safe. Fee \$40.00 For all Four Events. One Event \$10.00 CLAYBIRD GUN CLUB 71363 Ausable Line, Bluewater (Exeter), ON. Prizes: Proceeds to Safe Pet Ontario Lean more: safepet.ca Contact: Doug Moore 519-264-3101 Check out our website: www.claybird.ca

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THUR, JUNE 18TH @ 6PM: Soccer Summer Watch Party, Canada vs Qatar

Wednesday, June 24th @ 3pm: Canada vs Switzerland

WED JUNE 24TH, 3:30PM YA Author Talk: Curtis Campbell, "Lying, Stealing, and Other Ways to Save the Planet" (Ages 13-18) *Registration Required, Snacks & Pizza provided!

WED, JUNE 24TH, 3:30PM-5:00PM Teen Advisory Group Additional Dates: July 8th & 22nd, August 12th & 26th, September 9th & 23rd,

JUNE 27 - 10AM - 2PM. Show & Shine. Car Show. Royal Canadian Legion Branch 540, 136 Market Street, Lucan. BBQ and refreshments.

SAT, JUNE 27 3PM Fundraiser for Raquel Murray. Port Franks Community Centre. Sat., June 27 - 3pm. Wear your pink! Family friend outdoor fundraiser event with food, music and games for the children and families. For info: llattard@gmail.com

SUN, JUNE 28 - 2-4 P.M. - Crystal Gage and Ryan St Denis, Country and Western. Zion United Church, 6 Victoria Ave W, Crediton. \$25.00/person call Ruth 519-234-6035 or Joan 519-237-3806

SUN., JUNE 28 - 10AM - Huron Shores United Church's Picnic Service in the Park. Join us for our summer Canada Day picnic in the park! At Grand Bend Lions Park behind the firehall, 21 Municipal Drive. Free parking. Bring either a main dish, salad or dessert and your own cutlery, plates, drinks and a lawn chair.

JULY

THURS, JULY 2, 10:30 AM - 11: 30 AM Book

Social - First Thursday Of The Month, July 2nd & August 6th EXETER LIBRARY BRANCH, exeterlibrary@huroncounty.ca

SUNDAY, JULY 5 10AM - Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Huron & South Bruce North Huron presents Golf Fore Kids' Sake 2026. shotgun start. White Squirrel Golf Course, 72538 Bluewater Highway, Zurich. For more info contact Angie Steckle. angie.steckle@bigbrothersbigsisisters.ca

WED JULY 8TH, 6:30 - Huron Apothecary/Home Hardware Open Pairs Tournament. \$20 per player Register at ExeterLBC.tournaments@gmail.com

JULY 20 TO 24, 9AM-12PM - Vacation Bible School. Join us this Summer for our Emerald Crossing Vacation Bible School at Zion Lutheran Dashwood! VBS will be from July 20th-July 24th, from 9am-Noon. Children going into kindergarten up to children going into grade 6 are all welcome. We look forward to seeing you all there! Registration Link: <https://vbsmate.com/events/ziondashwood/31803>

AUGUST

AUGUST 4-7 9AM-12PM VBS Exeter Reformed Church - Registration is now open for VBS at Exeter Christian Reformed Church! Join us Aug. 4-7 from 9am-12pm for an exciting week filled with: music, crafts, games, Bible stories, Railway adventures. Register today and invite your friends! <https://vbspro.events/p/rockyrailway26>

AUGUST 8 & 9 Co-ed mixed recreational slo-pitch tournament sponsored by the Kirkton-Woodham Optimists. Family-friendly event. Contact Helen 519-301-6099.

WED AUGUST 5TH, 6:30 Syfilco Open Pairs Tournament. \$20 per player Register at ExeterLBC.tournaments@gmail.com



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

PHOTO QUIZ ANSWER

Marsh Marigolds

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Ask the Arborist



By Joel Hackett • 519.272.5742 • jtsquote@gmail.com

Joel Hackett is a certified Arborist residing in the St. Marys area. Currently, he spends most of the year running Joel's Tree Service. For contact call 519.272.5742 or email jtsquote@gmail.com

Dear Arborist,

We have a Japanese Emperor Oak (Quercus dentata 'Pinnatifida'). When the new leaves develop, the trunk does not have enough strength to support the leaves. Left unsupported, the top of the tree is parallel to the ground. Should we support the trunk or let the tree bend over?

Thanks,

Dave

Hi Dave,

In a situation like this, we would recommend keeping it staked but changing the tie-offs on the stake every year or so.

An alternative would be to trim it down to reduce weight. But in this case, I would wait until late fall to trim it if you choose to.

Thanks

The Arborist



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White Squirrel Watch



PHOTO BY KATHLEEN BINNS

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