

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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NOVEMBER 21, 2025

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Woodstock Hospital releases HART Hub update

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Woodstock Hospital has released a long-awaited update on the progress of the Oxford HART Hub.

“Woodstock Hospital and a network of local partners, collaborating through the Oxford Ontario Health Team (OHT), are pleased to announce a phased-in approach to services for the Oxford Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub - a made-in-Oxford model of care that will connect health, housing, and social supports across the County,” according to a press release.

The release stated that while the term “Hub” may sound like a single site, it is actually a coordinated system of local organizations working together to lead people to supports for recovery and long-term stability.

“Part of this new system will be the Oxford County Wellness Centre. To ensure residents can begin accessing services while construction continues at the permanent Wellness Centre at 16 Graham Street, a temporary location will open at 369 Huron Street in Woodstock,” added the release. The location is the former Woodstock Private Hospital, which operated for years as a small long-term care home.

“The temporary site allows us to start helping people right now while building toward the full vision of the HART Hub,” said Teresa Martins, Executive Director of the Oxford OHT. “By working together across organizations, we’re ensuring that care is seamless — the right help, at the right time, close to home.”

A new central intake process launched on Nov. 3, allowing those looking for mental health and addictions support to self-refer by calling 519-537-2382, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3



ECHO TAKES HOME CHAMBER AWARD

(CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PHOTO)

The Woodstock Ingersoll Echo was presented with the Professional Services Award at last week's Chamber of Commerce business awards dinner in Beachville. From left to right are Editor Lee Griffi, Publisher Stewart Grant, Advertising Representative/Distributor Sue Pieters and Salesperson Mamta Patel. Read about all the winners on page 16.

Oxford County releases 2026 draft budget

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Members of Oxford County Council recently had their first look at next year's document, which comes in with an operating budget of \$227.8 million and a capital portion of \$127.9 million.

The largest portion of county expenditures is water and wastewater, at 28 per cent, followed by 19 per cent spent on roads, and the three Woodingford Lodge sites account for 11 per cent of the total budget.

If approved in its current form, residents of the lower-tier municipalities — such as East Zorra-Tavistock

— would see a 5.1 per cent increase, equivalent to a \$75 rise in the average tax bill. City of Woodstock residents would see a 5 per cent increase, or about \$66 more.

“\$96.3 million is what we are requesting for the budget, which is a \$6.5 million increase or a 7.2 per cent increase required to be raised from taxation,” explained Manager of Finance Carolyn King, who presented to council.

“It is important to note there is supplementary growth within the property taxes, resulting in about a 5 per cent increase to the average residential property bill.”

CONTINUED TO PAGE 4






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Central intake begins for phased-in services at temporary wellness centre

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The HART Hub is phasing in several services, including 24/7 central intake supports and system navigation, outpatient group therapy sessions to support recovery and wellness, mental health and addictions transitional supportive housing and primary care. There will also be four beds for “withdrawal management and six beds for addiction supportive treatment.”

The temporary Wellness Centre will be staffed by a multidisciplinary team, including nursing staff, social workers, peer support workers, and recreational therapists. There will also be on-site security, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all clients, staff, and neighbours.

“We are proud to begin offering additional mental health and addiction supports for Woodstock and Oxford County residents,” said Perry Lang, Woodstock Hospital President and CEO. “I want to thank the staff and service providers involved in reaching this important milestone in the Oxford HART Hub’s implementation. This work lays the foundation for the future Oxford County Wellness Centre on Graham Street.”

The temporary Huron Street location is a voluntary treatment and recovery facility with four withdrawal management beds and six supportive treatment beds.

“Individuals may stay in the withdrawal management beds for up to 14 days and in the supportive treatment beds for up to three months. Bed-based care will begin in December. Also starting in December, there will be community mental health and addictions programming accessible without a residential stay in welcoming, accessible community spaces across Oxford County,” explained Jillaine Blair, Manager of Outpatient Mental Health and Addictions.

“We would prefer not to use the term ‘sheltering’ to avoid public confusion about this being a shelter. The Wellness Centre is a voluntary treatment and recovery facility, not a shelter and not a supervised drug consumption site,” she added.

Lang said significant progress has been made at the Graham Street site. Soil remediation and interior demolition are complete, and a site plan approval has been submitted to the city and county for their review and approval.

“We have engaged a general contractor and are working with architects to accelerate construction. We don’t have a potential opening date just yet. We understand the urgent need for these services in our community, and that’s why we opened the temporary site on Huron Street,” he added.

Lang said a great deal of foundational work has been happening, including the formation of an implementation team and working groups representing more than



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTO)

The former Woodstock Private Hospital is now the site of the Oxford HART Hub’s temporary Wellness Centre. The building will offer several services, including transitional housing while construction continues at the permanent Graham Street location.

16 community organizations.

“The Oxford OHT hosted co-design sessions across Oxford County with nearly 100 participants, including people with lived and living experience of homelessness and addiction. The Oxford United Way also hosted Harwood Community Conversations about the Oxford HART Hub.”

Lang admitted they have received some questions and concerns from some residents about the Graham Street location, which is why a community consultation was completed.

“A report on what we learned from this engagement will be shared soon. We feel the concerns may stem from confusion about what the Wellness Centre will be and what it’s not. It is a voluntary treatment and recovery facility — not a shelter and not a supervised drug consumption site. It is designed to help people safely begin or continue recovery with dignity.”

The centre will be staffed 24/7 by healthcare professionals, including nurses, social workers, peer support workers, therapists, nurse practitioners and, over time, psychiatrists - and supported by on-site security to help maintain a safe environment for clients, staff, and the surrounding community.

“When people get the right care at the right time, emergency visits drop, crises are less visible, and communities become safer for everyone, including businesses, schools, and neighbours. The Oxford HART Hub helps local people stabilize, recover, and return to fuller participation in community life, contributing to Oxford’s safety, health, and shared well-being,” added Lang.

Next year, the HART Hub client continuum of care, which will include primary care, case management and transitional housing service types, will be phased in.

When completed, the permanent Wellness Centre at 16 Graham Street will offer 50 beds and a full continuum of co-located services under one roof.

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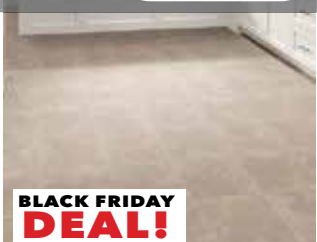
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Residents looking at 5 per cent tax hike

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The budget began back in June with the launch of a community budget survey. Those results were presented to council in September. County staff started their work on building the document in June, including five meetings with the senior leadership team to debate the budget behind the scenes.

“About 3 per cent of the increase is delivering the same level of services in 2026 as we did in 2025,” explained Warden Marcus Ryan, who added inflation is the main factor behind the hike.

“The average resident experiences the Consumer Price Index, but municipalities see a mix of that, along with the Construction Price Index, which is generally one to two per cent higher. About 2 per cent of the increase is service level improvements or changes, and that’s where the opportunity is for council to decide if they are worth it or not.”

He added most of the extra expense comes from areas identified by taxpayers as departments they wanted to see improvements in.

“There is an allocation of \$400,000 for housing and homelessness to better integrate with the HART Hub and start moving people out of encampments and emergency shelters, and into the Hub for treatment. I don’t think anyone (on council) wants to cut that.”

Ryan admitted he has had discussions with some councillors about some potential cost savings, but time will tell if those conversations result in any savings for taxpayers.

The operating budget supports key county services that residents rely on every day — from affordable housing and support for vulnerable people to clean drinking water, safe roads, paramedic services, long-term care, community planning, and libraries.

The capital plan for municipal infrastructure includes \$75.3 million in capital reserve transfers for future funding of roads, bridges, water and wastewater infrastructure, facilities, information technology and more, as outlined in Oxford County’s Asset Management Plan.

The budget introduces several new initiatives, including the creation of a Homelessness Support Services Fund, a review of Paramedic Services deployment and facilities, and the development of a new Official Plan to guide future community growth and development.

25.5 new full-time equivalent (FTE) staff positions are

OXFORD COUNTY TAX LEVY INCREASES FROM 2020 TO 2025		
YEAR	GENERAL LEVY AMOUNT	LEVY INCREASE OVER PRIOR YEAR
2020	\$62.8 million	5.8 %
2021	\$63.7 million	1.4 %
2022	\$66.6 million	4.6 %
2023	\$70.8 million	6.3 %
2024	\$82.6 million	16.7 %
2025	\$89.8 million	6.6 %
2026 (proposed)	\$96.3 million	5.1 %
The levy rose from \$62.844 million in 2020 to \$89.8 million in 2025, a total increase of just under \$27 million or 43 per cent. The average annual levy increase from 2020 to 2025 was 7.7 per cent.		

also proposed, including 5.6 at Woodingford Lodge, 5 in paramedic services, 2.8 in facilities and 2.5 for the public library system.

“A lot of those, depending on what department they are in, are covered under grants or other levels of funding. A large chunk of those FTEs are paramedics and council did get a report in the fall outlining our response times.”

The Echo reached out to the county to find out how many of the new FTEs are funded and was given a confusing explanation. It appears 0.6 of the 25.5 will be funded directly from grants in 2026, but the rest will come directly from the taxpayer, at least for now.

“Some FTEs will be funded through other sources. Some examples include 7.0 FTE for paramedic services – will be eventually funded through future provincial grants (county will receive 50/50 provincial funding, but this lags one year),” said a statement from the county.

Ryan said the county has seen a six per cent increase in ambulance calls over the last few years, but only two per cent in population growth.

“Where is that other four per cent coming from? There is a demographic shift. As we all get older, we tend to call on all forms of healthcare more frequently, but some people don’t have access to primary care.”

He added homeless people experiencing exposure to the weather or having mental health and addiction issues have also put a strain on the system.

“Unless we want to accept longer response times for ambulances, we are going to have to allocate more resources. I think we also have to look at our municipal partners in Perth, Elgin and Middlesex, to see if there are ways we can collaborate to try and meet acceptable response times.”

Ryan said he didn’t want to rule out council cutting any of the new FTEs or other budget expenditures, but added the county has a long and extensive process for councillors to have a full picture of what is in the draft.

“I am always reluctant to speculate where council is going to go. I have had one-on-one discussions with every member of council to figure out where they were at, and some of them have some pretty creative ideas to bring forward.”

The warden did single out a request from staff for a dedicated road safety person which amounts to .2 per cent on the overall levy.

“That person would be assigned to specifically look at situations to see if an intersection should be changed to a four-way stop or a roundabout. Do we need to implement other forms of traffic calming and almost every member of council will tell you one of the most common calls from residents is about traffic safety and speed control.”

Ryan said it is an item council could easily cut, but it would make the county less responsive to traffic safety concerns.

“That’s the hard debate council is going to have. There is an opportunity to cut the tax increase, but do we want the service?”

2026 municipal property taxes would fund just under a quarter of the budget at 23.4 per cent. Other funding sources include provincial and federal funding, reserves (funds earmarked for future expenses), user fees, and other charges and debentures.

Special budget meetings are streamed live at www.oxfordcounty.ca/livestream with the next one booked for Nov. 24. The final document will be up for a final review and vote on Dec. 10.

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Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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Ingersoll, I've been getting to know you... now it's my turn to introduce myself

KYRAH SMITH

Echo Correspondent

Hi Ingersoll!

My name is Kyrah Smith, and I'm your friendly neighbourhood journalist.

Originally, I lived in Woodstock, but I've been an Ingersoll resident since 2016, almost ten years, which feels unreal. I've always loved to write and draw; anything artsy and you could count me in. During COVID, I earned a degree in 2D animation and graphic design. I was also awarded a distinction in illustration, and I'm a very novice ukulele player.

Writing has always been a safe place for me. I've written plays, screenplays, ghost walk monologues, short stories, and research articles for previous employers. Growing up, I was fairly introverted, but I never felt shy about sharing stories, whether fictional or factual. I love telling stories, through art or through writing.

When I first applied for work at the Echo, I was leaning more toward the graphic design side of the paper, but sometimes the universe has other plans.

I ended up being hired to cover local events.

Although I've lived in this small town for nearly a decade, I'm ashamed to say I didn't realize how vibrant and active our community really is. I'd always overlooked it, not on purpose, of course. It wasn't until I started doing coverage for the Echo that I began to truly pay attention. It's opened my eyes. I've had such a lovely time researching this town, attending events, and meeting people. There's something to be said about small-town charm; something Ingersoll has plenty of.

I've always wanted to live in Stars Hollow, a quirky fictional town from one of my favourite TV shows, full of life, community, and spirit. How ironic that I was living in the real-life version of it without even knowing.

