

The Paris Independent

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FREE



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FIR-REAL FUN AT ST. JAMES TREE LOT

(CHRIS WHELAN PHOTO)

The Jones family of Ayr made the trip to Paris on Nov. 28 to kick off the season in style at the official opening of the St. James Church Christmas Tree Lot. With a fresh-cut fir strapped securely to the roof, smiles all around, and a car full of holiday cheer, the family joined the long-standing town tradition known for its picture-perfect trees, free family photo station, there are 1,500 handmade ornaments (800 of which are new this year) Open Friday 4-7, Saturday 10-5, and Sunday 1-5, so stop by to get your tree and some new decorations! A merry start to the season!

FreshCo grocery store under construction off Rest Acres Road

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

A long-awaited new grocery option is officially on its way to Paris, with construction now underway for a FreshCo store at 10 Markel Drive, just off Rest Acres Road. The development comes as many residents express growing frustration over limited local gro-

cery choices and increasing traffic congestion around routes to existing stores.

For years, west- and south-end neighbourhoods have relied on No Frills on Dundas St E or Sobeys on Grand River Street North in the town's north end, a trip that often requires navigating busy corridors or travelling through the downtown core, which has been inacces-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

By-Election coming to fill empty Ward 5 seat

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

County of Brant councillors have reversed their earlier direction to appoint someone to fill the vacant Ward 5 council seat, instead voting last week to proceed with a by-election in early 2026.

The shift comes one week after the Administration and Operations Committee narrowly supported Option 3, direct appointment, during a muddled Nov. 18 discussion that left several members uneasy.

At the Nov. 25 council meeting, Councillor Steve Howes pulled the item for further debate.

"If anybody watched the video of that meeting, they would have seen a pretty muddled several minutes where we seemed to attempt to pass different motions or solutions related to the various options," said Howes. "I think with the benefit of some second thought since that meeting, I would like to propose that we go back to revisiting and supporting Option 4, which is the option of a by-election."

Councillor Lukas Oakley seconded the motion, putting the matter back on the floor.

Mayor David Bailey noted he had originally proposed a by-election during the committee meeting, but that motion failed before councillors eventually defaulted to direct appointment.

"To do something that is not transparent, like other municipalities have done, is not like us,"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



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New Rest Acres Road plaza aims to ease grocery crunch as Paris growth continues

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

sible until recently. The new FreshCo aims to ease that pressure by bringing a full-service grocery store closer to the fast-growing Rest Acres Road residential area.

The store is part of a 50,000-square-foot commercial plaza led by Maverick Developments, with construction by The Cecchini Group. Initial planning discussions were held in May during a County of Brant Committee of Adjustment meeting, where details surrounding parking, pedestrian access and site layout were reviewed.

During that meeting, agent Brooke Burlock of Zelinka Priamo Ltd., representing the applicant, answered questions from committee members about site functionality. Ten parking spaces will be used for temporary snow storage before removal off-site, she noted. Burlock also confirmed that rollover curbs at the main entrance, slightly raised and painted, are

not meant for general public use.

A sidewalk will run along the curve of Hutchings Road and along Markel Drive, but there will be no pedestrian access from the east side of Hutchings. Committee members asked whether the building footprints could be adjusted to better fit the lot, but Burlock said the design was fixed and both FreshCo and Shoppers Drug Mart, the two confirmed anchor tenants, were satisfied with the approved plan. Despite concerns about the lot size raised by at least one committee member, no public objections were submitted during the meeting.

The new plaza is expected to serve thousands of residents in a rapidly expanding part of Paris, where commercial services have struggled to keep up with residential growth. While an opening date has not yet been announced, construction is well underway and the grocery store is expected to significantly improve shopping convenience for households south of



(CHECCHINI GROUP INC PHOTO)

A rendering shows the planned FreshCo and Shoppers Drug Mart development at 10 Markel Drive, part of a new 50,000-square-foot commercial plaza now under construction off Rest Acres Road in Paris.

Highway 403. More details, including timelines and additional plaza tenants, are expected in the coming months.

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Community giving group supports Nova Vita with \$8,535 donation



Members of 100 People Who Care Brant present a donation of \$8,535 to Nova Vita Domestic Violence Prevention Services following the organization's latest giving cycle. From left: Jennifer Church, Membership Coordinator, 100 People Who Care Brant; Donna Ireland, Admin/Communications, 100 People Who Care Brant; Jordy Thielman, Shelter Team Lead, Nova Vita; Natasha Dobler, Executive Director, Nova Vita; and Anne Ruddell, Fund Development & Strategic Initiatives Manager, Nova Vita.

Brant Council reverses course, opts for Ward 5 by-election after revisiting earlier decision

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Bailey said, adding he was pleased council was reconsidering the by-election option.

Council first voted unanimously to defeat its earlier recommendation in favour of Option 3. A second vote to proceed with a by-election passed, with only Councillors Bell and Councillor Robert Chambers opposed.

Under the proposed timeline, Nomination Day would be set for January 23, 2026, with Election Day scheduled for March 9, following the 45-day period mandated by the Municipal Elections Act. The successful candidate would take office before the March 24 council meeting.

The by-election will be conducted primarily online, with one physical polling station located in Ward 5. Staff estimate a cost of \$20,000 to \$25,000, funded through the elections reserve.

Clerk staff noted an online vote aligns with council's direction for the 2026 mu-

nicipal election, offering a smaller-scale opportunity to test procedures and vendor capacity. The ongoing Canada Post strike could disrupt delivery of voter information cards, so alternative distribution methods may be required.

Councillor John Bell reiterated his concern about operating with 10 councillors until March, stressing the number of recent tie votes that stemmed from an even-sized council.

Councillor Jennifer Kyle supported the by-election, calling it the clearest and most transparent way forward.

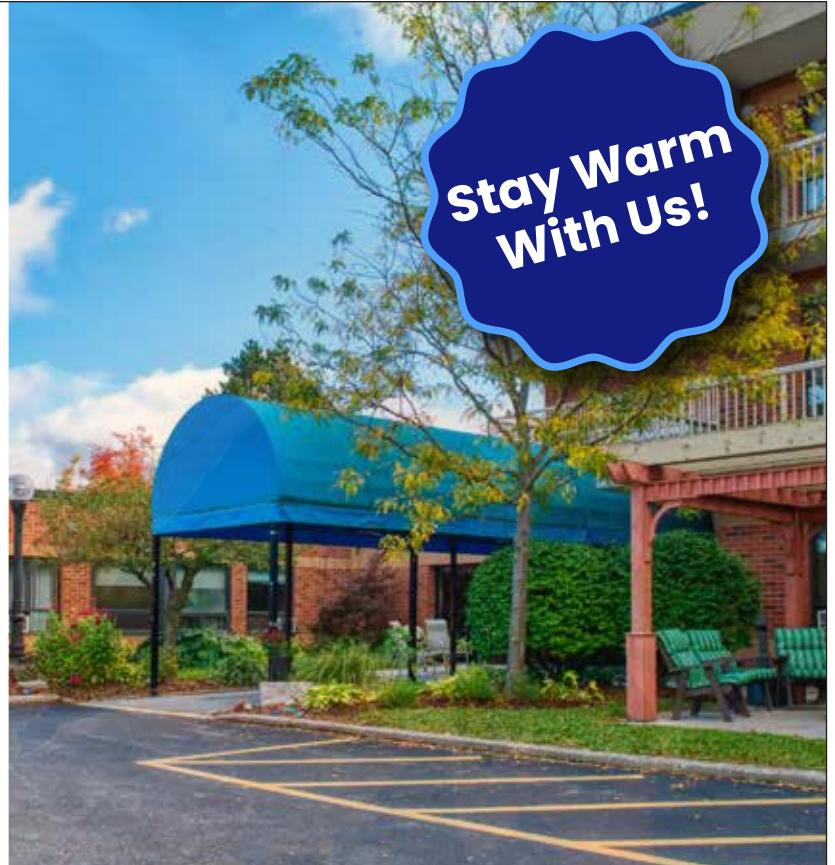
"It's the option that provides the most transparency and the most clarity and allows the residents of the ward to elect the person they want in the chair," she said, adding that council has managed votes in the past despite absences.

The Ward 5 seat has been vacant since former councillor Christine Garneau resigned earlier this fall. The by-election will give residents their say on who should carry the seat for the remainder of the term.

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"Fail forward": Inspirational book chronicling a stilt walker's triumphant journey from childhood to Guinness World Record holder

CHRIS WHELAN

Editor

Get ready to be inspired! Long-time Brantford resident and semi-professional entertainer, Doug Hunt, is set to launch his highly anticipated book, *Fail Forward*, on Thursday, December 11th at the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre at 6:30 PM. This event marks a major milestone in Hunt's decades-long commitment to raising awareness and funds for Participation Support Services (PSS). The book, co-authored by local writer and educator Larry Brown and featuring vibrant illustrations by artist Bernadine Van Renne, tells the remarkable true story of Hunt's journey from a devastating knee injury to achieving the Guinness World Record (GWR) for walking on the tallest stilts.

Doug Hunt's stilt-walking career was thriving, performing locally and internationally on custom-made, advanced stilts.

However, a severe knee injury in 1996, sustained during a fun "Dad's Dance," threatened to end his days on stilts. The pivotal moment that ignited his pursuit of a World Record occurred when he returned to work at PSS on crutches. Two residents—David and Paul, both living with Cerebral Palsy and requiring daily support—expressed deep concern and sympathy for his injury.

"It was at this point I decided to stop feeling sorry for myself," Hunt recalls. "Not only to get back on stilts but to go after a Guinness World Record for tallest Stilts. Really, this was a 'Challenger that became an Opportunity to help others who live a Challenge everyday.'"

In 2002, Hunt and his dedicated team, including manager Dave Levac, successfully set the GWR by taking 29 unassisted forward steps on stilts measuring an astonishing 50 feet, 9 inches.

Team Manager Dave Levac proposed the idea for the book, recognizing that their

story was a powerful read and a crucial next step for fundraising. Hunt enlisted the help of friend and former Rolling Thunder Theatre Company director, Larry Brown, to bring the vision to life. Brown, who was already familiar with Hunt and PSS, was captivated by the human element of the tale. "As I stumbled along, I became interested in the characters that shared Doug's life," Brown shared. "So the book became the journey of Doug from a boy to now." The result is a unique book, part traditional narrative and part graphic novel, made perfect by Bernadine Van Renne's illustrative style. The launch will be held directly under the spectacular display of the actual 55-foot stilts (the height intended for their current GWR attempt) located in front of the Sports Hall at the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre.

Join Doug Hunt, Larry Brown, and Bernadine Van Renne for the official launch of their inspirational book, *Fail Forward*, on Monday, December 11th at 5:30 PM! The event takes place directly under the impressive 55-foot stilt display at the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre. Hosted by Team

Manager Dave Levac, the evening will feature remarks from Mayor Kevin and the PSS Executive Director, a book proclamation by David McKee, and an exclusive reading by author Larry Brown. Attendees can meet and get books signed by Doug, Larry, and Bernadine, and enjoy complimentary pizza from Domino's. Books will be available for purchase for \$25, with all proceeds dedicated to supporting Participation Support Services (PSS).

Hunt's personal mantra, "Fail Forward," is the core message of the book. It encapsulates the lessons learned from both success and setbacks, echoing the wisdom of innovators like Henry Ford and Thomas Edison. The book details how the team handled challenges and the crucial importance of learning from individuals who face adversity daily.

In addition to purchasing the book, community members are encouraged to make direct donations to PSS via the QR code on the back of the book or to have Doug Hunt as a motivational speaker for their next event, with his talk aptly titled, "Fail Forward."



Doug Hunt's 2002 GWR took place at the opening of the Brantford Tourism Centre and his latest world record in 2023 took place at the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre and can be found in the 2025 Guinness Book on page 110. You can also google Guinness World Records website and do a search for Tallest Stilts.



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Santa serves up smiles at sold-out Kiwanis holiday breakfast



(PHOTOS BY MRS. CLAUS)

The Kiwanis Club of Paris-Brant served up a heaping helping of holiday cheer this past weekend as families packed into St. James Anglican Church for the club's always-popular, completely sold-out Breakfast with Santa. With two bustling seatings, guests tucked into a homemade breakfast prepared by hardworking Kiwanis volunteers while little ones enjoyed what may have been Santa's very first official stop in Paris this Christmas season.

In the spirit of matching sweaters and pure Christmas magic, siblings Mia Ribeiro, 2, and Theo Ribeiro, 4, snuggled in for a visit with the Big Man himself. Santa also welcomed Hannah Herschell, 4, and her baby brother Hudson, who at just three months old is already rocking his first holiday photo-op, joined by proud parents Maggie Hall and Scott Herschell. A heartfelt thank-you goes out to all the Kiwanis volunteers who cooked, coordinated, decorated and delighted, making sure Paris got a joyful reminder that Christmas is just around the corner.



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Brant Council backs call for Province to reverse automated speed enforcement decision

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

At its November 25 meeting, Brant County councillors voiced strong support for sending a letter to the province urging the continuation of Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE), following the Ontario government's recent decision to discontinue the program.

The matter arose under the consent items portion of the agenda, when Councillor John Peirce drew attention to a letter from the City of Brampton addressed to Premier Doug Ford. The Brampton letter outlines the municipality's opposition to the cancellation and details research-supported evidence showing ASE reduces speeding, prevents collisions and improves safety in school zones and community safety areas.

"I strongly feel that we should send a very, very similar letter to what's in here," Peirce said. "If you've read it, it hits all the points about what the ASE program has done."

Peirce introduced a motion for Brant to issue its own letter, mirroring Brampton's position. Councillor Lukas Oakley seconded. Mayor David Bailey noted he has heard firsthand that the speed camera previously located in St. George was effective.

"I've had people come to me in St.

George saying it was working," Bailey said.

Councillor John Bell questioned whether council had already taken this step, referencing a September 29 meeting. Peirce clarified that Brant had previously sent a letter expressing disapproval of the cancellation, but the Brampton letter contains "specific facts" and a more comprehensive argument supporting ASE, details he believes Brant should echo.

Council unanimously supported the motion.

The discussion came the same week the province announced Andrew's Law, which proposes lifetime driving bans for dangerous offenders. Oakley pointed out the contradiction between increasing penalties for dangerous driving while eliminating an enforcement tool widely used to deter speeding.

"I think it's a shame they are doing this just two weeks after removing a valuable safety tool," Oakley said. "There are things that are not aligning there in the provincial cabinet."

Brant's forthcoming letter will be sent to the Premier, the Minister of Transportation, local MPPs and other stakeholders, reinforcing the county's position that ASE is an important component of community road safety.

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Paris Beer Company serves up holiday cheer with local gifts, sip & shop weekends and seasonal menus

At The Paris Beer Company, we believe exceptional beer belongs at the heart of every celebration — even the small ones, like that quiet moment when someone unwraps a can of something you knew they'd love. This holiday season, we're inviting you to swap ordinary gifts for flavour, quality, and a whole lot of local charm.

Whether you're looking for stocking stuffers, hunting for the perfect hostess thank-you, planning a festive dinner at home, or crossing "stylish cozy merch" off your list, our Bottle Shop and online store are packed with options for (almost!) every occasion.

The holidays are our favourite season in the Bottle Shop for exactly that reason. It's the time of year when the gift is less about the object and more about the reaction you're hoping for: the "oh heck yes," the "you shouldn't have," the unspoken but fully understood "you are an amazing gift giver" nod. The fridges are lined with cans and bottles that work for stocking stuffers, host gifts, clever add-ons, and holiday table showstoppers. We also build pre-

made gift packs so you don't have to assemble anything while whisper-arguing with yourself over ribbon placement. Our team has already paired the right combos, packed them up, and made them look like you had it all under control from the start.

And then there's merch — the cozy, wearable kind that doubles as survival gear for Canadian winters. Hats, hoodies, tees that layer under anything, glassware that makes beer feel fancy, and soft accessories that double as respectable wardrobe staples. Do they say, "I love beer and local breweries"? Sure. But they also say, "I came prepared with warmth and good taste," and that's the sweet spot. You can browse it all online or just come into the Bottle Shop where real humans can help you choose based on vibe, taste, or the very scientific "what will make the recipient happiest."

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Ring in the new year with us. Midnight cheer starts here!

New Year's Eve, we're rolling out our Beer Pairing Dinner menu. Tickets and details drop soon — if you like dinner with purpose and beer with matching main-character energy, you'll want in.

And once the confetti clears, we don't go quiet. January marks one of our favourite annual traditions — our 3-Way Menu. It's three courses of comfort food, clever

price points, and just the right amount of indulgence designed to ease the post-holiday slump, take the sting out of winter wallets, and give people a reason to do dinner out again. It's become the unofficial kickoff to the slow

season done right: a bit of nostalgia, a bit of comfort, and a gentle reminder that good food and good beer don't require a splurge to feel indulgent.

Five years in, a lifetime of cheers still ahead!



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The County of Brant celebrates completion of 2025 Downtown Dig construction season

MEDIA RELEASE

The County of Brant is proud to announce the successful completion of the major construction activities for the 2025 season of the "Downtown Dig" project in downtown Paris. This once-in-a-lifetime infrastructure renewal project, which occurs every 75-100 years, replaced critical underground infrastructure and transformed the streetscape to create a more vibrant, functional, and accessible downtown for decades to come.