I'm looking forward to attending future events and connecting even more with this fantastic community!

If you have any stories or upcoming events, feel free to send me an email at kyrahsmith1@gmail.com.

Cheers!



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)



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Indwell's Hope and Homes dinner showcases positive impacts, shares future plans

Echo Correspondent

The Hope and Homes dinner was filled with inspiring tales of how Indwell is making a difference by providing homes to those in need.

Indwell held its annual Hope and Homes dinner in Woodstock at the Maranatha Christian Reformed Church on the evening of Nov. 5. As the 100+ dinner guests, including residents of Indwell's Blossom Park and Harvey Woods Lofts residences in Woodstock, had a barbeque chicken and roast beef dinner, members of the organization and greater community reflected on Indwell's successes and future.

In the lobby before dinner, guests could view artwork created by residents, explore an interactive housing diorama, learn more about harm reduction and how to become involved with Indwell as a volunteer, and/or purchase preserves made by Blossom Park residents. The preserves have ingredients from a community garden started and run by Blossom Park residents.

The dinner highlighted the 10th anniversary of its Harvey Woods Lofts, a formerly abandoned textile factory transformed into an 80-unit housing area, and residents in Indwell homes, both in-person and via a short video, talked about how Indwell changed their lives for the better, including providing stability, a sense of belonging, and wrap-around supports, and improved their outlook on life.

"Every day, we see people move from crisis to stability, from isolation to connection, from surviving to thriving, and I am so grateful to be part of this community with you," Tracy Daichendt, program manager of Indwell, said during her speech at the dinner.



(RON YUZARK PHOTO)

Administration member Susan joined supporters Joanne and Cara in celebrating Indwell's mission and the continued call for more affordable housing.

Indwell is a Christian-based organization providing affordable and supportive housing with support services for those with mental health challenges and has provided housing for more than 1,300 tenants across Ontario. The organization has 141 units in Woodstock and is looking to add more programming provincially, including the first Sarnia/Lambton County Indwell location.

The organization also announced a new initiative called Gather, which will provide affordable housing to anyone struggling to find a place to live in today's housing market.

More information about Indwell's programming can be found online by visiting <https://indwell.ca>.

Visit us online at theecho.ca

The logo for 'Floral Buds & DESIGN' is set against a background of a sunflower and pink roses. The text 'Floral Buds' is in a large, black, serif font, and '& DESIGN' is in a smaller, black, sans-serif font, both enclosed in a thin black rectangular border. Below this, the text 'Premium Floral Arrangements And Gift Baskets For All Occassions Florist-Designed and Hand-Delivered!' is written in a black, serif font. To the right, a green circle contains the text 'FREE Local Same Day Delivery!' in a white, sans-serif font. At the bottom, a black banner displays the address '507 Dundas St, Woodstock | (519) 537-5700' and the website 'www.floralbudsanddesign.com' in a white, sans-serif font.

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Woodstock Art Gallery encourages children to slow down and discover their creativity

ALEX HUNT

Echo Contributor

After school and PA Day, art programs aim to ground children and explore the benefits of creative exposure.

The Woodstock Art Gallery (WAG) offers programs for children from five to twelve years old. Programs for children five and under are offered on Wednesdays once a month and must be accompanied by a caregiver.

After school and PA Day programs are led and supervised by art educators who provide lessons, gallery tours and self-guided opportunities, which encourage space and creativity in child engagement.

“Being exposed to art allows time and space for someone to discover and express themselves and be curious in a safe environment,” said Stephanie Porter, head of education at the WAG.

“Children have no fear, which makes



Children exploring their creativity at the Woodstock Art Gallery.

(ALEX HUNT PHOTO)

them more eager to make a mark on a blank piece of paper. It comes naturally to them. I think learning art at an early age develops that curiosity and awareness of the world

around them.”

Educational programming plays a significant role in the community and is central to the gallery’s learning model. She noted

that humans are natural creators, and it’s never too late to explore one’s creativity, regardless of age.

The programs are designed to build confidence, encourage socialization, and strengthen children’s problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

“A lot of kids are really busy, and it’s always a good time to slow down,” said Porter. “If you take five minutes to reflect on what you want to do and where you want to go, “It builds an appreciation and awareness for the arts in everything they do in their life.”

Porter said she loves sharing what she knows about creativity with the community and hopes that when someone new walks into the gallery, they feel safe and at peace.

The gallery also offers programs for adults, youth and has all-ages drop-in sessions. Teacher and school programs, birthday parties and team building sessions are also available.

A Festive Weekend in Ingersoll

KYRAH SMITH

Echo Correspondent

The weekend of Nov. 15 proved to be a true kickoff to the holiday season in Ingersoll, offering residents a blend of beloved traditions and fresh new festivities.

The celebrations began with the much-loved Ingersoll Rotary Christmas Parade, now in its 28th year. With the theme of Santa’s Workshop, the parade set off at 11 a.m. from the corner of Wilson and Mutual Street, making its way to Harrisfield Public School on Caffyn Street. The weather was mild, but the holiday spirit was anything but; onlookers lined the streets in Santa hats and Christmas sweaters, ready to welcome the season.

The Ingersoll Pipe Band proudly opened the procession, followed by Mayor Brian Petrie and Member of Parliament Arpan Khanna. A variety of local businesses and community groups joined in with festive floats, performances, and plenty of cheer. Candy canes were handed out to children, and surprise appearances from The Grinch and Cindy Lou brought smiles to

the crowd. The parade concluded with the stars of the season themselves, Santa and Mrs. Claus, waving to families as they passed.

On November 16th, the town welcomed something new: a Christmas Market Pop-Up hosted by Aftermath Tattoo Studios. The event offered a unique twist on holiday shopping, featuring alternative local vendors such as Ink Envelope, Wilted Crafts, Curios and Oddities. Guests could snap a picture with Santa, sip complimentary hot chocolate courtesy of the Olde Bakery Café, or even add some festive sparkle with hair tinsel installations.

The market embraced a gothic holiday aesthetic, complete with a Christmas tree decorated in bats and skulls, a detail Santa himself playfully highlighted: “Where else in Ingersoll can you go to get hair tinsel and see a Christmas tree decorated with bats and skulls?”

Together, the Christmas Parade and the Pop-Up Market made for a wonderful weekend of celebration. With festivities now in full swing, the holiday season in Ingersoll is just getting started.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

Festive Horses dressed as Reindeer at Ingersoll Rotary Santa Claus Parade.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

Santa and Mrs. Claus at the 28th Annual Ingersoll Rotary Christmas Parade.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

Ingersoll’s Aftermath Tattoo Studios and Santa at their Christmas Pop Up Market.

First Hindu Temple opens in Oxford County

KYRAH SMITH
Echo Correspondent

On Nov. 9, the town of Ingersoll and Oxford County warmly welcomed the opening of its very first Hindu temple. Located at 239 Ossian Terrace, the new place of worship was established under the Global Organization for Divinity (G.O.D).

The celebration began with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by Member of Parliament Arpan Khanna and Ingersoll Mayor Brian Petrie, who both served as guests of honour. The newly renovated temple was adorned with red and yellow ribbons, setting a joyful and hopeful tone for the day. Some attendees even travelled from the United States to witness the landmark opening in Ontario.

When invited to speak, MP Khanna reflected on the importance of spiritual grounding in today's world.

"You know, I think teachings and blessings are what keep us going in life," he said. "There's many challenges that come with today's day and age, with technology or cost of living, whatever it may be, you always need that foundation. You need that anchor in life that continues to inspire you, that continues to guide you, that is a rock

for you in times of turbulence."

Khanna also acknowledged the organization's meaningful name and mission, emphasizing unity. "We are all one," he added, as he welcomed the temple and its members to the community.

Mayor Petrie also shared heartfelt remarks, expressing gratitude for the warm reception.

"It truly is a great honour to be here," Petrie said. "I think it's important that we go back to your model because it embodies what community is. Community is built upon everybody working together toward a common goal. That's what makes Ingersoll so strong. Nothing like this ever happens without hard work, so congratulations on the outcome of that."

Following the speeches, both Khanna and Petrie took part in a traditional Hindu ritual. The ceremony continued with a musical performance by youth from the temple, showcasing the group's dedication to blending rich traditions with modern expression.

The temple extends a warm welcome to all who wish to visit or learn more. For additional information, you can contact canada.godivinity@gmail.com or visit <http://www.godivinity.ca>.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)
Youth members of Global Organization of Divinity performing at Opening Ceremony.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)
Ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by Member of Parliament Arpan Khanna and Ingersoll Mayor Brian Petrie for First Hindu Temple Opening.

Visit us online at theecho.ca

Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Bermuda is located in which Ocean? | 6. Who hit No.1 in 2008 with the song 'Touch My Body'? |
| 2. What is the highest female voice in a choir? | 7. What is the talking dog's name in "Family Guy"? |
| 3. What university is home to the Fighting Irish? | 8. What's the fancy name for a squirrel's cozy little home? |
| 4. What is also known as Japanese horseradish? | 9. What country will host the 2026 Winter Olympics? |
| 5. The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald occurred on what day? | 10. Who played Tony Soprano in The Sopranos? |

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

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Woodstock Library offers festive educational programming for the holidays

ALEX HUNT

Echo Contributor

A Library’s mission is to provide engaging ways for the community to connect, learn, and grow together.

The Woodstock Public Library will be offering a variety of free holiday and additional programming. Public Services Supervisor, Gillian Green, said that after approaching local partners and conducting surveys as part of the library’s new strategic plan, the community voiced a need for more educational programming

“I think libraries play a huge role in supporting lifelong learning, and offering programs that reflect community interests is really important to us,” said Green. “We’re always open to suggestions. We take those ideas, explore them, and see how they fit within the library’s service model and future direction. Our goal is to have something for everyone.”

Next month, featured educational programming will include:

- Holiday-themed Coding with Scratch from ages six to 12 will take place on Dec. 4 from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Laptops and iPads are provided

- For teens, Festive Holiday Ornaments will take place on Dec. 9 from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Participants will have the opportunity to create a penguin ornament as well as indulge in hot chocolate and treats.
- Storytime with Santa will take place on Dec. 16 from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. Families can join a holiday-themed Storytime and take pictures with Santa.

Additional programs offered by the libraries include Cyber and Genealogy assistance sessions, adult craft nights, and wellness social circles with the Canadian Mental Health Association.

“I love helping our librarians develop programs and seeing their growth and success along the way, and you don’t even need a library card to join in,” said Green. “The library really is a community hub, a place where people can come together, try new things, and learn without any barriers or cost.”

To register or learn more about programming information, visit the library’s website at mywpl.ca.



Gillian Green, Public Services Supervisor at Woodstock Public Library. (ALEX HUNT PHOTO)

Christmas kicks off in downtown Woodstock

The holiday season officially began in Downtown Woodstock on Friday, Nov. 14, as hundreds gathered in Museum Square for the highly anticipated lighting ceremony. The countdown to the illumination drew cheers from the crowd, especially with the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Claus, who helped

begin the evening’s celebrations. Guests were treated to a variety of free performances and hands-on activities. NorthFire Circus delivered a memorable fire act enhanced by the electrifying music of Dr. Draw, and the Vocal Rhythm Oxford Choir set a joyful tone with classic carols. Families enjoyed

meeting Santa and Mrs. Claus, stopping for photos and enjoying freshly served hot chocolate and cookies. Creative stations and demonstrations kept the excitement going, including live ice carving, the Woodstock Art Gallery’s Keychain Creation Station, and the Woodstock Museum’s Christmas Scav-

enger Hunt. Children also took time to write Letters to Santa inside the Education Room, adding a warm and personal touch to the celebration. The event once again brought the community together, highlighting the spirit of the season and the vibrancy of Downtown Woodstock. (RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



The Polar Bear greeted Sherri, Tyler and an excited little Axel as they arrived.



Museum Square’s lighting ceremony brought excitement to the crowd in attendance.

OWIN thankful for community support with Christmas Shoeboxes for Ingamo Homes

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

Oxford Women in Networking (OWIN) is hoping to bring some holiday joy to women and children fleeing domestic violence.

OWIN is collecting donations to create Christmas shoe boxes for Ingamo Homes. The organization is looking for hand cream, soap, cozy socks, journals, gift cards, toothbrushes and toothpaste, hair products, and women-focused gifts to assemble the shoe boxes. OWIN is also accepting completed shoe boxes and children's gifts.

"The response from the community has been incredibly encouraging. People have been generous, thoughtful, and eager to help," said Chrystal Skinner of OWIN.

"Each donation-big or small, shows how much Oxford County cares about lifting up women and children who are rebuilding their lives. The momentum is growing, and we're grateful for every supporter who has stepped forward."