"We made it, Brant! We are thrilled to have reached this significant milestone," said Mayor David Bailey. "We sincerely thank our residents, businesses, and visitors for their incredible patience and perseverance during this major undertaking. Your support for local businesses throughout the construction has been vital in keeping our community strong."

The 2025 season focused on significant upgrades along Grand River Street North, between William Street and the Nith River Bridge. Key accomplishments for the year include:

- Completed critical infrastructure replacement: Upgrading essential water mains, sewer lines, stormwater and utilities (gas and electrical) beneath the road surface.
- Enhanced accessibility and aesthetics: Installation of wider sidewalks, new rollover curbs, and features like new streetlights, and a future tree canopy to improve pedestrian experience and climate resiliency.
- Improved traffic flow: Conversion of angled parking to parallel parking to enhance both traffic and pedestrian safety and create more space for pedestrians and business activities.

With the 2025 construction season wrapping up, plans are already in place for the next phase. In spring 2026, work will continue on Grand River Street North to fin-

ish the brick work and landscaping, hydro work and installation of new furnishings and begin the reconstruction of the William Street and Grand River Street North intersection. Subsequent phases will address Mechanic Street, Broadway Street West and William Street. These future phases will be officially announced in the future and are tentatively planned to occur in 2027 to 2029. While construction can be challenging, these improvements ensure the longevity and growth of our community. The County of Brant remains committed to minimizing disruptions and ensuring safe pedestrian access to all downtown businesses during future phases.

Throughout the Dig, local businesses demonstrated incredible resilience. While businesses adapted to the challenges of construction, Downtown Paris welcomed six (6) new businesses, with two (2) additional businesses slated to open shortly. Furthermore, Downtown Paris has had two (2) businesses expand with an additional one (1) projected to expand later this year.

"This is a testament to our strong business community," said Zach Gable, Director of Economic Development and Tourism. "The resilience shown by our local businesses is the heart of our community's character. Despite the challenges, they demonstrated incredible dedication. Their tenacity has kept downtown Paris a vibrant place to visit and shop during a difficult time. We are grateful for their partnership and perseverance."

In addition, applications for the Community Improvement Plan from the downtown Paris businesses resulted in 14 grant applications being approved, totaling \$201,000 (rounded) - a 302% increase in funding, attributing to \$1,080,000 in improvements. These programs included signage, façade improvement, adaptive commercial reuse, planning and building, and housing improvements grants.

The holiday season officially kicked off



(COUNTY OF BRANT PHOTO)

The 2025 construction season of the "Downtown Dig" comes to a close on Grand River Street North, where new sidewalks, utilities, and streetscape features mark the beginning of a transformed downtown Paris.

in downtown Paris at the annual Jingle Bell Night event! Hundreds of people joined downtown Paris to celebrate the season,

which included the tree lighting, to show their support for our incredible downtown businesses.

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Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

- What is the street address of the White House?
- What kind of dog is Scooby-Doo?
- The practice of drawing electoral district boundaries to give one political party an advantage is called?
- What is the main body of an aircraft called?
- What is the largest country in Africa by area?
- What does DNA stand for?
- Who is Katy Perry currently dating?
- What is Warren Buffett's company called?
- Who is Bluey the dog's sister?
- True or False. A group of geese is called a gaggle.

This week's answers are found on pg. 19

HISTORIC PARIS

PARIS PAST: Revisiting the traditions of the Paris Santa Claus Parade



By Chris Whelan

For as far back as I can research Paris has always been up for having a parade. From Military parades to labour day parades, from Coronations to celebrating Canada's Independence, Paris has a long history of hosting parades! We even have photos of our towns people parading to the park just for a picnic! Celebrations along the downtown main streets has long been a tradition that has continued right up until our present day.

Among the many parades celebrated in our little town my favourite has always been at Christmas. Former Reeve and business owner Gord Gibson used to tell me stories of when he was young and Paris would have the Santa Clause parade downtown and afterwards all the children of Paris would gather at the Capital movie theatre and receive a bag of goodies from Santa and watch cartoons for the rest of the afternoon courtesy of the Penman's Entertainment and Recreation Association (PERA). Gord would tell me how much he would enjoy a bag of hot roasted peanuts at the theatre for only a nickel or how the black balls from the Palms would turn your whole mouth and tongue black.

The first recorded mention of Christmas in Paris that I could find was an article in the newspaper from December 1929. The town was celebrating its second annual town Christmas Tree, adorned in the town square (this became the cenotaph in 1930). Santa Claus himself would visit the tree, distributing gifts to the children, followed by a free matinee at the nearby Capital Theatre. Little did the resi-



dents know that this would mark the beginning of a cherished tradition that would endure for decades.

Year after year, Santa Claus would make his grand entrance into downtown Paris, captivating the hearts of both young and old. Whether arriving in a bright red sleigh, a motorcar, or even a helicopter in the 1960s, his arrival was always met with great anticipation. Accompanying him were popular fairytale and nursery rhyme characters, adding an extra touch of magic to the parade.

The Penman's Entertainment and Recreation Association (PERA) took

over sponsorship of the parade, and it grew larger and more spectacular with each passing year. The festivities would kick off in the morning at the PERA room located at Penman's #2 -mill on Willow Street. The parade would then traverse the town, cross the William Street bridge and make its way through downtown via William Street, Broadway Street, Mechanic Street, Grand River Street, Emily Street, and back to Broadway Street before finally landing at the Theatre.

Once Santa Claus arrived at the Theatre, over five hundred children eagerly packed into the venue. Each child would receive a bag filled with rock candy, an orange, and a candy cane to take home as a sweet memory of the day. As the children enjoyed an afternoon filled with cartoons, serials, and a feature movie, parents had the opportunity to indulge in some holiday shopping.

Santa Claus didn't stop there; his mission to spread joy extended beyond the theatre. After leaving the packed venue, he would visit the community hall to meet with pre-school children and make special visits to sick children at the Willet Hospital or at their homes. It is estimated that around 1,200 to 1,300 bags of candy were distributed during and after the parade each year.

In 1957, the Capitol Theatre closed its doors, marking the end of an era. However, Santa Claus found a new destination for his arrival—Christmas Island, also known as Kings Ward Park. This tradition continued until 1966 when Penman's sponsorship ceased, and the parade came to a halt. The absence of the Santa Claus Parade left a void in the hearts of Paris residents, and Christmas in the town would never be the same.

Until... in 1985, a determined organizer named Dale Maidens decided it was time to bring back the cherished



Paris Santa Claus Parade photos from December 1955 - 1964

tradition. After an 18-year hiatus, the Paris Santa Claus Parade returned to the delight of the community. Maidens worked tirelessly to revive the spirit of the parade, ensuring that the magic of Christmas would once again fill the streets of Paris.

Since then, the Paris Santa Claus Parade has become an annual highlight, eagerly anticipated by residents and visitors alike. Prior to the pandemic the parade was organised by Ed McGuire and Christine Ashton for the previous 20 years and was revived in 2022 by the Paris Volunteer Firefighters Club and members from Station #1. This annual parade serves as a reminder of the town's rich history and the enduring power of community spirit. As families gather along the parade route this December 6th, at 6pm they will witness a joyous spectacle that honours the past while embracing the future.

The Paris Santa Claus Parade is not just a procession of floats and characters; it represents the unity and shared celebration of the holiday season. It is a time when the young and young at heart come together to embrace the enchantment and wonder of Christmas. So, let us join hands and hearts as we welcome Santa Claus back to the main streets of Paris, with the hope that this beloved tradition continues for generations to come.



(PARIS STAR NEWSPAPER PHOTO)

Ed McGuire and Christine Ashton organized the parade for 20 years.

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR NOISE EXEMPTION COUNTY OF BRANT NOISE BY-LAW 108-22

Applicant: Noisemaker Presents, 200 Caroline St N, Hamilton **Exemption location:** Two Rivers Stadium at Syl Apps Community Centre, Paris ON **Description of sound:** Amplified Music, Loading Equipment **By-law Section:** Schedule B - Section 6(a); Schedule C Item 4. **Exemption period:** August 13, 2026 from 8:00am-11:00pm August 14-15, 2026 from 9:00 am to 11:00 pm and August 16, 2026 from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. **Reason:** Paris Drinks Fest (Festival) **Objections:** Must be received in writing **10 days** from this publication date. Please ensure to provide your contact information and reason for the objection. Where an objection is not received within the time indicated above, no further opportunity to file an objection will be granted. For more information or to file an objection, please contact:

The County of Brant By-law Enforcement Division
26 Park Avenue Burford, Ontario N0E 1A0
Tel: 519.449.2451 Fax: 519.449.3382 Email: bylawenforcement@brant.ca

Paris volunteer gives back to the Christmas Hamper Program that helped shape her childhood

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

For many families in Paris, the Christmas Hamper Program is more than a box of food and toys. It is a gesture of hope, dignity and community at a time of year when those things matter most. Few understand that more deeply than Tricia Meadows, a long-time volunteer who once received a hamper as a child.