Ingamo Homes, run by Domestic Abuse Services Oxford (DASO), provides programming, outreach, and second-stage housing to women and children fleeing from domestic violence. The non-profit organization has 22 houses and has sup-

ported more than 1,000 women, transgender individuals, and their children over the years.

"The holidays can be especially difficult for women and children transitioning out of domestic abuse. A simple shoebox filled with essentials and small comforts reminds them that the community sees them, supports them, and believes in their fresh start," said Skinner.

"These gestures bring hope, dignity, and a sense of belonging at a time when it's needed most."

Skinner said she's thankful for the community's generosity so far.

"Community care is powerful, and together we can make a difference by making the season brighter for families by adding a touch of sparkle, kindness, love and joy, who deserve safety, stability, and happiness," she explained.

Individual items and completed shoe boxes can be donated to Lilybear Dance Boutique's donation box on 489 Adelaide St., Woodstock, up until Dec. 5.

Anyone looking for more information can contact OWIN directly by sending an email to membership@oxford-owin.ca or by sending a direct message via www.facebook.com/OWIN.OxfordWomeninNetworking.

Church holds annual bazaar

Holy Trinity Church at 1420 Devonshire Avenue in Woodstock welcomed the community on Saturday, Nov. 15, for its annual Christmas Bazaar. Doors opened at 10 a.m., and guests quickly filled the venue to take part in the penny sale, raffle draws, baking table, craft offerings, gift baskets,

silent auction, and yesterday's treasures. The selection of religious goods attracted many visitors, while the tea room provided a cheerful gathering place for friends and families. Draws were held at 2 p.m., bringing the day's activities to a close and marking another successful event for the parish.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



A steady stream of attendees moved through the venue as they admired the many unique, one-of-a-kind offerings.



Carman and Louise paused beside the array of seasonal baskets, enjoying the festive presentation.



Sue and her daughters, Avelynn and Arabelle, were engaged throughout the day, assisting all the eager shoppers.

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Worship Services

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Sunday 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday 10:30 a.m.

Saturday 6:00 p.m.

followed by Coffee Hour

Rev. Richard Hetke

will be offering Communion.

Ingersoll pork dinner attracts a crowd

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Ingersoll hosted its annual Roast Pork Dinner on Nov. 7, welcoming guests from across the community for an evening of hearty food and warm fellowship. From 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., the church hall was filled with conversation and the aroma of a freshly prepared meal that included roast pork with all the trimmings—gravy, apple sauce, mashed potatoes, home-grown squash, peas, cabbage salad, rolls, and apple crisp topped with ice cream. Guests

could choose to dine in or take their meals to go, making the event accessible to all. Many praised the quality of the food and the welcoming hospitality of the St. Paul's volunteers, who worked together to make the evening a success. Proceeds from the dinner supported the ongoing ministries and outreach programs of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, continuing its mission of service and connection in the Ingersoll community.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



The kitchen buzzed with teamwork as Rev. Allan Brouwer joined Laurie, Kim, and Kathy in preparing the Roast Pork Dinner.



The dedicated team of volunteers ensured every guest was served a hearty Roast Pork Dinner.



Laughter and conversation accompanied guests as they enjoyed their Roast Pork Dinner.

Oxford OPP briefs

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Fatal collision near Medina

Police are investigating the circumstances surrounding a fatal collision in the Township of Zorra.

On Sunday, Nov. 16, at approximately 6:17 p.m., members of the Oxford Detachment of the OPP, along with Oxford County Paramedic Services and South-West Oxford Fire and Emergency Services, responded to a two-vehicle collision involving two sport utility vehicles (SUVs) on 19th Line near the community of Medina.

A passenger in one of the SUVs, a 40-year-old London woman, sustained life-threatening injuries and was transported to hospital, where she was later pronounced deceased. The driver of that vehicle sustained minor injuries, while the driver of the second SUV was taken to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

The 19th Line between Road 92 and Road 96 was closed for several hours to allow for an extensive investigation.

Collision claims one life

A collision involving two commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) on the 401 claimed one life.

On November 13, 2025, at approximately 7 a.m., Police, Paramedic Services and Fire Services responded to a collision on the highway, east of Oxford Road 29, in the Township of Blandford-Blenheim.

Emergency services located a CMV that had struck the rear of another CMV while travelling in the eastbound lanes. One of the drivers, a 26-year-old male from Brampton, was pronounced deceased at the scene while the other driver did not require medical attention.

The eastbound lanes of the 401 between Oxford Road 29 and Cedar Creek Road were closed for several hours as the West Region OPP Traffic Incident

Management and Enforcement Team investigated.

Any person with information or dashcam footage from the collision are being asked to contact the Oxford OPP at 1-888-310-1122.

Police investigating Ingersoll thefts

Police are asking for the public's assistance following a reported theft from a business in Ingersoll.

Officers were called to the Samnah Crescent business around 4 p.m. on Oct. 16 after suspects entered the premises and stole multiple items. Investigators have since obtained surveillance footage of a possible person of interest.

The Oxford OPP are seeking help to identify the individual. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Oxford OPP at 1-888-310-1122 and reference report number E251412163. Tips may also be submitted anonymously through Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).



(OPP PHOTO)

Oxford OPP are looking for this suspect in connection with a theft from an Ingersoll business on Oct. 16

Ingersoll gathers to honour the fallen on Remembrance Day

KYRAH SMITH

Echo Correspondent

On Nov. 11th, the Town of Ingersoll gathered to honour the lives of those lost in service, coming together for a moving Remembrance Day ceremony that included the laying of wreaths and a solemn moment of silence.

All in attendance were adorned with

bright red poppies. From Cadets and emergency responders to dedicated volunteers, the Ingersoll Pipe Band, Mayor Brian Petrie, and residents, the town centre was filled with community spirit and quiet reverence.

Though the weather remained cold and overcast for much of the ceremony, the sun broke through at times, offering brief moments of warmth and comfort that added to the reflection of the day.

One by one, names were read, and wreaths were laid with the national anthem echoing proudly through the streets of our small town.

At 11 a.m., Ingersoll paused together for a heartfelt moment of silence, followed by a performance by the Ingersoll Pipe Band.

This year, the wreaths were left on display until 2 p.m., allowing residents the opportunity to visit, reflect, and pay their respects

to those who fought for our freedom at their own pace.

The Legion welcomed all to join afterwards for chilli, refreshments, and fellowship.

As the wreaths rested in the afternoon, the town quietly carried the spirit of remembrance forward, a shared promise to honour the past and never forget the sacrifices that shaped our freedom.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

Ingersoll Pipe Band at the Town Centre for Remembrance Day Ceremony.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

Some of the many wreaths laid to honour the fallen in Ingersoll 2025.

Woodstock remembers the fallen

On Tuesday, Nov. 11, the City of Woodstock hosted its annual Remembrance Day ceremony at Victoria Park, located at 413 Buller Street, to honour the bravery and sacrifice of Canada's veterans and active service members. Community members, veterans, and local leaders came together for a moving service that recognized those who served and continue to serve during times of war, conflict, and peace. The ceremony included the traditional laying of wreaths, a moment of silence, and remarks from community officials and representatives of veterans. Rogers TV Woodstock broadcast the ceremony live at 10:45 a.m.,

with additional airings at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m., allowing viewers across the region to take part in the day of remembrance. The City expressed deep gratitude to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch #55, The Oxford County Naval Veterans Association, emergency services, City of Woodstock staff and area school boards for their continued support and participation in making the event meaningful and respectful. The annual ceremony once again reflected the city's enduring commitment to honouring the men and women whose courage and sacrifice have secured the freedoms enjoyed today.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



In tribute to Canada's veterans, the Knights of Columbus participated in the wreath-laying ceremony at the Cenotaph.



Members of the honour guard, symbolizing different branches and times of service, joined in the tribute.



Hundreds of residents filled Victoria Park to take part in the ceremony.

A Festival of Lessons and Carols



Johann VanIttersum, Artistic Director

Dr. Christiaan Teeuwssen, Organist

December 13, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.

Church of the Epiphany

Tickets: www.oxfordcollegium.ca

560 Dundas Street, Woodstock

SANTA'S VILLAGE

OPENING NIGHT
SATURDAY NOVEMBER 22ND 4-8PM

Experience the magic of the season at Santa's Village! Join us Saturday's from November 22 to December 20 for festive family fun featuring crafts, letters to Santa, treats, live entertainment, and of course, visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Each week offers something new! Enjoy the twinkling lights, holiday music, and the joyful spirit of the community all season long.

THE INGERSOLL CHEESE &
AGRICULTURAL MUSEUM

290 Harris Street, Ingersoll



Follow the Ingersoll Cheese & Agricultural Museum on Facebook & Instagram for details and updates!

Woodstock Chamber celebrates excellence at annual business awards

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Woodstock and District Chamber of Commerce hosted the 28th Annual Business Awards of Excellence on Nov. 5 in Beachville, celebrating the outstanding achievements of local businesses, organizations, and individuals who make a meaningful impact in the community.

The gala evening brought together business and community leaders for a night of recognition, inspiration, and connection, highlighting the innovation, leadership, and dedication that drive Woodstock's business community forward.

"This was such an exciting evening of celebration for our local business community," said Mike Crabbe, the chamber's general manager. We have so many incredible businesses, organizations, and individuals working hard every day. Coming together to celebrate their impact and shine a light on their efforts is something we look forward to each year."

Crabbe thanked everyone who took the time to nominate, vote, and support the event.

"Because of you, our businesses receive the much-deserved recognition for all they do. Congratulations to all the nominees, and we are thrilled for this year's winners. We are also deeply grateful to our many sponsors, including OLG, Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada, FirstOntario Credit Union, Heart FM, MW and Co., Cornell Welding, and Anderson Automotive Group. We look forward to celebrating again next year as we continue to spotlight our incredible local business community."

2025 Business Awards of Excellence Winners

Agri-Business Award – Sponsored by Farm Credit Canada

The award is presented to a business or individual within the local agricultural community who shows leadership and outstanding achievement within their sector. They will also show continuous improvement and commitment to the environment and the advancement and sustainability of the agricultural industry.

• Jakeman's Maple Products

Commercial Retail Award – Sponsored by Fanshawe College Woodstock Campus Nominees

The award is presented to an individual or business that has demonstrated commitment, innovation and excellence in their field while providing outstanding customer service.

• The Thoughtful Artisan

Community Engagement Award –

Sponsored by BDO Canada

The award will be given to an individual, business or non-profit organization that demonstrates outstanding commitment and involvement through endeavours for the betterment of the community and those who live within it.

• Operation Sharing

Food Service Award – Sponsored by Woodstock Print

The award will be given to an individual or business that engages in the preparation and delivery of food by exhibiting superior preparation, delivery and customer service.

• Little Caesars Pizza

Woodstock Manufacturing Award – Sponsored by the City of Woodstock

The award is presented to a manufacturing business that is a recognized force in its industry while introducing efficient internal programs, including apprentice programs and/or recent successful launches of new products or product lines.

• Vuteq

New Business Award – Sponsored by Maglin Site Furniture

The award will be given to a new business created in the last three years and/or business owner who has demonstrated a level of financial risk and created opportunities for employment

• Cheesy Cow Company

Professional Services Award – Sponsored by Bossy Nagy Group

The award is presented to individuals or companies that have shown business growth, job creation, and concern for employee relations and education, customer service, quality, community and charitable involvement.

• Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

"It takes a special community to have a start-up print newspaper succeed in this internet era. My sincere thanks to everyone who has supported us, from readers to advertisers alike. We couldn't do it without you," explained publisher Stewart Grant.

"I'm very proud of our local team for consistently putting out an interesting and informative newspaper. I also know that the best days for the Echo are still to come. As we continue to move forward, our long-run goal is to graduate from a bi-weekly to a weekly newspaper," he added.

Young Entrepreneur/Professional Award – Sponsored by Community Futures Oxford Nominees

The award is presented to a professional/young entrepreneur who is 40 years of age or younger who has excelled and taken risks to expand their business and/or client base.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 16

NOTICE OF STUDY COMPLETION

Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 15 (Parkinson Road) intersection, Woodstock

Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Study

About the project

Oxford County has completed a harmonized Environmental Assessment (EA) Study for the Oxford Roads 4 and 15 (Parkinson Road) intersection for improvements to the intersection configuration, traffic operations, and safety.

The Oxford County Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Study (2024) previously recommended upgrades and improvements to the intersection to accommodate anticipated traffic growth over the next 25 years.