Meadows grew up in a household where money was tight, but love was abundant. Her mother, Krystyna Hoffman, became a single parent at 19, working full-time while studying to complete high school and later pursue post-secondary education. They lived with Tricia's grandmother and great-grandmother, three generations supporting one another through the ups and downs.

"When it came to Christmas time things were always extremely tight," Meadows recalled. "I remember every year getting these gifts."

Among her clearest memories is the annual chicken that arrived in their hamper, an item her family cherished because they seldom had access to a complete meal with protein.

"Mom would make a special dinner and



(CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTO)

Volunteers work together to sort and prepare hamper boxes, helping ensure more than 150 local families receive food, gifts and holiday essentials. Without these dedicated volunteers, the Christmas Hamper Program wouldn't be possible—nor would the magical Christmas mornings it creates.

it was always a big celebration for us," she said.

Those early holiday dinners, made possible by strangers in her community, sparked a family tradition Meadows continues today. "It's still my favourite meal. I make the exact same dinner for my kids now."

As the program has evolved, today's hampers now include a grocery voucher so families can purchase a turkey or ham, along with all the fixings for a full Christmas meal plus toys for each child, and warm hats and mitts generously knitted by community members.

What Meadows didn't know as a young child was the true source of those gifts, the Barbie dolls she adored, the toys she unwrapped, the dinner they shared. In her teen years, her mother gently explained that the magic of Christmas morning had come from the generosity of the hamper program. That revelation, Meadows said, changed everything.

"I remember never feeling like we were poor or struggling," she said. "I had an extremely happy childhood, and I believe it was because of the support of the community helping my mom when she really needed it. The hampers shaped the Christmas memories I have today."

Her mother passed away in 2013, leaving Meadows with a lasting sense of gratitude and an unmistakable calling to give back.

"I started volunteering for this program over 14 years ago because I wanted to give back to the community that helped me grow up into the person that I am," she

said.

Now a mother of two, Meadows brings her children - 17 and 15 - to sorting nights each December. For them, volunteering is as natural as the holiday season itself.

"They've come with me since they were little. They still look forward to it," she said. "If they donate their time at a young age, that spirit will continue throughout their lifetime."

Sorting week is famously fast-paced, with more than 100 volunteers working side by side to prepare hampers for more than 150 local families.

"Sorting night is (organized) chaos, but everyone just wants to help," she said. "It's so nice to be around. The volunteers are all there for a good cause."

She believes the real strength of the program lies in the diversity of people who contribute from students, service clubs, first responders, sports teams, businesses, churches to families of every background.

It's the sense of community, people coming together from all walks of life, that makes this program amazing. Some might even call it a Christmas miracle.

As Paris continues to grow, Meadows hopes newcomers will understand the spirit behind the program and the families who use it.

"We are equals. We are a community," she said firmly. "Sometimes people go through hard times. We need to support each other, and ultimately the goal is to let the kids have one time a year when they are spoiled. They deserve that."

She hopes the community will continue breaking down the stigma of asking for help. "It's hard to raise kids and it's okay to rely on help," she said.

The intergenerational nature of the program is something Meadows finds especially meaningful. Some of today's organizers are children or grandchildren of past volunteers, a reminder that kindness often becomes a family legacy.

For Meadows, finding the words to thank donors can feel impossible.

"I look at myself as a child and think how things could have been different if the program wasn't available," she said. "You don't realize that a small donation can have such a big impact on somebody and how that impact will help build their character."

Her own character, she said, was shaped in part by the generosity of strangers who ensured her mother didn't have to shoulder the holidays alone.

"The traditions I carry on today come from the memories I have because of the hamper program," she said. "It's comfort and happiness."

The Paris Independent Pick Up Locations

PARIS

Brant Sports Complex
Brave Waves Swim School
Canadian Tire
Cobblestone Public House
Cowan Community Health Hub Pharmacy.
Detour Café Paris
Dog-Eared Café
Egg Smart
Elberta Farms Country Market
Farah Foods
From The Attic Interiors
Horsfall's Auto Service
Jay's No Frills
John M Hall The House of Quality Linen
Le Petite Marché
Mary Maxim
Northville Pharmacy
Paris Beer Company
Paris Health Store

Paris Inn

Paris Jewellers
Park Lane Terrace
Paris Branch--County of Brant Public Library
PrimaCare Community Family Health Team
Queensview Retirement Community
Rexall Pharmacy
Royal Canadian Legion Branch 29
Sales Decorating
Secret Lunch and Catering
Sobeys
Stacked Pancake & Breakfast House Paris
Telfer Place Retirement Residence
Tim Hortons - Rest Acres
Tim Hortons - Paris Road
Tim Hortons - Grand River St N

The Gem Marketplace

The Grand Bayou Cajun Kitchen
The Paris Wincey Mills Market
Walter's Greenhouses & Garden Centre
Wright's Variety Store
Wilkin Family Community Centre
Willett Urgent Care Centre
BURFORD
County of Brant Library - Burford
Foodland
Nelley's Bake & Brew
PRINCETON
Jim's Lunch
Sinden Feed & Seed Inc.
ST. GEORGE
County of Brant Library - St. George
Freshmart
Tim Hortons – Brant Rd

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
GRANTHAVEN.COM**

A holiday tradition of kindness: Gift bags bring joy to local seniors

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

As the holiday season draws near, one Paris woman is once again working tirelessly to ensure seniors at St. Joseph's Lifecare in Brantford feel remembered, cherished, and surrounded by kindness at Christmastime.

For the past several years, Dawn Sangster has led Gwen's Holiday Magic for Seniors, a heartfelt campaign created in memory of her mother, Gwen Ludwig, whose generosity and devotion to giving shaped their family's traditions. Each December, the campaign raises funds to deliver a Christmas gift bag to every long-term care resident at St. Joseph's - 205 in total when the home is at full capacity.

This year's fundraising goal is \$5,125, the equivalent of 205 gift bags at \$25 each. Sangster says the campaign is currently (as of press deadline) 30 per cent of the way there and hopes to see donations grow in the coming weeks so all bags can be delivered the week before Christmas.

"We are so grateful for the support of these wonderful local businesses," she said, noting financial and in-kind contributions from Lip Service Beauty, Smile City Paris,

Hunter Amenities, and Concord Ropes Inc. "Their generosity is truly appreciated."

The community support doesn't end there. Sangster said she continues to be moved by the loyal group of friends and family who return each year to honour her mom's memory.

A special place in her heart is reserved for Gwen's lifelong friends, Wendy and Dave Norman, Fi and Dan Plastina, and Maryanne Louch, who have supported the campaign since its earliest days.

"It means so much to me, and makes me feel closer to Mom, knowing that the people who were such an important part of her life continue to support this effort each year," said Sangster. "Their kindness and commitment mean more than words can express."

The contents of the gift bags remain carefully curated, all items chosen with care and tested year after year for their practicality and comfort. Each bag includes:

- a toothbrush and toothpaste
- body wash
- a 100 per cent natural lip balm
- warm, non-slip socks
- a cozy throw blanket
- a Norman Rockwell calendar
- a small stuffed animal for residents



Volunteers of all ages gather around hundreds of festive gift bags during a previous delivery day for Gwen's Holiday Magic for Seniors, a community campaign that prepares and delivers Christmas surprise bags to every long-term care resident at St. Joseph's Lifecare in Brantford. The annual tradition continues in memory of Gwen Ludwig, whose spirit of giving inspires the project each year.

to cuddle

- a handmade ornament
- a hand-decorated gift bag and heart-felt card created by local students

"The residents absolutely love the little stuffed animals," Sangster said. "Many keep them close or tucked on their laps. Those small comforts mean a lot."

Organizing, assembling, and delivering more than 200 gift bags takes a dedicated volunteer crew. Each year, roughly 20 adults and children gather to pack the bags, with another 12 to 15 volunteers joining the delivery team.

Sangster's sisters, Wendy and Erin, and their families are at the centre of the effort, along with close friends including Sara Morrison, Kim Newell, and Caitlin Mayberry and their families.

"Their dedication and excitement make this tradition even more special," she said. "It fills our hearts as much as it fills the bags."

Delivery day, typically just before Christmas, is the most emotional part of the effort. Sangster said the reaction from residents never fails to remind her why this project matters.