The purpose of this study was to:

- Identify and evaluate alternatives to improve the Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 15 intersection;
- Select a preferred solution and evaluate a preferred design concept;
- Complete and document the Class EA Study in accordance with the Municipal and Ministry of Transportation provincial documents;
- Engage interested parties and the public; and,
- Meet the County's vision "to provide a safe, efficient and sustainable multi-modal transportation network."

About the process

The project was completed as a Schedule "C" project in accordance with the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (2024) and a Group "C" MTO Class Environmental Assessment (2024), approved under the Ontario *Environmental Assessment Act*. The study addressed the requirements of Phases 1 to 4 of the Municipal Class EA process.

Public review

An Environmental Study Report (ESR) has been prepared documenting the process undertaken, details of study recommendations, and potential impacts and mitigation measures. An electronic copy of the ESR is being placed on the public record for review for 30 days from November 13, 2025 to December 13, 2025. The report and appendices are available on Oxford County's study website at www.speakup.oxfordcounty.ca/or4-15

Section 16 Order requests

In addition, a request to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) for an order imposing additional conditions or requiring an individual environmental assessment may be made on the grounds that the requested order may prevent, mitigate or remedy adverse impacts on constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights. Requests should include your full name and contact information.

Requests should specify what kind of order is being requested (additional conditions or an individual environmental assessment); explain how an order may prevent, mitigate or remedy potential adverse impacts; and can include any supporting information. The request should be sent by December 13, 2025, in writing or by email to both of the following Ministry contacts, as well as the project contacts listed below:

Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
777 Bay St., 5th Floor, Toronto, ON M7A 2J3
minister.mecp@ontario.ca



and

Director, Environmental Assessment Branch
Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
135 St. Clair Ave. W., 1st Floor, Toronto, ON M4V 1P5
EABDirector@ontario.ca

Please visit the Ministry's website for more information on requests for Orders under Section 16 of the Environmental Assessment Act at www.ontario.ca/page/class-environmental-assessments-section-16-order

Comments and project contacts

Interested persons may provide written comments to the project team. All comments should be submitted by December 13, 2025, to the project contacts listed below. Please contact Oxford County if you need alternative accommodations to view the documents.

Harry Goossens, P.Eng.
Project Engineer, Oxford County
1-800-755-0394 ext. 3028 | hgoossens@oxfordcounty.ca

Andrew McGregor, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner, R.V. Anderson Associates Limited
905-685-5049, ext. 4211 | amcgregor@rvanderson.com

Information collected will be used in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

This notice issued on November 13, 2025

Local 636 Office
126 Beale Street Woodstock, ON
N4S 6X5



Tel: 519.537.5942
Fax: 519.421.0064
E: uniforlocal636@rogers.com

BRENT THOMPSON
President

CRAIG WARNOCK
Financial Secretary

RETIREE'S BREAKFAST

UNIFOR LOCAL 636

IS HOSTING BREAKFASTS FOR RETIRED WORKERS
AND/OR THEIR PARTNER

NOVEMBER 27, 2025

STARTING AT 9:00 AM

\$5.00 Per Person

Retiree's meeting to follow

AGENDA

ROUTINE BUSINESS

Doug Steele
Unifor Local 636
Retired Workers Chapter
Chairperson
DS/cmcope343

Susan Veenstra
Unifor Local 636
Retired Workers Chapter
Recording Secretary

Dr. Leonard Reeves awarded President's Award

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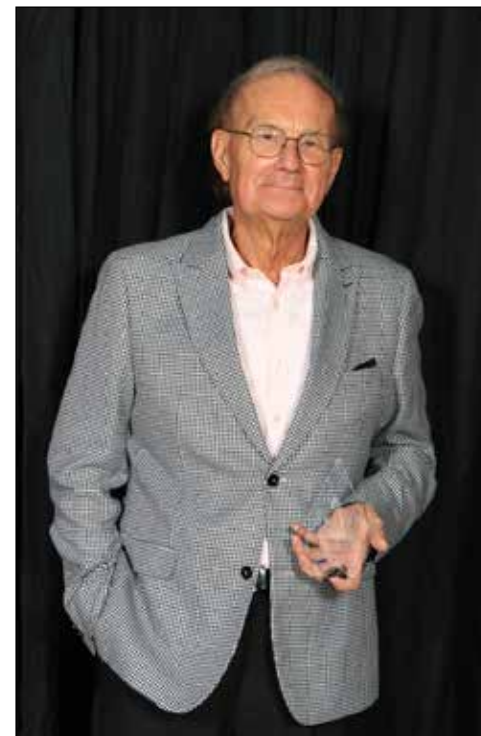
• Alisha Wilson – Transitions Equine Assisted Learning

President's Award – Sponsored by First Ontario Credit Union

The President's Award is selected by the President of the Woodstock District Chamber of Commerce. The award recipient will be a local individual or private business, or an individual from a multinational, publicly traded corporation that has shown exceptional contribution to the community through extraordinary vision and investment, job creation and commitment to community service.

• Dr. Leonard Reeves

Dr. Reeves founded the Dr. Leonard Reeves Foundation, a registered private foundation based in Woodstock. The foundation donates to charitable organizations in Oxford County, including the Woodstock Art Gallery and the United Way. He also created the Dr. Leonard Reeves Entrance Award for Women in Skilled Trades at Fanshawe College. It helps women pursuing trade programs by providing significant tuition support.



(CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PHOTO)

Dr. Leonard Reeves was given the prestigious President's Award by the Woodstock Chamber of Commerce.

theecho.ca

'TIS THE SEASON IN DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK

CHRISTMAS IN THE SQUARE

DECEMBER 12 & 19 5-8PM

DECEMBER 13 & 20 12-4PM



LATE NIGHT SHOPPING

DECEMBER 18TH

downtownwoodstock.ca

Check with businesses
for extended holiday hours

Photos with Santa,
Free train rides,
Dance Showcase,
Christmas Cheer,
Music, plus endless
shops & restaurants
to enjoy.



Woodstock Police Service briefs

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

City man charged after Norwich Avenue incident

Police were called to a residence on the evening of Nov. 14 following reports of a disturbance.

Upon arrival, officers attempted to assess the well-being of the people inside the home. One occupant was uncooperative and refused to allow police entry to confirm the safety of those inside. After continued attempts to make contact, officers were eventually able to determine that the occupants had sustained minor injuries as a result of an altercation.

A 57-year-old Woodstock male eventually surrendered peacefully to police. He was arrested without incident and is facing charges of assault and forcible confinement.

Injuries to the victim were treated on scene by EMS and are considered minor.

Police say the alleged victim and the accused were known to each other.

Police searching for robbery suspect

The Woodstock Police Service is seeking the public's assistance in identifying a theft suspect.

The unknown male was involved in a robbery at a business on Queenston Boulevard. He was last seen walking



(WPS PHOTO)

southbound on the Huntingford Trail at approximately 9:40 p.m. on Oct. 24, wearing the clothing shown in the attached photo.

If you recognize this individual or have CCTV footage from the area around that time, please contact the Woodstock Police Service at 519-537-2323 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

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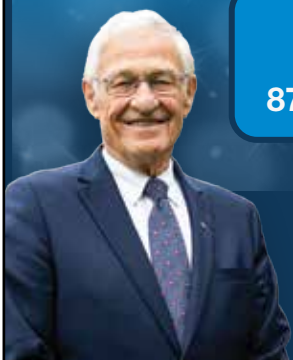
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Saturday, December 6th
8:00am - 10:00am
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ERNIE HARDEMAN
MPP - Oxford

519-537-5222 • 1-800-265-4046
12 Perry St., Woodstock, ON N4S 3C2

ernie.hardemanco@pc.ola.org
erniehardemanmpp.com

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo SPORTS

Red Devils, Warriors shop local for WOSSAA AA gold, silver medals

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

At the end of a long, competitive Western Ontario Secondary Schools Association (WOSSAA) AA junior boys' volleyball season, two representatives from the Thames Valley Regional Athletics (TVRA) Southeast kept the shiniest medals within Woodstock city limits.

"It's a little 'Siberia' (comparatively isolated) town that seems to do okay," said Jeff Melanson, coach of the gold medal champion Woodstock CI Red Devils. "And that's okay, we'll play underdog."

"If you don't expect much, we'll surprise you."

The Red Devils locked up the title with a 25-18, 25-19, 25-18 victory over the Woodstock St. Mary's Warriors on Nov. 13 at the WCI Devildome, capping a highly successful season of change. It began with a level of uncertainty created by moving up from essentially a challenge match against weaker competition to qualify for WOSSAA A, to a broader AA pool including London representatives.

"I thought we might be outclassed," admitted Melanson, ultimately discovering the toughest competition came from close by. The Warriors had fired the first shot in an extended TVRA Southeast rivalry, taking their regular season match 27-25, 25-22, 26-24 to finish undefeated at 8-0, two points up on the 7-1 Red Devils. The teams set up a TVRA championship playoff rematch and earned WOSSAA AA semi-final berths by taking care of business in their respective TVRA semi-finals on Nov. 6 at Woodstock Huron Park.

Having taken the first set 25-23, Jonrei Castillo provided St. Mary's the spark it needed during the second, stepping to the service line with his Warriors trailing 20-14 to the St. Thomas Central Elgin Titans. A distinctive pre-service routine backing up a powerful stroke - three slaps of the ball, three stomps of his foot - came to him out of the blue during an earlier match against WCI, the Warriors bench

loudly joining in on the latter trio.

"It helps me and it's also fun," explained Castillo, who opened with an ace and then added two service winners. The Warriors pulled even at 20 on a Jakub Mazurkiewicz centre tip, taking a 21-20 lead on a Tristan Manalo block. The Titans were called for a catch and throw, capping an eight-point Castillo serving run at 22-20. Central Elgin broke it off there, but St. Mary's finished out a 25-22 win on a desperation Mazurkiewicz tip that found the front, right corner of the Titans court, followed up by an Ethan VanRooyen centre kill catching the inside of the line.

"This game is all about momentum," said Manalo, who plays much taller than his 5'9" height, citing the value of a big serve or big hit. "It really helps us to get energy in our game."

"We had a slow start, but once these guys are hitting, the cheering starts, we get pumped up," agreed Elijah Allard.

The Warriors completed a sweep with a 25-22 win in the third set, riding an early 14-6 lead to a 21-13 advantage. St. Mary's coach Denys Reid called a time out as the Titans clawed back into it, 23-22, rewarded as Manalo and VanRooyen closed the set and match out on a tip and centre kill, respectively.

The Red Devils did their part, sweeping St. Thomas Parkside Stampeders 25-12, 25-18, 25-20, a point in the third set contributing to the term, 'honest' victory. The Red Devils built an early 15-8 lead, only to have the Stampeders battle back to 17-15. On the next point, WCI libero Owen Vandersar interrupted the crew of officials converging to discuss if a Parkside kill attempt out had in fact been touched by a WCI defender, confirming that it had been, point to the Stampeders.

"We want to win right," he explained later, of honesty trumping expediency during a potentially crucial point of the game.

Melanson called for him, a rare time out at 17-17, the Red Devils responding with a kill to break serve and kick off a five-point run. Middle hitter Ty Martin closed out the set and



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

The Woodstock St. Mary's Warriors capped their 2025 juniors boys' volleyball season with WOSSAA AA silver medals.

match with a block at the net.

The win was representative of a balanced game, said WCI captain and setter Austin Bickell, serving, setting, hitting and passing, along with strategic adjustment.

"Knowing where the hitters like to hit."

"Adapting to the situation," added assistant captain Aiden Silos.

The Red Devils were able to do that in the TVRA Southeast final, prevailing to enter the WOSSAA draw as the division's top seed. They punched their ticket to the championship with a 25-5, 25-16, 25-19 win over London South, while St. Mary's set up a rematch with a 25-21, 27-25, 25-22 sweep of Stratford St. Mike's.

WCI's AA win helped erase some of the sting of the previous season's WOSSAA A five-set championship loss to London Christian, special said Melanson, to share this year's experience with returnees from that squad.

As a group, this year's Red Devils liked each other, played well together, knew their roles and were hungry both to improve and win.

"You just kind of create the space and opportunity for them to do so," said Melanson.

In the gold medal game, he felt previous ex-

perience against the Warriors allowed for subtle adjustments, which helped the Red Devils transition more successfully from defence to the attack. The rivalry between the two teams is healthy, at times intense, between foes who know each other very well and play hard against each other.

"For sure it makes us better," Melanson credited. "How do you replace good volleyball, right?"

The pathway to the season's finale was laid out early in the campaign, said Reid, first meeting the Red Devils during a pre-season tournament. It was apparent from that point they were among the region's top teams.

"To win, we'd have to beat each other."