"The smiles, the conversations, the moments of connection, they stay with us long after the holidays," she said. One year, the group was joined by a guitarist who played Christmas carols as they walked through the halls. "It added a little extra magic that we still talk about."

For those who never met her mom, Sangster describes Gwen as a kind, loving, and

selfless woman who believed deeply in giving back. She volunteered widely at the Brantford Red Sox, in local baseball programs, through food bank donations, and at countless community events.

"She made everyone feel like family," said Sangster. "Her smile and laugh could put anyone at ease."

Sangster believes her mom would be honoured to see the project grow and to know that seniors continue to feel valued through this gesture.

"It can be so lonely for some of these residents," she said. "No one should be left out."

The biggest challenge each year is keeping the cost of filling 205 bags manageable while still meeting the fundraising target. Rising costs have made that task even harder.

"We always look for discounts, donations, and the most cost-effective ways to manage the project," said Sangster. "The community's support is essential."

Those wishing to contribute can join the Facebook group "Christmas Magic For Seniors In Memory of Gwen Ludwig" or reach out to Sangster directly.

Donations can be made by e-transfer to: gwenstmasmagic@gmail.com.

Gift bag delivery is planned for the week before Christmas, and there is still time to help make this year's campaign a success.

"It's a gift for us to be able to share these moments," said Sangster. "And we're honoured to do it every year."

County of Brant stands against gender-based violence with awareness flag raising



(COUNTY OF BRANT PHOTO)

County of Brant representatives joined local service providers from Nova Vita, Victim Services of Brant, and the Brant OPP on November 25 to raise the flag in honour of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Many attendees wore purple scarves in support of Wrapped in Courage, an Ontario-wide campaign that shows survivors of gender-based violence they are not alone. Throughout November, Woman Abuse Prevention Month, Ontarians are encouraged to purchase and wear a purple scarf to demonstrate their commitment to ending femicide and all forms of gender-based violence, with proceeds supporting essential shelter and support services at Nova Vita. "There is an epidemic of gender-based violence and an increase in femicides in Ontario, despite the national trends of decreased crime," said Councillor Lukas Oakley. "I personally know many individuals impacted...and it is saddening how pervasive it is. We must ensure that folks are aware of this epidemic, so that women and gender diverse folks experiencing violence can connect to services and know that they are not alone." For more information on the Wrapped in Courage campaign, follow Nova Vita Brant or visit wrappedincourage.ca.

The Paris Independent SPORTS



Sponsored by Paris Canadian Tire

Paris High Panthers launch winter sports season with mixed results across the court and ice

GEORGE LE GRESLEY

Paris Independent Sports Correspondent

The winter season for high school sports kicked off last week, with over 80 games scheduled in volleyball, basketball, hockey, badminton, and wrestling, among others. Of course, Paris High School athletes are competing; some, like many of the Junior students, are entering competitive sports for the first time, and some games are an extension of practice.

Boys Hockey

Last year's squad had a good run at the AABHN championship, and this year's version, coached by Scott Mann and Tony North and a variety of students, at this early stage, looks set to continue a good run. Last Thursday, the Panthers faced Simcoe's Holy Trinity Titans at the BSC.

At 7:36, the Panthers opened up scoring with Nathan Wylie beating the Titan goalie to open the game's scoring. A minute and a half later, Quinn Carpenter scores on a shot from the right wing. At 2:07 remaining in the period, another goal for Paris, followed by a shorthanded goal while killing a penalty, by veteran Josh Pizzey. At the end of the first, Paris leads 4-0.

In the second period, the Panthers added two more goals, one off Nathan Wylie's stick and the other off Josh Pizzey's. Holy Trinity scored to end the period with a 6-1 lead. In the third, both teams scored, and Paris won 7-2.

Girls Volleyball

Both the Junior and Senior sides started on the road, first facing BCI and, a few days later, St. John's. Both opponents swept the Panthers three games to 0. They return to their court today against Assumption.

Boys Basketball

This year's Junior side is comprised of young players, most of whom have minimal experience, except on our county's outdoor courts. They opened their season against BCI, and on the first play, they showed their nervousness by winning the opening game tipoff and running to the wrong basket, a mistake they'll probably never repeat. BCI won by a large margin, not allowing their first-string play-



(GEORGE LE GRESLEY PHOTO)

Canan Shrebino scored 24 points against St. John's in senior boys basketball action

ers to sit while the boys on the bench got in the action. The BCI coaching staff showed poor sportsmanship by letting the score get out of hand.

The next game for the Juniors was against Assumption, and although they lost, they showed some improvement, a testament to the players and Coach Murchie and Parr.

The senior Panthers, a talented team also lost their first two games. Against BCI, they were having a hard time getting the ball through the hoop and not winning the ball on rebound opportunities at both sides of the court. They dropped their season opener 77-56.

The second game of the week against St. John's was a different story, taking an early first-quarter 26-13 lead, with Canaan Sherbino leading the way with 14 points. In the second quarter, the Eagles had outscored the Panthers, but Paris held on to a 36-30 lead.

In the third quarter, Paris caught up, trailing their opponent 44-42. In the final quarter, Sherbino was back on track, leading the team in scoring, but despite that effort, the team lost 61-56.



(GEORGE LE GRESLEY PHOTO)

The Paris Panthers celebrate their season-opening 7-2 win over Holy Trinity at the Brant Sports Complex, kicking off the winter schedule with a strong team performance.



PARIS MINOR HOCKEY

SCOREBOARD - WEEK OF NOVEMBER 23RD

Sunday, November 23

- U13LL Wolfpack Team 1 win 5-0 against Langton Leafs
- U13 LL Wolfpack Team 2 lose 2-1 against Ingersoll Express
- U15 LL Wolfpack lose 6-2 against Ayr Flames 2
- U18 LL Wolfpack Team 1 tie 4-4 against Tillsonburg Tornadoes
- U18 LL Wolfpack team 2 lose 3-0 against Ingersoll Express

Tuesday, November 25

- U13 LL Wolfpack Team 1 lose 5-3 against Ingersoll
- U15 LL Wolfpack tie 3-3 against Ayr Flames 1
- U18 LL Wolfpack Team 1 lose 7-0 against Ayr Flames 2

Thursday, November 27

- U11 LL Wolfpack Team 2 tie 4-4 against Langton Leafs
- U9MD Wolfpack win 5-3 against Delhi Norwich 59ers
- U11 LL Wolfpack Team 1 lose 4-2 against Tillsonburg Tornadoes

Friday, November 28

- U15LL Wolfpack lose 3-2 against Tillsonburg Tornadoes
- U18 LL Wolfpack Team 2 lose 3-1 against Tillsonburg Tornadoes

Saturday, November 29

- U11 LL Wolfpack Team 3 lose 4-2 against Ingersoll Express
- U13 LL Wolfpack Team 2 lose 3-2 against Ayr Flames

Battalions reach tournament final at Richard Vollmer Memorial & Rep Classic

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The Brant Battalions U13B squad put together a strong weekend of hockey at the Richard Vollmer Memorial & Rep Classic, finishing as tournament finalists after a series of hard-fought games Nov. 28-30.

Brant opened the weekend with a strong 3-0 shutout over the Plattsburg Rage. After two scoreless periods, the Battalions broke the deadlock in the third when Everett Clement buried the game winner off a feed from Dominic Crone. Insurance came quickly as Grayson Grosvold and Bentley Vieira added unassisted markers to seal the victory.

Their momentum carried into Game 2, where the Battalions earned a convincing 4-1 win over the Tavistock Titans. Clement struck early in the first period, followed by goals from Grosvold and Logan Baldwin in the second to build a 3-0 lead. Vieira rounded out the scoring in the third. Assists were credited to Bryson Lee, Zachary Nieman, Grayson Kristman and Baldwin.

The final round-robin matchup saw Brant face the only other undefeated team, the host Twin Centre Stars, in a high-tempo, back-and-forth contest. Brant set the tone early with first-period goals from Andrew Louch, Clement and Nieman. The Stars responded with four in the second, while Clem-



Members of the U13B Battalion team include Miles Glowala, Grayson Grosvold, Bennett Inberg, Grayson Kristman, Bryson Lee, Andrew Louch, Zachary Nieman, Easton Pizsey, Taylor Plant, Nolan Steward, Bentley Vieira, Logan Baldwin, Colton Boakes, Everett Clement, Dominic Crone, Connor Brittain and Lucas Harrison.

ent added his second of the game to send the teams into the third tied 4-4. Twin Centre capitalized twice in the final period to hand Brant its first loss, 6-4.

The two clubs met again for a re-

match in the championship game, with the Stars edging Brant 2-0. Twin Centre scored both goals in the opening period and held on the rest of the way, shutting down Brant's offence through a tight defensive effort.