Admittedly, Reid and the Warriors would have preferred to prevail, both at TVRA Southeast championships and WOSSAA.

"But at the same time, that was the standard."

Putting the team's WOSSAA silver medals in perspective, he noted the number of AA teams in their region, adding in London competitors and those from within WOSSAA's extended boundaries.

"To say we are the top two out of all that is pretty impressive."

St. Mary's had a comparatively young roster, five Grade 10s with the balance Grade 9 rookies. The jump from elementary competition to high school is a big one said Reid, impressed with the grit and determination his players displayed.

"They just kind of kept pushing, kept pushing," he said, citing a collective ability to put their heads down amidst adversity and keep on going. "Win or lose, that's something to be proud of."

"At the end of the day, as well as being good athletes, they were great kids."

While wishing program graduates the best at the senior level, Reid also looks forward to a strong cadre of potential returnees, a group fully understanding the level of dedication, hard work and commitment required for another run toward WOSSAA.

"Hopefully we can get the job done."



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

The Woodstock CI Red Devils finished off their 2025 junior boys' volleyball campaign with homecourt WOSSAA AA gold medals.

WCI Red Devil junior basketball girls looking beyond WOSSAA AA title to future opportunities

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

Sports coaches frequently remind players not to look too far ahead, emphasizing the importance of focusing on the game at hand.

But looking beyond has become a fact of athletic life for Woodstock CI junior girls' basketball guard Avery Molinaro and forward Brooke Halward.

"Oh yeah, we are," smiled the former. "OFSAA (Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations championships) was our goal since our first practice of Grade 9," added Halward, a more-than-interested observer at eldest brother Jaxson's OFSAA experience in Timmins while she was in Grade 8, and last year's silver provincial medal earned by sibling Will's team right at home in Woodstock as a Grade 9.

The junior Red Devils marked an important milestone on that lofty longer-term goal on Wednesday, Nov. 12 at Listowel District Secondary School, dominating Western Ontario Secondary Schools Athletics Association (WOSSAA) AA competition en route to a girls' basketball championship victory.

The 'beasts of the TVRA Southeast' opened with a 58-8 semi-final win over London John Paul II Jaguars, making it official with a 62-26 clincher against perennial powerhouse St. Thomas St.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Woodstock CI junior girls' basketball team capped a 22-1 2025 season with a 62-26 victory over St. Thomas St. Joe's in the WOSSAA AA championship game on Nov. 12 in Listowel.

Joe's in the final.

"The start was close, I was nervous," admitted WCI point guard Reese Crown.

"But when our nerves left, we just closed out," said Halward.

Crown had nine of her game-high 18 points in the first quarter of the gold medal final. Natalie Sutherland added 14, Halward and Jillian Trepanier six, Avery Molinaro and Jennyson Mazur-Hanagan four apiece, Isabella Perkins, Brooklyn Donais, Rudy Kalbfleisch and Hannah Thistlewaite a field goal each, and Addison Weicker two free throws.

The previous week, WCI had beaten St. Joe's 47-27 in the TVRA Southeast AA championship game, qualifying with a 51-30 semi-final victory over the Aylmer East Elgin Eagles. The Eagles hung with the Red Devils through the first eight minutes, tenacious defence holding WCI to a modest 9-5 advantage.

"They had an aggressive defence," credited Halward. "They were all over us. We didn't get any easy baskets for sure."

The Red Devils began executing better offensively in the second quarter, breaking the game open with a 19-2 run, featuring a half-dozen points from Sutherland, five from Halward and four from Kalbfleisch.

"Started playing as a team with good passes," Halward summed up. "It was a good game," she added. "Good to play in our home gym too."

"It's a different energy in here," Sutherland agreed.

Halward finished with 14 points, Sutherland hit double digits with ten, Brooklyn Donais, Crown, Thistlewaite and Layla Graham each scored four, Perkins a three-point field goal, Avery Molinaro a two-pointer and Trepanier two free throws. Lonsi Begemann had 11 points to pace East Elgin with Shelby Adams adding seven.

The win qualified WCI both for the TVRAA AA Southeast final and one of two available WOSSAA AA berths for the division. The Red Devils entered the regional draw as top seed on the

strength of a 47-27 win over St. Joe's on Nov. 6 at WCI.

"An amazing season," said coach Eric Molinaro, celebrating his 47th birthday along with the WOSSAA AA title. The Red Devils finished with a 22-1 won-lost record, including an undefeated TVRA Southeast season and tournament wins in two of three attended. WCI's lone defeat came at the hands of London Catholic Central, one of seven AAA opponents faced during the campaign.

To be fair, said Molinaro, St. Joe's elevated four of its best Grade 10 girls' basketball players to the senior ranks, bolstering the team at that level.

"We knew they weren't at their best," he said, predicting a full-throttle challenge in the future. "It's going to be a battle for the AA schools at senior."

Molinaro is among those looking forward, given a historical perspective shared with assistant coach Kyle Graham, reaching back well before high school. Nine of 17 current roster members used to play together with the Oxford Attack program.

"We all played together, I just know how they play," said Crown, a Grade 9 point guard. "And we came together as a team."

That level of community hoops experience and interest, combined with WCI's well-established basketball program, led to the wheels turning on a successful 2027 senior girls' AA basketball OFSAA bid, building on last year's A boys' event.

"We knew we could pull it off for the girls as well," said Molinaro.

Partly in preparation, partly standard operating procedure, he and assistant coach Graham kept 17 players on this year's junior roster, dressing 15 per game. As well as supporting broader development, those numbers protect against potential attrition to other commitments or interests as the program matures. As hosts, the Red Devils will receive an automatic berth into a 2027 AA OFSAA draw they also intend to be competitive in.

In conclusion, the team is not looking

beyond its next game, or for that matter, the next season.

"But as a program, we knew what the potential was," Molinaro concluded.

TVRAA AA SENIOR GIRLS BASKETBALL

The Woodstock CI Red Devils seniors' season ended on Nov. 4 with a 41-21 semi-final loss to St. Joe's in St. Thomas. The Woodstock College Avenue Knights also advanced to senior semis, dropping a 36-16 decision to St. Thomas Parkside. St. Joe's ultimately prevailed 54-42 in the final.

2025 Girls Captains-Veterans Basketball Game

The annual junior/senior captains-veterans doubleheader is scheduled for Nov. 20 at Woodstock CI's Devildome. The junior game will feature Team Black (Woodstock CI, Ingersoll DCI and Woodstock College Avenue) tipping off at 6 p.m. against Team Blue, featuring representation from Woodstock St. Mary's, Huron Park, Tillsonburg Glendale and Lord Dorchester.

The senior game will follow at 7:45, with Team Black (WCI, St. Mary's and IDCI) against Team Blue (CASS, Huron Park, Glendale and Dorchester).

All proceeds from the evening will go toward the WCI Festive Campaign for CAS.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

WCI's Rudy Kalbfleisch (right) moves the ball against Aylmer's Khole Ellis.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Woodstock CI Red Devil guard Avery Molinaro (right) 'D's up' against East Elgin's Shelby Adams.

Top WOSSAA AA 'dawgs' heading to provincial championships in Orillia

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

The Woodstock Huron Park senior boys' volleyball Huskies are the top AA 'dawgs' in the Western Ontario Secondary Schools Athletics Association.

And with the title safely in their competitive kennel, they earned the companion right to 'pound' up highways 400 and 11 and contest the 20-team Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) provincial championship in Orillia from Nov. 20 to 22.

"It's four years in the making, right?" said Huskies middle Parker McLeod. "Work hard every season, build stronger as a team, same guys since Grade 9.

"A huge moment for us - we're going to look to continue this into OFSAA."

Getting there was certainly a seasonal goal, but not the last one, said McLeod.

"Not yet, job's not done."

"It's been a dream since Grade 9, honestly," added setter Gavin Jansen. "We put all the work together for this Grade 12 year... It's big."

Huron Park enters the OFSAA AA championship as the No. 5 seed, competing in Pool B alongside second-seeded Port Perry, No. 12 Dundas Valley, No. 15 Hamilton St.

Mary's and No. 18 Timiskaming District. The Huskies open round-robin play on Nov. 20 with matches against St. Mary's at 8:30 a.m., Dundas Valley at 11:30 a.m., and Port Perry at 2:30 p.m. They close out pool play on Nov. 21 with an 11:30 a.m. matchup against Timiskaming. The top two teams in the pool advance to the quarterfinals that evening at 6:30 p.m., while the third- and fourth-place finishers move into the consolation bracket, with semifinal action beginning at 4:30 p.m.

The tournament's consolation semifinals are set for 9 a.m. on Nov. 22, followed by the championship semifinals at 11 a.m. The consolation final will begin at 1 p.m., with the championship bronze medal game slated for 2:30. The event will conclude with the gold-medal final at 4 p.m.

Details will be available on the OFSAA website at https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1WJhp-6pHAF0fIQvKcQMWd9dW-1W7Gv7aGkUtVrX4_CFsg/edit?gid=0#gid=0.

"What can you say, right?" queried Huskies coach Eryn Orr rhetorically. "It all paid off."

She had wanted her team to experience OFSAA, something

she herself had been fortunate to share during her Grade 12 season at London John Paul II.

"I'm really, really proud of how far they've come, how they played today and where our program has come."

Initially, she had considered everything after their TVRA Southeast title to be 'gravy.'

"But you're going to go, we're going to try," she smiled, her competitive fire showing through. "You're there, right? Might as well."

Huron Park's OFSAA ticket did not come easily, the challenge opening with a hard-fought 21-25, 25-19, 25-20, 19-25, 15-10 five-set victory over London South in their Nov. 13 WOSSAA semi-final at Huron Park. McLeod was involved in four of the Huskies final set-five points, back-to-back blocks at the net, a rejection at the net following a service advantage created by Cale Pigeau, kill, block and finally, set and match point, reaching back for a deep set and massive centre kill.

"At the end of the game, trying to get points, got to give it to your horse," Orr summed up.

The Huskies faced a tenacious St. Thomas Central Elgin Titans squad in a rematch of the previous week's TVRA Southeast final, the team's



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

The WOSSAA AA champion Woodstock Huron Park Huskies senior boys' volleyball team was scheduled to compete at OFSAA provincials Nov. 20-22.

determined defence led by Tyrese Dillard. The Huskies appeared flat in the first set, a condition arguably influenced by Central Elgin's attempt to mitigate their middle strength by creating service advantages. Although the Titans would lose a number of points to long or net serves, they hung tough through a tightly contested set, Huron Park's Connor Harper contributing a number of crucial kills to keep the Huskies close. A Central Elgin serve out and Rohn Cowan service winner finished off a narrow 27-25 win.

"I would say we weren't as enthusiastic as we should be," admitted Harper.

"The 'dawgs' were cold," agreed McLeod, crediting Harper for responding when most needed, part of resiliency displayed by the entire team. "He stepped up big-time and helped us get that first win."

The dawgs came out pounding in the second set, building a 16-2 lead, middle Jaxson Finnie contributing a 'kick set' as well as an impressive net presence. Huron Park's balanced presence in the middle was illustrated by a quality Finnie dig/first pass on game point, finished by McLeod. The Titans gained some momentum with a late push to 11 points, capitalizing on that surge—and perhaps a bit of a Huskies letdown—to take the third set 25-20. Huron Park regrouped quickly, though, and sealed the match with a commanding 25-13 victory in the fifth.

"A surrealistic moment," McLeod said. "Four years come down to this."

A 25-20, 25-15, 25-9 TVRA Southeast AA final win over the Titans a week earlier at Huron Park locked up both a WOSSAA berth and home-court for the third consecutive round of playoffs, a distinct advantage, said Jansen, given enthusiastic partisan support.

"Student section got in their heads for sure. All three matches - just phenomenal."

The Huskies downed Woodstock St. Mary's 25-17, 25-22, 25-17 in their semi-final. St. Mary's is a quality team which always presents a tough challenge, said the Huskies' Travis Ernst.

"I felt we were just a step ahead today."

"We just didn't have it today," said Warriors middle Kiefer Hager, a Grade 11 student looking toward next season.

"I think we could have played better," agreed teammate Kingston McPherson, who also plays wing with the Woodstock Navy Vets. "But they're a tough team, tough to block."

"The crowd got to us a bit," added Owen Pilon. "Flat start, we came back, just wasn't enough."

"Just wasn't our day," concluded Warriors coach Valerie Popovich, crediting the Huskies for being a great team. "You're not going to overpower them, you have to outsmart them."

St. Mary's had rebounded after a flat start, she said.

"But not enough."