Vincent family donates \$57,000 to Live 2 Play Campaign



(PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW SCHMIDT PHOTOGRAPHY)

Members of the Vincent family present a generous \$57,000 donation to the Live 2 Play Campaign, supporting the upcoming expansion of the North Dumfries Community Centre in Ayr. Pictured from left are Councillor Rod Rolleman, CCG Deputy Chair Russ Hutchings, Teri Vincent, Darlene Vincent, Dave Vincent, Councillor Derrick Ostner and Councillor Alida Wilms. The community-led campaign aims to raise \$2.1 million toward a second ice pad and new programming rooms to meet the growing demand for local ice time.



BRANT BATTALION

SCOREBOARD - WEEK OF NOVEMBER 23RD

Sunday, November 23

- U10A Battalions lose 7-0 against New Hamburg Huskies
- U12A Battalions lose 4-1 against Ausable Valley Coyotes
- U13B Battalions win 10-1 against Tavistock Titans
- U11A Battalions lose 5-4 against Norfolk Knights

Tuesday, November 25

- U13A Battalions lose 6-3 against New Hamburg Huskies
- U11A Battalions lose 3-1 against Delhi Norwich 59ers

Thursday, November 27

- U10A Battalions lose 7-3 against South Oxford Storm

Friday, November 28

- U15B Battalions lose 4-1 against South Oxford Storm
- U11B Battalions win 2-1 against Ayr Flames
- U18B Battalions lose 8-0 against Ayr Flames

Saturday, November 29

- U11B Battalions win 9-1 against New Hamburg Huskies
- U14A Battalions tie 4-4 against Delhi-Norwich 59ers
- U18A Battalions lose 4-0 against New Hamburg Jr Firebirds
- U11A Battalions lose 9-0 against Elgin-Thames 73s

Flashback



Junior C Paris Mounties 1985/86

Paris Wolfpack Team 1 claims Terry Conroy Memorial title in all-Paris final

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

It was a Paris-versus-Paris showdown in the championship game of the Terry Conroy Memorial Tournament on Nov. 29, as two of the Wolfpack U11 Local League teams battled their way through round-robin play to set up an all-hometown final. In the end, Paris Wolfpack Team 1 captured the title with a 7-2 win over their fellow Wolfpack competitors, capping off a dominant weekend for both squads.

Team 1 earned its spot in the final with two strong round-robin performances, opening the tournament with a 6-3 win over New Hamburg before rolling to a 9-0 shutout against Wellington Grey. The group carried that momentum into the championship game.

Dawson Anderson was a standout, scoring twice in the first period and completing his hat trick early in the second to give Team 1 a commanding lead. He added a fourth goal later in the game. Henry Bartscher, Lillian Ryan and Josh Rollings rounded out the scoring, while assists came from Ryan, Harper Stec, Arthur Hazeldine and Jace Allgood. Goaltender Davis Starks secured the win in net.

On the opposite bench, Paris Wolfpack Team 2 put up a hard fight in the final and found the back of the net twice, with unassisted goals from Cecil Burbridge and Henry Martin.



The Paris Wolfpack proved twice is nice at the Terry Conroy Memorial Tournament, packing the ice with hometown pride after an all-Paris final. Team 1 skated off with the championship banner, but both squads brought the energy, the goals, and the smiles to Fergus.

Team 2 also earned its place in the championship with an impressive round-robin showing of its own. The squad opened with a 7-2 victory over Centre Wellington Team 2, then defeated the Ayr Flames 4-2 to advance. Both Paris teams played with intensity and heart throughout the tourna-

ment, something Team 1 Head Coach Jeff Bartscher highlighted afterward.

"I'm incredibly proud of how our group competed this weekend," he said. "Every game, they showed grit, discipline, and a willingness to battle for each other. Everyone bought into a shared goal, supported

one another, and stayed focused no matter the situation. That commitment is what made the difference for us."

The all-Paris final made for an electric atmosphere in Fergus and showcased the depth and talent within the Wolfpack program.

Paris Titans edge Braves 6–5 in back-and-forth thriller

JIM BROWN

Paris Independent Sports Contributor

The Paris Titans posted another victory Saturday evening at the Brant Sports Complex as they outlasted the Tavistock Braves 6-5 in Provincial Junior C Hockey League play.

The Titans took a 1-0 lead in the opening period as Kayden Blacquiere scored at 8:50 with help from Austin Christian and Jake Semiolos.

Each team tallied a pair of goals in

the second period for a 3-2 Paris advantage after two, thanks to Ryan Gardiner-O'Keefe's marker at 4:18, assisted by Ben Easson and Clarke's goal at 10:53, assisted by Gardiner-O'Keefe and Blacquiere. One of Tavistock's two goals came on a power play, their only successful power play opportunity of the game.

Just 43 seconds into the third period Trevor McDowell with helpers from Christian and netminder Ethan Madden put Paris in the lead 4-2. Then, playing shorthanded, four on four, Col Kersey bumped the

score to 5-2, assisted by Clarke and Blake Kersey. Tavistock would tally two more to close the gap, making it a one goal game with just minutes left on the clock. Blacquiere netted his second of the game to secure a 6-4 lead with Spencer Edwards and Clarke assisting on the empty netter. Tavistock mounted a last minute rally putting up one more goal but it wasn't enough to catch the Titans.

Although it was a close game throughout, coach Gary Gardiner said it was a good game for the Titans.

"We are getting better with our forechecking," he said. "That was the key to our success."

Clarke agreed with his coach's assessment saying the improved forechecking led to offensive opportunities.

Gardiner also noted that the defense is improving and the goaltending was superb.

Friday's game in New Hamburg was postponed due to the weather.

The team hits the road for two games this week against Norwich and Wellesley.

Street Beat

GEORGE LE GRESLEY

Paris Independent Columnist

Have you started your Christmas shopping yet?

Jennie Vanverknaap



Not yet. I have more important things to do right now.

Grace Curley & Cedar



Although I'm from Paris, I currently live in British Columbia, where we spend Christmas on a ski hill.

Emma and Carter



We are a quarter of the way done and doing some here at the Wincey Mills!

Willie Macmain



We are just doing great. I only buy for my great-grandchildren.

Anne Jonker & Corina Dowling



Just started with shopping downtown, with more shopping to do.

When celebration meets loss: Strategies for managing holiday grief



THE GRIEF JOURNEY

By Tammy Adams

While the holidays can be cause for reunion and celebration, they may also be a reminder that those, who were close to you, are no longer present. While it is normal and natural to miss their absence, here are a few suggestions to help you cope with your grief during the holiday season.

Don't Isolate Yourself

You may not feel like you want to associate with people during the holidays. Even if you must push yourself, do your best to participate in at least a few of the activities going on around you. By first acknowledging

ing you don't want to go out, or do something, allows you to validate your emotions and diffuse them rather than bury them. Then, by choosing to still do a few of those things, this allows you to push through and take back some of your personal power.

Don't Get Too Busy

Getting out during the holidays is important but it can get a bit hectic. Be careful to create a manageable schedule, especially if you are not used to being extremely busy. Choose the activities you will enjoy most. Being over active can cause undue stress. Enjoy yourself!

Be Mindful of the Misuse of Alcohol or Food

As a young child you may have been conditioned to believe you could use food to cover up or push down your feelings. When you were upset you may have been told not to feel bad and were given a cookie or a mug of hot chocolate to help you to feel better. This distraction was most likely an unintentional teaching by those who loved or cared for you. We teach what we know and then learn from what we have experienced, observed, or heard from those around us. As you get older there may be a chance you might replace the cookie with overeating or the hot chocolate with drugs or alcohol in an attempt to mask your feelings of loneliness and sadness.



The holiday season should serve as a gentle reminder to hold space for grief and healing during the season.

Talk About How You Are Feeling

Grieving people are not broken. They do not need to be fixed; they just want to be heard. In North America, many of us are very uncomfortable talking about death and grieving. As a result we want to empathize with our own stories, offer advice, or change the topic of conversation. It is very important, during the holidays especially, you have a friend you can trust to let you talk about your memories and feelings; a heart with ears.

Don't Dwell On Talking About How You Are Feeling

While it is important to talk about how you are feeling, telling the same story over and over is not helpful. In fact, telling the same story over and over strengthens the peptides which crave this feeling of sadness. Take a moment, with a friend, to acknowledge how you are feeling, for example, "I really miss Bill right now" and then make a conscious effort to talk about something else. Your emotions want to be recognized but it is not helpful to dwell on them.

Recall Happy Memories

It is normal and natural to focus on the loss and the sadness of your grief. If you find you are focusing in this direction, take a movement to recall a positive memory of your loved one. For example a time they made you laugh, a special trip you took, etc. This allows your sad emotions to be replaced with a happier memory.