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Senior Blue Bombers end 57-year gridiron drought with championship win over London Saunders

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

The Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers 18-7 Thames Valley Regional Athletics Tier II senior football championship triumph over the London Saunders Sabres on Nov. 7 at IPassword Park in St. Thomas came as the result of laying it on the line.

Classic Canadian rockers reference aside, the Bombers played to win, rather than not lose. And a resultant series of big decisions, big plays, a big team effort, a little luck and a tiny bit of disregard for a mother's concern culminated in IDCI's first senior football championship since 1968.

"Nineteen-sixty-eight," Bombers coach Nick DiCiocco echoed. "Fifty-seven years.

"That was the goal from day one. Day one, we knew we had to play eight games this year, and we were going to play eight and here we are."

Each play in a championship game is critical, a potential turning point. But a third-quarter Logan Janzen punt block returned for a touchdown still stood out. With Saunders trying to answer IDCI's second-half-opening touchdown and driving from their own 34 to the Ingersoll 30, Janzen subbed in for a guest appearance in the Bombers defensive secondary. His mission was to tighten the gap defensively on pass coverage, despite his mother Vanessa's fears of aggravating an earlier injury.

"My mom, right there, just told me, do not go on defence, because you can't overdo it," he smiled post-game.

Following a short ground gain on first down, Bombers teammate Kolton Stewart read the ensuing screen pass attempt perfectly, tackling the recipient for a loss.

"I just read it, took him down... took him down and celebrated," said Stewart.

Although generally uncertain about specific duties, Janzen, who entered on second down, recalled coaching instructions to block the punt.

"I was like okay, go do the edge, do something cool," he said, throwing his body in front of a kick projected to pin the Bombers deep in their zone. He picked up the loose ball and ran it 70 yards for a major.

"That's the coolest thing I've ever done," said Janzen, his performance mollifying even his mother's concern.

"Umm... no, yes, no," she responded, smiling. "I just wanted him to play safe and he did and proved us all wrong."

Ethan Butt's point after try gave IDCI a 15-7 lead, and following a Gavin Laidman onside kick recovered by Aaron Petit on the ensuing kickoff, possession on the Saunders 50 with 37 seconds



The TVRA Southeast Tier II champion Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers.

(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

left in the third quarter. The Sabres recovered possession on their own 45 via interception, advancing to the IDCI 38 where following a Butt knockdown on a second down pass, Saunders quarterback Cameron Couchie was swarmed short of the line of gain on third down.

Taking over on their own 37 with 8:41 remaining, IDCI quarterback Delwo was forced to punt, but a second special teams gamble, lining up players behind him onside, paid off. Spencer Krajewski ran onto a designed short punt along the sideline to retain possession at the Saunders 50, emphasizing 'playing safe' was not in the Bombers playbook.

"Not today," said DiCiocco. "There is no tomorrow and there is no next game. We knew they were tough and we needed that one extra possession to seal the deal."

Krajewski pulled down a Delwo pass at the Sabres 10, running to the four for first and goal. Following a short run and a delay of game penalty, Ingersoll was pushed back to the 13 on second down. The turn of events compounded by a fumble gave Saunders possession on its own three. The Sabres were stopped at their 27 on a Doug Catrysse open field tackle on a reverse, advancing, but turning the ball over on downs inside their half of the field with 2:24 to play following a Stewart open field tackle and Nathan Burton knockdown.

Delwo took the ball into field goal range with a gutsy keeper, redemption for an earlier miscue. Butt split the uprights with a 32-yard field goal on third-and-11 from the 25 for a two-score, 18-7 lead with 1:11 remaining. Laidman and Burton had defensive knockdowns and Janzen and Carter Whitworth combined on a sack as time and downs ran out for the Sabres, IDCI taking over with 20 seconds remaining.

"We needed this," said Laidman. "We haven't won a trophy here in what is it, 50 years? I play four sports here, I've never won any-

thing. I think the whole team needed this. This brings something to the school."

The Bombers opened scoring with under three minutes to go in the first half. A drive from their own 30 to the Saunders 13 featured a 24-yard Delwo to Laidman pass, six-yard QB keeper on third-and-one from the Sabres 43 and a 28-yard Krajewski reception to the ten. A field goal attempt sailed wide, going for a single point and 1-0 lead.

A subsequent 67-yard Couchie pass and run completion to Dominic Espino set the Sabres up first-and-goal at the IDCI eight. The Bombers defence made two stops before Cjay Reid found paydirt on a jet sweep left, adding the PAT for a 7-1 lead. A Saunders drive in the final minute led to a 32-yard field goal attempt with three seconds remaining, blocked by a Bombers surge and recovered by Burton.

Laidman opened the second half with a kickoff to the Sabres five, returned to the 21 but leading to a punt from the ten and great IDCI field position. Delwo gained 15 yards on a first-down keeper, eventually capitalizing on a third-and-one gamble behind the left side of the line and a Janzen lead block. Butt added the PAT for an 8-7 lead.

"Our whole line was giving us some great blocks," said Delwo. "I just found the hole."

The Bombers QB admitted his expectations rose as the season progressed, growing confidence in what could be accomplished.

"It feels great, I'm just glad I could do it with these guys one last time. I'm going to miss this team and going to miss this sport."

DiCiocco recruited two members of the 1968 Bombers championship team, Roger Henhawke and Dave Cussons, to act as honorary captains.

"They were super excited, super excited," said DiCiocco. "It was awesome to support us like that."

He also appreciated a pre-game query from an onsite broadcast crew focussing only on Delwo and Laidman, which fired up the rank and file through a true team victory.

"We had playmakers all over the field today," said DiCiocco, celebrating the championship not only for itself, but what it represented.

"Honestly, the football part of it is just the medium to show them what they can do if they all commit, if they come together as one. What they accomplished could have been done in soccer, could have been done in volleyball.

"But football is special because there are so many people involved and they haven't done it in so long."



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

A cluster of Blue Bombers surrounding Gavin Laidman's onside kick illustrate how completely surprise was achieved.

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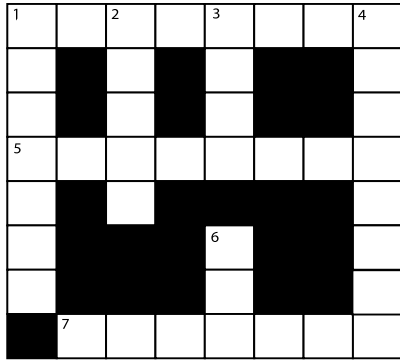


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DOWN

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2. Transparent
3. Pain
4. Trying things out
6. Liquid fat

Answers:
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1. Packages 5. Neaten up 7. Boiling
Down
1. Peanuts 2. Clear 3. Ache 4. Sampling 6. Oil

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Most wonderful time of the year coming for Christmas tree producers

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

The festive season is the most wonderful time of the year for Christmas tree producers. But it takes a little organized chaos to get there.

"Absolutely," said Mike Vanderklooster of Vanderklooster Christmas Trees, a you-cut/pre-cut operation located just south of Sweaburg at 424847 Substation Road. "Always," he added.

With Friday, Nov. 28's opening circled on the family calendar, it was all hands on deck. Vanderklooster's daughter Alexa was given a pass, sleeping after an overnight shift as a nurse, but her partner Sean Fitzpatrick, his Rock, Paper, Earth landscaping season having ramped down, was sequentially clearing leaves from the yard with a blower. Daughter Carmyn Vanderklooster, enjoying a break from working on a bio/poly sci Master's Degree, was wading through a truckload of Fraser and Balsam Firs delivered earlier that day - two hours late due to traffic delays on the 400 series highways.

Inside the operation's current shop, Vanderklooster looked past an array of potted Christmas urns to an open excavation for an expansion, its concrete foundation pour delayed by a dump of snow earlier that week.

"It looks like this - and then we get it all going and it looks Christmassy."

Vanderklooster began planting trees for a you-cut operation in 1997, envisioning a personally and financially productive side hustle from his regular job. Ten years later, he began bringing trees in to establish a business that today includes both pre and you-cut options, urns and wreaths, and this year will also feature cookies, brownies, donuts and hot chocolate for sale.

"It's taken 15 or 20 years to actually get going."

While the latter part of November and December are the busiest months in terms of sales, Christmas tree farming is a year-round responsibility. Beyond planting and pruning, producers battle predatory bugs, disease and fungus, have to mow and weed their plantation, and must keep trees watered, particularly in a 'big-time dry' summer like 2025. Vanderklooster has



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

It was beginning to look a lot more like Christmas at Vanderklooster Christmas Trees, midway through November, with Carmyn (left) and Mike preparing for the upcoming festive season.

added equipment and four rows of trees, now watered through drip irrigation. But from an old-school drip approach for the balance of his farm, hand-bombing water into repurposed plastic pails with a small hole drilled in them, a lot of physical labour goes into turning seedlings into holiday centrepieces.

"A lot of this is still hands-on."

Since retirement, Vanderklooster's hobby has become more of a full-time occupation, pride and passion for growing something from nothing.

"And I just enjoy it," says the active member of the Christmas Tree Farmers of Ontario (CTFO). "Keeps the brain going,

gives me something to do... purpose, and I like being outside."

It remains very much a family operation with Vanderklooster sourcing additional labour during peak periods through his kids or their friends. Beginning Nov. 28, Vanderklooster Christmas Trees will be open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. until Christmas, or until they are sold out. As a concession to modern technology, the business has added a Facebook page and an Instagram account.

"The kids were going, Dad, you've got to be beyond the sign at the road."

Against the pressure of rising input

costs, Vanderklooster is holding the line on you-cut pricing at \$75 per tree. There are cheaper options, but his customers are generally seeking both a tree and an experience, travelling to the country, often as a family unit. Some have been coming for 15 years, says Vanderklooster, and virtually without exception, all share something from his own happiest time of the year, making endless hours of work worthwhile.

"Everyone comes here, they're happy, right?" he concluded. "The smiles, the kids, old customers, that's when it's fun."

For more information, visit <https://www.vanderkloosterchristmastrees.ca>.

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR HOUSE IS



Keep your dollars in Canada to strengthen communities and support local businesses, including your local newspaper.

Oxford MP looking for answers on CAMI plant

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Amid threats by Unifor Local 88 to take over the massive Ingersoll production facility, Arpan Khanna is accusing the federal government of dragging its feet on coming up with a solution to get employees back to work.

Union chair Mike Van Boekel said it is the only leverage he and nearly 1,100 laid-off workers have to try and keep the plant open.

“We will occupy the plant until there is a way forward. We want to team up with the federal government and GM to get something for the plant.”

General Motors announced in October it had ceased production of the BrightDrop electric delivery van due to lower-than-expected sales. Last week, union officials met with Industry Minister Mélanie Joly, Secretary of State for Labour John Zerucelli, Ingersoll Mayor Brian Petrie and GM officials.

“Joly told GM to come back with a commitment to the plant and the workers. She said talks are continuing, so we are waiting to see what the outcome will be. We are fighting to ensure CAMI stays open and we are prepared to do whatever it takes to protect our jobs, our members, and the future of this plant.”

Oxford MP Arpan Khanna posted a letter he wrote to Joly on social media, where he demanded an update on the situation. She gave GM 15 days to deliver a full update on its “next steps” for workers at the plant. That deadline has come and gone with no plan released by the automaker.

“I have been asking a lot of questions. The timeline the Liberals put in was their own timeline,” said Khanna. “When I asked her in Parliament, she stood up in the House and said within 15 days GM would present us with a plan. She made that statement, and she is the minister of industry. We will hold the government to their own promises.”

Khanna said he’s reached out to Joly and has asked General Motors for a meeting this week.

“I’ve been in touch with Mayor Petrie, Mike Van Boekel, so we are doing everything possible for our autoworkers. I will always be a voice for them. There are thousands of spinoff jobs being affected



(UNIFOR PHOTO)

by this in the transportation and parts industries.” He also accused the Liberal government of selling out autoworkers across the province and said the future for the industry looks grim.

“We have also seen this with the GM plant in Oshawa, the Stellantis plant in Brampton. We are headed down a dangerous path. We have a Prime Minister who promised elbows up and promised to be a champion for workers. He is clearly failing and not living up to what he said he would deliver.”

Khanna said he is also disappointed with the Liberal government’s lack of consultation with opposition parties, despite its promise to do the exact opposite.

“They talk a big game, but they don’t collaborate. We saw that with the budget, we saw that on other files. They put on this show that they are ready to collaborate, but don’t follow through on it. That’s why I am getting together with the mayor, the union, and others, to see what we can do to fight for autoworkers. This government has been a complete failure when it comes to working with all levels of government and stakeholders.”

The federal and provincial governments kicked in a combined half a billion dollars to retool the Ingersoll facility. Khanna said the opposition has not been given a copy of the agreement the automaker signed with the government.