Identifying Your Sadness

During times of grief you may find you identify your sadness in time segments such as "I had a bad day" or "I had a bad week". When you notice you are feeling sad try to realign the timeframe. For example, "I felt sad this morning" or "I had a rough evening". This allows you to be open and to recognize other times, that day or week, where you did have an experience other than grief.

Grief and the Passage of Time

The first holiday after a loss can be the most painful for many. For some, the most difficult holiday can be two or three years down the road. Individuals who are waiting for time to ease the pain of loss may find the pain of grief increases with each passing year.

While Grief is Natural, It Does Not Have to be Permanent

The holidays provide a good time for you to monitor your grief. Whether it is the death of a loved one or the breakup of a romantic relationship, it is important to find helpful tools to assist you to discover, and recover, from your loss. Time can lessen the intensity of your pain. However, it is the actions you choose to take, within the time you have been given, which will allow you to move forward.

We have been socialized to "get stuff" and we are ill prepared for how to cope with "loss". If the resources available to you have not helped, it is not because something is wrong with you. It is simply because of a lack of incorrect information.

The Grief Recovery Method® has successfully supported more than a half million people, around the world, in dealing with the impact of grief, offering a variety of resources: The Grief Recovery Handbook (all types of grief); Moving On (relationships); The Grief Recovery Method for Pet Loss (animals); and When Children Grieve (supporting children when they grieve). Having the support of a trained Grief Recovery Method Specialist assures you face these emotions with guidance: You are not alone.

Whatever method you choose, it is important to be aware....recovery is possible!

Tammy Adams is a Certified Grief Recovery Method Specialist supporting individuals Canada-wide. To learn more about The Grief Recovery Method please visit www.tadams.ca or contact Tammy for a free consultation.

Yes, it's that time again – Christmas is coming fast!



Share the Spirit of Christmas with the The Paris Independent

Get a head start on the season with the **Paris Independent's Christmas Greetings**, publishing **December 17** – a great way to wish the community a Merry Christmas and thank your customers for their support.

A portion of proceeds will be **donated to Brant Community Healthcare System Foundation**, helping provide care and comfort to local families.

Don't wait — reserve your greeting today!

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GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

St. George BMO branch to close in June 2026, frustrating residents and prompting political response

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The Bank of Montreal has notified customers and local officials that its St. George branch will close next summer, a decision that has sparked strong concern among residents, small businesses and elected representatives.

In a letter dated Nov. 24, BMO informed bank customers, including local MP Dan Muys, that the branch at 9 Beverly Street West will permanently close on Friday, June 19, 2026, with customer accounts being transferred to the Wayne Gretzky & Henry Street branch in Brantford as of June 22. The bank says customer account numbers, cheques, deposits and automatic payments will remain unchanged.

An information session is scheduled at the St. George branch for January 8, 2026 to discuss the consolidation directly with customers. This closure is one in a long list of closures across Ontario scheduled for June 2026.

Some residents say they learned of the closure through word of mouth or social media before receiving any official notice.

"Apparently some people have received a letter... others like me have not received anything," said Shirley Steedman, a long-time St. George resident and BMO customer. "This closure is totally unfair to all of our residents, current and future, small businesses, farmers, seniors, non-profits and more."

Steedman said the closure will require many customers to travel to Paris or Brantford for in-person service, something she believes is unrealistic for seniors and residents who rely on face-to-face banking. She also raised concerns about mortgages, investments and safety deposit boxes, which cannot be handled through an ATM.

Residents are urging BMO to provide a temporary portable branch or satellite office. Steedman also noted that St. George is on the cusp of major growth, with "more than 1,300 homes" expected once sewer expansions are complete.

"That's not very good for any businesses wanting to come to a new community with no bank," she said.

Flamborough-Glanbrook and Brant North MP Dan Muys confirmed he learned of the closure only when he received BMO's letter late last week.

"To date, I have not received any calls or emails from St. George residents, but I know those will be coming," he said at the time of our press deadline. "I too have a BMO account and enjoy the convenience of this branch."

Muys said he will bring local concerns to federal regulators and highlighted broader issues around competition in Canada's financial sector.

"My own view is that a lack of competition in the banking, airline, grocery, telecom and other sectors means higher prices and poorer service to Canadian consumers," he said. "Other jurisdictions have done a better job of managing competition laws to ensure consumer fairness."

According to the Financial Consum-

er Agency of Canada (FCAC), federally regulated banks must provide six months' notice when closing a branch in a rural area with no other deposit-taking branches within 10 kilometres.

Banks must also notify local government, publish notice in a local newspaper and outline what actions, if any, will be taken to maintain services in the area.

Residents have begun circulating contact information for BMO's corporate office and encouraging the community to submit concerns directly to the FCAC.

Steedman said branch employees are "equally disappointed and affected," and hopes the bank will consider interim measures rather than withdrawing fully for at least two years.

"Clearly they may be forced into this closure, but at a minimum they should provide a temporary portable office until this is sorted out," she said.



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

Brant Simply Grand

In this guide...

Summer Camps!

Community

Programs: January 5, 2026 at 6:00 pm

Summer Camp: January 12, 2026 at 6:00 pm

Registration opens:

The Winter Guide arrives December 18

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

brant.ca/Sponsorships

The County of Brant offers a range of **advertising** and **sponsorship** opportunities to help you connect with a targeted local audience—at a cost that fits your budget.

- ★ **Kinderplay:** \$300 per session
- ★ **Family Day:** \$1,200 per sponsor, *limited to 3 sponsors**
- ★ **Community Events:** \$500, supports initiatives like Winter Active Month
- ★ **Public Skates, Holiday Skates, March Break Skates:** \$300 per skate

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5

Burford Community Tree Lighting

5:00 - 8:00 pm

Downtown Burford

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

Paris Santa Claus Parade

starts at 6:00 pm

Downtown Paris

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13

St. George Santa Claus Parade

Starts at 6:00 pm

Downtown St. George

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13

Burford Santa Claus Parade

Starts at 5:00 pm

Downtown Burford

Holiday Skates

Burford Community Centre
14 Potter Drive, Burford
Dec 22, 4:00 - 5:00 pm
Dec 23, 2:00 - 3:00 pm
Dec 29, 4:00 - 5:00 pm
Dec 30, 2:00 - 3:00 pm
Jan 2, 2:00 - 3:00 pm

Brant Sports Complex
944 Powerline Rd, Paris
Dec 22, 10:30 - 11:30 am
Dec 23, 10:30 - 11:30 am
Dec 23, 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Dec 30, 10:30 - 11:30 am

*Sponsored by the Lions Club of Paris
Sponsored by Elementary Occasional Teachers, GEDSB*

Gaukel Memorial Community Centre
7 Gaukel Dr, St George
Dec 22, 9:00 - 10:00 am

New Years Eve Skates

December 31, 2025
Brant Sports Complex
Beginner Skate, 9:30 - 10:30 am
Public Skate, 10:00 - 11:00 am

For holiday hours visit:

brant.ca/Offices

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WEEKLY Horoscope

December 03- December 10 2025

ARIES

Mar 21 - Apr 20



Fresh motivation returns, Aries. A clear goal sharpens your focus and fuels your drive. Trust your momentum—it carries you forward with confidence.

TAURUS

Apr 21 - May 21



Steady progress continues, Taurus. A practical choice brings comfort and reassurance. Stay grounded—your consistency creates lasting security.

GEMINI

May 22 - Jun 21



Curiosity stirs, Gemini. Conversations spark insight and renewed inspiration. Follow the ideas that light you up—they lead somewhere meaningful.

CANCER

Jun 22 - Jul 22



Emotional balance strengthens, Cancer. You feel supported in quiet but powerful ways. Let gratitude guide your actions.

LEO

Jul 23 - Aug 23



Your confidence draws attention, Leo. Creativity flows strongly when you act from the heart. Share your light freely—it inspires more people than you realize.

VIRGO

Aug 24 - Sept 22



Organization brings relief, Virgo. Clearing one small task restores your sense of control. Progress feels easier when you honor your process.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER 3

Brendan Fraser, Actor (57)

DECEMBER 4

Jeff Bridges, Actor (76)

DECEMBER 5

Christian Yelich, Athlete (48)

DECEMBER 6

Giannis Antetokounmpo, Athlete (31)

DECEMBER 7

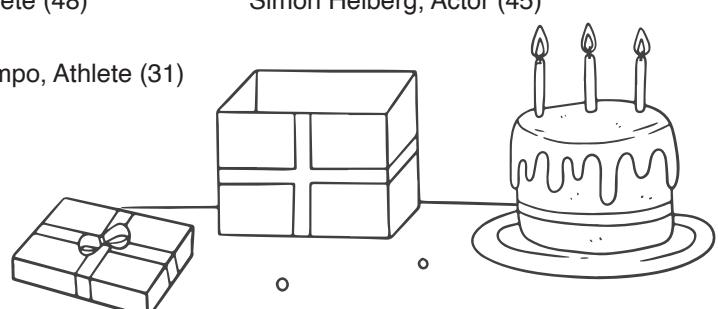
Sara Bareilles, Musician (46)

DECEMBER 8

Teri Hatcher, Actress (61)

DECEMBER 9

Simon Helberg, Actor (45)





Riddles

Why did the Christmas tree go to the barber?

It needed a trim for its tinsel.

What do you get if you cross a snowman and a vampire?

Frostbite.

What do Santa's helpers use to clean the workshop?

The elf-washer.

Why was the snowflake bad at lying?

You could see right through it.

What kind of motorbike does Santa ride?

A Holly Davidson.

What do elves learn in school?

The elf-abet.

What did one Christmas light say to the other?

You light up my life.

Why was the snowman looking through the carrots?

He was picking his nose.

Sudoku



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

Solutions on page 19

Sponsored by:



PET OF THE WEEK



MILLIE

Meet our Pet of the Week:

My name is Millie and I am almost four months old. I am a red retriever with unique white markings on my chest and paws. I love to play with my balls and crinkly toys. I have a brother who is a cat who I love but I'm not sure the feeling is mutual.

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



Word Search



ALL THINGS GINGERBREAD



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

- Cookie
- Flour
- Frosting
- Spices
- Icing
- Gumdrops
- Sprinkles
- Decorate
- Molasses
- Sugar
- Bake
- Dough
- Gingerbread
- Candy
- Butter
- Eggs
- Sticky
- Recipe
- Oven
- Bake

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EMAIL TO INQUIRE INFO@THEPARISINDEPENDENT.COM

DECEMBER 5 - 7

Camp Impeesa presents Festive Spirit Hike - a light 1 km hike through the camp with live storytelling and youth activities, including a visit with Santa at the Annikki Snow Centre. Enjoy a fire with marshmallows, hot chocolate and candy canes. Offered December 5 - 7 from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm at 827559 Township Rd 8 Drumbo. Cost is \$6 a person or \$24 a family, cash or e-transfer. For more information or to make a donation email Lighthike@1stpariscouting.ca

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9

Brant County Men's Probus Club Meeting - is on Tuesday December 9, 2025 at 10 am at the Sherwood Restaurant 799 Colborne Street in Brantford. The guest speaker will be Lily Docherty from the Historical Society. New members are always welcome.

Brant Men of Song Choir Practice - Tuesday December 9th at the First Baptist Church 70 West St., Brantford from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. New members are always welcome to attend and enjoy some singing.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10

Game Café Night at the Wincey Mills - coffee shop area from 7 pm to 9 pm, hosted by Paris Community Church and Paris Beer Company. Event is for all ages, but teens between the ages of 10 to 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Whether you enjoy board games, card games or classics like crokinole and chess, this free event is for you!

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11

Free Will Offering - St. Paul's United Church, 48 Broadway St. W., Paris, invites everyone to a Free Will Offering Soup and Bun Luncheon on December 11th from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. All are welcome!

Women Inspiring Women, Women's Institute Merry Little Christmas Party and Festive Potluck - Thursday, December 11th, 6-9 pm at The Paris Fairgrounds, Community Room. Snowflake craft and festive trivia to follow.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12

Paris Optimist Club Hosted Youth Dance - The Paris Optimist Club is hosting a Youth Dance at the Syl Apps Community Centre, 51 William St in Paris from 7 pm to 10 pm. This month's theme is Christmas Best Dressed. Dance is for students in Grades 5 to 8 only. Students Grade 9 and older are welcome to attend as volunteers. Dance is chaperoned by adults. Entry fee is \$5.00 with a concession booth for pop, chips, candy and pizza. For any further information and to volunteer as a chaperone or as a high school student, please call 519.757.5020.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13

Brantford Symphony Orchestra with guests The Grand River Chorus perform Handel's 'Messiah' at the Sanderson Centre - 7:30pm. Tickets are \$44 and \$49 for adults, \$10 for students with ID, FREE for children and elementary students, available at: brantfordsymphony.ca.

Owl Prowl for Families - Explore the trails at dusk and learn about local owls on this family-friendly outdoor adventure. Registration required. Sat. Dec. 13, 5:00pm-6:30pm Five Oaks Centre, 1 Bethel Rd, Paris 519-442-3212 | www.fiveoaks.on.ca

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13 & SUNDAY DECEMBER 14

Paris Optimist Club - Join the Paris Optimist Club as they organize Santa Claus meet and greets. The first event will take place on Saturday, December 13th with a Storytime reading of 'Twas the Night Before Christmas and Rudolf the Red Nose Reindeer, and sing-song event held at the Optimist Club House at 2 Elm St in Paris from 1 pm to 2:30 pm. Don't miss the chance to get that photo op with Santa! The second event takes place on Sunday, December 14 from 10 am to 2 pm at Wincey Mills where children can have their photo taken with Santa, participate in a Christmas activity and receive a treat bag.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 14

Traditional Christmas Service - Please join us on Sunday, December 14/25 @ 2:00 pm for our Traditional Christmas Service in the historical St. Paul's Chapel, 1159 Hwy 54, Middleport. Fellowship and Refreshments following the service. Everyone welcome! Please bring a non-perishable donation for the Caledonia Food Bank.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

Live Music Afternoon at The Paris Pub – In Support of the Food Bank - Join The Paris Pub on Sunday, December 21, 2025, for a festive live performance by The Kings of Adequate. Enjoy upbeat holiday tunes on the year's shortest day, with music playing from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM. There's no cover charge, but cash or food donations for the local Food Bank are warmly welcomed. For more information, please contact The Paris Pub.

1 & 3 TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

The Brantford Stamp Club - In Support of the Food Bank - The Brantford Stamp Club meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday September to December and January to May as well as the 1st Tuesday in June and December. Meetings are held at The Branlyn Community Centre 238 Brantwood Park Drive in Brantford. Doors open at 7pm and meetings start at 8pm.

OBITUARY

Valerio

Valerio, Robert Yule, "Robbie"

Peacefully, at Brantford General Hospital, on Wednesday November 19, 2025, of Paris in his 80th year.

Robert immigrated to Canada from Scotland, never leaving his Scottish Roots. He was an avid soccer (football) fan, an excellent dart player and a competitive golfer. He was a member of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch # 29 for over 40 years.

He is survived by his siblings, Linda Cameron, Mike Valerio, Nina Thompson and their families.

Cremation has taken place; a Celebration of Life will be held at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 29 (70 William St. Paris) on Saturday December 13, 2025 from 1-4 PM.

Donations to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 29 would be appreciated.

Online condolences and donations may be arranged through www.wmkippfuneralhome.com

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You can **purchase to donate** or take your pie or pulled pork **home**. If you purchase to donate, we will fill the freezers of our local food banks and shelters and give your \$20 to help feed families in Haiti, plus we will issue you a tax receipt.



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December 11, 2025 – 6:30 pm

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PARTICIPATION
SUPPORT SERVICES

Written by Larry Brown
Artwork by Bernadine Van Renne



CLASSIFIEDS

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COMING EVENTS

WHAT'S BREWING THIS MONTH AT THE PARIS BEER CO. 

NOVEMBER	2025
TUES DAYS	HAPPY TUESDAYS ↓ Happy Hour all day long with \$7 pints & food specials
THURS DAYS	LIVE MUSIC IN THE TAPROOM ↓ 7-9pm, check website for who's playing
WED THRU FRI	HAPPY HOUR 4-6PM ↓ \$7 pints & food specials
EVERY SUN	BRUNCH 11AM-2:30PM ↓ a la carte brunch menu plus the regular menu
ALL WKDS	SIP & SHOP IN THE MARKET ↓ Fri, Sat & Sun plus later market hours

BOOK A TABLE HERE 

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue	6. Deoxyribonucleic acid
2. Great Dane	7. Justin Trudeau
3. Gerrymandering	8. Berkshire Hathaway
4. Fuselage	9. Bingo
5. Algeria	10. True

WANTED

I will pay cash for antiques and collectibles. Coca Cola, Pepsi or any pop company. Brewery items - Kuntz, Huether Labatts, etc. Old radios and gramophones, wristwatches, pocket watches, old fruit jars - Beaver Star, Bee Hive etc. Any old oil cans and signs - Red Indian, Supertest etc. Any small furniture. If you are moving or cleaning out stuff please contact me - 519-570-6920.

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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