“We want to see if anything was given in terms of job security, but this government has been lacking in transparency on almost every single file, and we will keep raising these issues in Parliament.”

GM Canada has released a statement saying it has no plans to remove anything from its Ingersoll plant. “GM has no intention at this time to remove manufacturing equipment and our focus continues to be supporting our people and working with Unifor and governments to evaluate opportunities for Cami.”



LOCAL MATTERS.



Remember that time when **Amazon** sponsored your church fundraiser?



Remember when **Facebook** bought a case of Girl Guide cookies to support your daughter?



Remember when **Google** provided free pizza to your child’s soccer team when they won the championship?

Route to the Past – The Pathway to the Stars Started in Oxford

SCOTT GILLIES

Contributor

The more people you meet, the smaller the world becomes. As I have pursued the histories of various veterans from the Ingersoll area I have “met” some people with amazing stories to be told. The following is just one such example.

Born in Walkerton Ontario in 1892, Norman Russell Anderson was a twenty-two year old working for the Merchant's Bank in Ingersoll and was a regular attendee of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church where he sang in the choir and was elected president of their Young People's Society. He was employed as a ledger keeper in the Ingersoll branch at 99 Thames Street North (northeast corner of Thames and Charles Streets) and at the branch in Beachville. In the days when bank employees lived on site and often provided in-house security, “Andy” boarded with fellow bank employee Robert McNiven in the apartment above the bank.

The 5' 11" 22-year-old Anderson enlisted in April 1916 with the 168th (Oxford) Battalion; his enlistment number was 675898. He was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in July of that year.

In October of 1916, while still based at Camp Borden, Sergeant Anderson was honourably discharged in order to take a commission in the Royal Flying Corps. The 168th shipped out to England twenty days later.

He was not the only young man with Ingersoll ties to leave the infantry. Fellow infantryman Jack Boles had also re-

signed from the Canadian Expeditionary Force to take to the skies.

Both Boles and Anderson transferred to the Royal Flying Corps and trained to be pilots. In the spring of 1917, both Lieutenants went on operations in France. Boles was later stationed in Essex and died when his plane crashed shortly after take-off. Anderson also crashed one of his planes. Returning to base following an operational mission over No Man's Land, he accidentally crashed into a Nissan hut in May of 1917 but was able to walk away. Like Jack Boles, “Andy” was also brought back to the United Kingdom, but to be an instructor with the RAF. When the Armistice came in November of 1918, he was on staff of the RAF Flying Instructor's School at Ayr, Scotland.

Anderson returned to Canada in 1920 to become one of the original members of the Canadian Air Force and later served on the Air Board as Inspector of civil aircraft and flying personnel. In 1923 he was given command of the flight training school at Camp Borden. He was selected to attend a Flying Instructors' course at RAF Central Flying School at Uphaven, England in 1925, and the RAF Staff College at Andover, England in 1927.

It would seem that while he was stationed at Camp Borden between 1923 and 1927, he still had time to socialize. That same year, 1927, he married Mary Dorothea Grasett of Barrie.

During the next number of years, he held commands at Camp Borden, Winnipeg (where their daughter Marian Hope



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Norman Russell Anderson.

was born; siblings Alistair, Colin and Hugh would follow), and in Ottawa.

In December 1939 he became Air Officer Commanding Eastern Air Command with headquarters at Halifax and played a major part in the organization of Canada's Atlantic coast air defences.

RCAF Eastern Air Command was responsible for air operations on the Atlantic coast of Canada during the Second

World War. It played a critical role in anti-submarine operations in Canadian and Newfoundland waters during the Battle of the Atlantic. Eastern Air Command also had several fighter squadrons and operational training units under its umbrella. To that end, flight instructor Merton McKelvey of Ingersoll who was stationed on the east coast would have reported to Anderson.

In 1944 Anderson was recognized for his service by being appointed a Commander in the Most Honourable Order of the Bath KCB/DCB. The citation accompanying this order stated in part that: "Air Vice-Marshal Anderson, with outstanding organizing ability, energy and initiative, for many years very successfully filled a position of great responsibility as Air Officer Commanding, Eastern Air Command. As Air Member for Air Staff for the past twenty months, this conscientious and very thorough officer has efficiently and judiciously undertaken the responsibility of all Home War planning and operations."

Air Vice-Marshal Anderson retired in 1945, but recognition of his service did not cease.

In 1947, France awarded him the Croix de Guerre and made him an Officier de l'Ordre National de la Legion d'Honneur. The following year, the United States government named him a Commander in the Legion of Merit. This degree is awarded for services comparable to those for which a Distinguished Service Medal.

Norman Russell “Andy” Anderson died in Ottawa in 1948 of leukemia.

OFA Viewpoint: Finding opportunity amid uncertainty

DREW SPOELSTRA

President, Ontario Federation of Agriculture

As Ontario farmers prepare to gather for the Ontario Federation of Agriculture's Annual General Meeting next week, it's a natural time to reflect on the year behind us — a year that has tested our resilience, unity, and determination like few others.

Every season brings its share of challenges for Ontario farmers, but the past twelve months have been extraordinary. A year ago, none of us could have imagined that one of the biggest threats to our industry, our livelihoods, and even our country would come from our closest trading partner and neighbour.

What we've experienced since then has truly been a year like no other.

Farmers are no strangers to uncertainty — weather, markets, and regulations are part of our daily reality — but recent events have reminded us how vulnerable we can be to forces beyond our control. The arrival of a new U.S. administration has brought turbulence and unpredictability that continue to put tariffs and

trade squarely at the forefront of national discussions.

At the OFA, Ontario's largest general farm organization that represents about 88% of the province's farmers, we've taken these challenges head-on.

Working with our provincial and federal partners, we've embraced a Team Canada approach to ensure farmers' voices are heard where key decisions are made. That means meetings, media interviews, farm show conversations, committee participation, video updates, and grassroots advocacy — all part of the ongoing work our OFA team carries out every day.

Even in difficult times, adversity can spark collaboration and innovation. This year, we've seen how working together makes our voice stronger. A united letter endorsed by farm organizations across the country sent a clear message to government: agriculture is the backbone of Canada's economy, and farmers need stability to keep producing the food, fuel, flowers, and fibre our country relies on.

We also supported the Let's Grow Canada initiative at the federal level, a collective effort to strengthen our food system

and ensure Canadian agriculture remains competitive in a volatile world. Real progress can take time, but many things are possible when we stand together with purpose and persistence.

Trade isn't the only file where OFA has been active. We've continued to advocate for more effective business risk management tools, because stability and predictability are critical when markets are volatile and costs keep rising.

We've pressed for improvements to interprovincial trade, to remove barriers that restrict growth opportunities here at home. And we've been vocal about the urgent need for more local processing capacity — investments that would create jobs, strengthen rural economies, and reduce dependence on fragile supply chains.

None of this work happens in isolation. It depends on strong partnerships with agricultural commodity organizations, industry leaders, and all levels of government. Most importantly, it depends on our local federations of agriculture and their dedicated volunteers who keep OFA grounded in the day-to-day realities of

farms and rural life across Ontario.

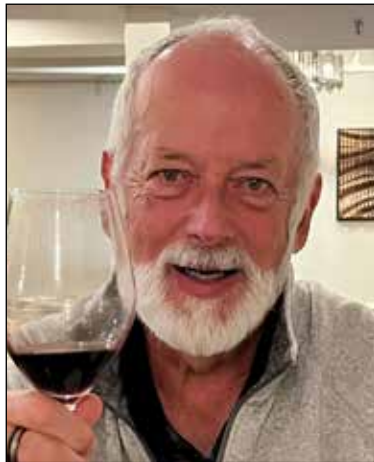
What I'm most proud of this year is how Ontario's farm community has demonstrated resilience, creativity, and unity in the face of uncertainty. Farmers aren't just problem-identifiers — we're problem-solvers. We bring practical ideas and real-world solutions to the table, and we work tirelessly to keep agriculture thriving for generations to come.

Every season brings new challenges, but also new opportunities to innovate, to grow stronger, and to help shape the future of our sector. OFA will continue to be the voice of Ontario farmers and working for solutions that strengthen Ontario agriculture and our rural communities.

As we head into our annual general meeting next week, I want to thank our members for their trust, input, and support; the policy and decision makers and business leaders who take the time to meet with us; and the many, many Ontarians who support local food and farming every day in a multitude of ways.

Ontario agriculture appreciates your support.

The shared vision of two couples creates a dining dream



PAUL KNOWLES

Echo Contributor

"I love it when a plan comes together."

I'm guessing that none of the four young partners in the astonishing new Niagara-on-the-lake restaurant, Revé, is old enough to remember that quote. But it applies.

Because Revé is indeed the result of a plan that has come together, beautifully. Or, to quote from their website, "Four individuals with one collective dream: to curate a journey like no other."

That "journey" involves unique and amazing food, and all of the stories behind the culinary creations. And the four individuals are two young couples: Anna Katherine and Kevin Gillingham, and Nicole Pisarenko and Adriano Cappuzzello.

In many ways, this is a love story. Love for food. Love for the land. Love for culture. And

love for each other.

Adriano is Chef. He's a native of Sicily, where his culinary story began. That's also where Adriano and Nicole's story began – she was on a study trip from Geroge Brown College when she met Adriano.

Anna and Kevin come to the restaurant business as event planners. But they shared the vision of running a superb restaurant with their friends.

And so, less than three months ago, Revé opened.

The moment you walk in the door, you begin to experience the story. Suspended from the ceiling is a unique bit of living décor – a large, moss-covered panel. Anna explains that their goal was to create an atmosphere to reflect the philosophy of the restaurant – food that is "farm to table," locally sourced from the Niagara Peninsula and southwestern Ontario.

And, oh, what food! Guests can order from a menu, but the hosts rather prefer that they don't. Because the true experience at Revé is to dine at the Chef's Counter, seated near the open fire, anticipating the next astonishing taste to come your way, each a step in a 10-course "blind journey".

So, we did. A visit and a story from Chef Adriano accompany each course. He explains the dish, and tells the story behind it. Many of the "tastes" involve a wonderful combination of Sicilian and Canadian cuisines. Like our third course, an exquisite beef tartare, prepared

by Chef Adriano as a memory of Sicilian tuna tartare. But the grass-fed beef comes from Heatherbrae Farms in Wellesley!

Chef Adriano, who has worked in Michelin Star kitchens throughout Europe and Canada, consistently finds a way to combine the magic of uber-high-end recipes with food prepared by his Sicilian mother and grandmother. Such as delicious venison, dubbed "Mama's Pizzaiola", made with cherry tomato, oregano, black garlic zabalone, and undoubtedly several more secret ingredients.

The menu celebrates international flavours, from Sable Fish that reflects Korean barbecue, to Beef Bavette, a taste of France. Adapted and improved, of course, by Chef Adriano and his talented team.

I won't elaborate on all ten courses – because they will undoubtedly be changed by the time you dine at Revé. That's part of the charm – you don't know what you will be eating, but you know it will be amazing, an experience that stretches for hours.

Each course – a small serving, beautifully presented – is served on dinnerware handmade specifically for Revé by a glass artist in Sicily. And by the way, you can have a flight of wines paired with your food – in our case, several superb wines from Ontario or Sicily.

I mentioned that each course includes a story. In truth, Chef

Adriano's personal story is captivating. Because his father knew the owner, Adriano was able to get a summer job in a Michelin-star restaurant in Sicily when he was only 14 years old. He immediately announced to his family that this was to be his calling, and that he didn't want to go to school any more. His parents overruled that idea, but Adriano continued to spend all of his out-of-school hours in high-end restaurants, learning the culinary arts.

At age 17, he moved to Madrid, working in a small restaurant where he was the chef. He told me that he spent his off-hours visiting other restaurants, for the first time encountering cuisines like Vietnamese and Mexican.

Adriano then moved to Malta, "where I got to work with Chef Andrew Pace. He's a visionary. He opened my eyes."

Eventually, after working in top-of-the-line restaurants in Italy and Berlin, he came home to Sicily. Where he met Nicole, who in turn brought him home to Canada. He continued to work as a chef, including at Langdon Hall, but now, his personal vision – shared by Nicole, Anna and Kevin – has become a reality in Niagara-on-the-lake.

The 10-course Chef's Counter tasting menu costs \$225; wine, either individual or a matching flight, is extra. If you normally eat at a fast-food joint, that will seem like a lot. But if you are a foodie, or more



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The simple exterior of the restaurant, in a Mary Street strip mall, belies the culinary masterpiece inside.

simply a lover of good food, you'll be hitting the website to make a reservation.

We sat next to a couple who were making their third trip to Revé in only a couple of months. They praised "the hospitality, the food, everything!"

They were right: Revé is just that good.

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



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The fire of the candles and the moss on the ceiling feature invoke Revé's connection to the land and nature.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The visionary owners of the new restaurant; from left, Chef Adriano Cappuzzello, Nicole Pisarenko, Anna Katherine and Kevin Gillingham.

Riddles

What has a head and a tail but no body?
Coin

What can you catch but not throw?
Cold

What goes around the world but always stays in one place?
Stamp

What has an eye but cannot see?
Needle

What has many teeth but cannot bite?
Comb

What comes down but never goes up?
Rain

What can travel faster than anything else, but is never seen moving?
Thought

What has a bed but never sleeps and a mouth but never eats?
River

What has keys that can't open locks and pedals that don't brake or accelerate?
Piano

What has a thumb and four fingers but is not your hand?
Glove

What belongs to you, but other people use it more than you do?
Your name

Sudoku

by PeterS 2025

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

Solutions on page 31

Featured Pet



MOOSE

Our Moose is a very, very good boy. He is a border collie mix who lives with horses, goats, chickens, 3 kitties and has lots of doggie friends also. Loved by many.

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

Word Search

HOLIDAY GIVING

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

- GENEROSITY
- KINDNESS
- SURPRISE
- GRATITUDE
- WRAPPING
- GIVING
- FAMILY
- FRIENDS
- JOYFUL
- CHARITY
- STOCKING
- HOLIDAY
- MEMORIES
- TOGETHER
- WARMTH

COMING EVENTS

INGERSOLL CHORAL SOCIETY PRESENTS "CHRISTMAS BELLS"

December 13: 2 and 7 p.m.

Ingersoll CRC,

429 King St. W, Ingersoll

Christmas music for the whole family, with special guest - Thamesford Handbell Choir. Bake Sales. Tickets \$25, kids 12 and under \$15. Patina's, Ingersoll, Long & McQuade, Woodstock, online <https://ticketscene.ca/o/Ingersollchoralsociety>.

dlandon@rogers.com.

EXPERIENCE FANSHAWE AT OPEN HOUSE

All locations are open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, November 29

Meet faculty and current students from all areas of Fanshawe Drop-in and ask about your program interests, career options and becoming a Fanshawe student. Hear from college experts on student life, admissions, financial aid, and more! Explore our campuses at London, Woodstock, Simcoe, St. Thomas, Clinton and Tiverton

LET'S FALL INTO COUNTRY MUSIC WITH THE INGERSOLL COUNTRY MUSIC JAMBOREE

December 5: 1 to 4 p.m.

Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St., Ingersoll

Join us. Walk ins welcome. Qualifications, love 50-70's country music, perform, listen, dance, and enjoy.

FAMILY FUN DAY @ EMMANUEL REFORMED CHURCH

170 Clarke St. Woodstock, ON

November 22: 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Penny Sale - Silent Auction - Bake Sale

Games for all Ages
Delicious Soup - Chili - Hot Dogs - Buns
Yummy Desserts - Drinks
FREE ADMISSION - EVERYONE WELCOME

OXFORD GOES TO WAR

Wednesday, November 26: 6:30 p.m.

Chartwell Gardens, 423 Devonshire Ave. (Main Entrance)

Special Presentation by Scott Gillies, Chair OxHS.

Free event, Donations welcome!

ANNUAL COMMUNITY CAROL CONCERT

Sunday November 30: 7:00 p.m.

Knox Presbyterian Church Woodstock, Corner of Riddell and Hunter

Free will offering supporting Operating Sharing - The Christmas Place

WOODSTOCK COIN CLUB PRESENTS

A CONTEST OF MEDAL DESIGN CELEBRATING OUR CITY'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY

THEME: WHAT DOES WOODSTOCK MEAN TO ME?

WHO CAN ENTER? ANYONE! And as often as you like.

TWO CATEGORIES: ADULT (18+) AND YOUTH

One winner from each category will receive a set of medals with their design and initials on the medal itself, plus a numismatic prize. DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING YOUR DESIGN: **DECEMBER 1, 2025**

Designs to be submitted to:
wcc2026contest@gmail.com

Woodstock Choralaires, with guest artist Mark Weatherly, presents MERRY CHRISTMAS, MERRY CHRISTMAS

Saturday, December 6: 3:00 p.m.

Knox Church in Woodstock

Tickets are \$30 (12 and under free), available at Wilson & Markle Jewelers or online at ticketscene.ca

ST. PAUL'S CHRISTMAS MARKET

December 6: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

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

Join us for a festive market to include a Penny Sale (Draw at 12:30 pm), Treasure Chest, Local Craft Vendors, Christmas candy, cookies, frozen fruit pies, turkey pies, frozen soups, casseroles & cabbage rolls. It will be a wonderful day to pick up your favourite treats and gifts and share the festive spirit. We hope you can join us!

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

December 6: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

The Church of The Epiphany, Dundas St. Woodstock

There will be lots for everyone. Homemade Cookies, Candy, Preserves. Baking table with lots of homemade baking and our famous Christmas Pudding and shortbread. Our deli table will have, Shepherds Pie, Turkey Pies, etc. There will also be an Attic Treasures room full of gently used Christmas decorations. Check out the several vendors that will be here to help you with your Christmas Shopping.

MONTHLY VON BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC

Last Tuesday of every Month:

10 a.m. to Noon

Ingersoll Pharmasave

19 King St. E., Ingersoll

TILLSONBURG DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB

Interested in Bridge? Join us every Friday at the Tillsonburg Duplicate Bridge Club at 1 p.m. at The Senior Centre. Don't have a partner? Come anyway and we will match you up with someone. For more information, visit their Facebook page: TburgBridge.

THE OPTIMIST CLUB OF OXFORD COUNTY

The Optimists bring out the best in Youth, Community, and Themselves. If anyone is interested in coming out to meet us and learn more about us please email brenda7621@outlook.com

REPAIR CAFÉ - TOSS IT? NO WAY!
1st Saturday of each month: 9 a.m. to Noon

St. John's Church 685860 Oxford Highway 2, Eastwood, ON N4S 7V9

St. John's, Eastwood, now affiliated with Repair Café International (look for us at repaircafe.org). Meets the first Saturday of every month 9am to noon at St. John's Church 685860 Oxford Highway 2, Eastwood, ON N4S 7V9. Repairs made to clothing, linens, household items, toys, musical instruments etc. Save money, learn how to make your own repairs. Volunteers welcome. Payment by donation.

CALLING ALL LOCAL VENDORS!
511 Finkle St., Woodstock, ON

Saturday, December 6: 1 - 4 p.m.

Cedarview's Annual Christmas Bazaar is back, and we're on the lookout for talented vendors to join us! We're seeking: Artisan goods, Crafts, Holiday décor, Homemade goodies, Unique gifts & all things Christmas! Apply by November 1st to secure your spot! To join, send your info + business details to: lisa.eccleston@bwliving.com, (226) 458-

**GRANT
HAVEN
MEDIA**

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

CONVENIENT WAYS TO ACCESS YOUR NEWSPAPER!

Stay up-to-date with the latest news and local stories. View the current edition online 24/7 at www.granthaven.com/woodstock-ingersoll-echo

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For those of you who prefer to have a printed copy of the paper we will continue to drop off paper at many local businesses and community spaces.

**SCAN TO READ
ONLINE PAPER**



**SCAN FOR PICK
UP LOCATIONS**



www.granthaven.com

COMING EVENTS

3294. Don't miss this chance to be part of a festive community event full of holiday cheer!

GRIEF SUPPORT FOR MAID RELATED LOSS

This monthly in-person grief support group for loss related to Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) offers a compassionate, safe space to explore this unique loss. The group will meet the **4th Wednesday of the month from 1 – 2:30 p.m.** at the Thamesford Library, 165 Dundas St., Thamesford. The group is free of charge and pre-registration is requested. The next meeting is **Wednesday, November 26th**. To register or inquire about an evening group, contact 519-866-3016 or email faye@compassionategriefsupport.ca.

PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

Third Wednesday of each month:

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

21 Wellington St., Woodstock
(Virtual options available)

PCMH is a peer support program providing support to parents and caregivers across Ontario with lived experience raising children and youth with mental health challenges. For more information, please visit family.cmho.org or oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca. We are also on Facebook: Parents for Children's Mental Health ~ Oxford County

VON OXFORD GRIEF CARE:

FREE MONTHLY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Register at: oxford.griefsupport@von.ca or 519-539-1231 Ext 6299 or 6296

TILLSONBURG

WHEN: 2nd Tuesday of every month

WHERE: VON Oxford Office 24 Brock St. W., Tillsonburg

TIME: 6:30PM-8:00PM

INGERSOLL

WHEN: 4th Tuesday of every month

WHERE: Ingersoll Public Library 130 Oxford St., Ingersoll

TIME: 10:30AM – 12:00Noon

WOODSTOCK

WHEN: 3rd Saturday of every month

WHERE: Sakura House Hospice 715180 Oxford Rd.4, Woodstock

TIME: 10:30AM-12:00 Noon

THE LIONS CLUB OF WOODSTOCK

The Lions Club of Woodstock has been serving the community and Oxford County with kindness and generosity since 1931. The Lions always place the needs of neighbours and communities first. Through the dedication and hard work of our volunteer members, we are serving those in need together. If you are interested in becoming a member or simply wish to learn more by attending one of our monthly meetings, please email Steve Iorio at steveiorio4@gmail.com for more information.

COLOURING THROUGH GRIEF

Caring Hearts Support Network:

St. David's United Church,

190 Springbank Ave., Woodstock ON

Third Wednesday monthly. One time fee of \$15. Registration is required.

Call 519-536-3370. Check out website

www.caringheartssupportnetwork.com

OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Meetings: 2nd Tuesday (2 to 4 p.m.) and 4th Tuesday (7 to 9 p.m.)

September to May

Church of the Epiphany, 560 Dundas Street, Woodstock Ontario N4S 1C7

If you have never belonged to a stamp club, now's the time.

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Contact: Don Eaton dhfe@silomail.com

Website: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>

OXFORD COUNTY BRANCH OF ONTARIO ANCESTORS

Are you looking to start a summer pastime? Are you interested in your family history? Oxford Branch has an extensive collection of family history and genealogical resources that can help you. **Come visit our Resource Centre at 82 Light Street, Courthouse Square, Woodstock. We are open Tuesdays to Thursdays 10:00 am to 4:00 pm** where volunteers are ready to help you get started or help you research for missing information. You can also connect with us on the web at <https://oxford.ogs.on.ca>. We are dedicated to supporting and promoting genealogical research in Oxford County. Hope to see you through the summer!

BEACHVILLE LEGION EVENTS:

434852 ZorraLine, Beachville

EUCHRE

Thursday nights 7 p.m.

DARTS

Friday nights 8 p.m.

BLUEGRASS AND OLD TIME COUNTRY JAM

Saturdays 1-4 p.m.

GENTLE CHAIR YOGA

Wednesdays 7-8 pm

KARAOKE WITH KEN PYLE

November 22: 7-11 p.m.

CEDARVIEW RETIREMENT HOME EVENTS:

511 Finkle St, Woodstock

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Saturday December 6: 1-4 p.m.

Accepting non perishable food items for the food bank. FREE event

DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK BIA IMPORTANT DATES:

DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK SHOPPING NIGHTS

November 27, December 18: 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Our monthly shopping event, Woodstock Shopping Night, typically occurs every 4th Thursday of the month. Participating stores stay open late until 8 pm to facilitate late-night shopping. Enjoy a great night out in downtown Woodstock with extended store hours & exciting specials.

CHRISTMAS IN THE SQUARE

December 12/13 & December 19/20

Get ready for a festive family adventure in Downtown Woodstock! Join us for free festive fun in Museum Square;

expect smiles, laughter, and a jolly good time. Bring the kids and snap a free photo with Santa at his house. Take the opportunity to do some last minute shopping for your loved ones at the wonderful downtown businesses.

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 55

EVENTS:

642 Dundas St, Woodstock, ON

EVENING ENTAINMENT

November 22 - 2 For the Road

November 29 - Randy Thomas

AFTERNOON MATINEE

November 29 - Two of a Kind

FISH N CHIPS

November 23: 5-6 p.m.

Contact the Office or canteen for more info. 519-537-3112 or 519-539-3401

SANTA BREAKFAST

November 30: 9-11 a.m.

SILENT AUCTION

Starts November 27

Ends November 29

SHUFFLEBOARD

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CADETS

Every Monday

DARTS

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NO GENERAL MEETING THIS MONTH

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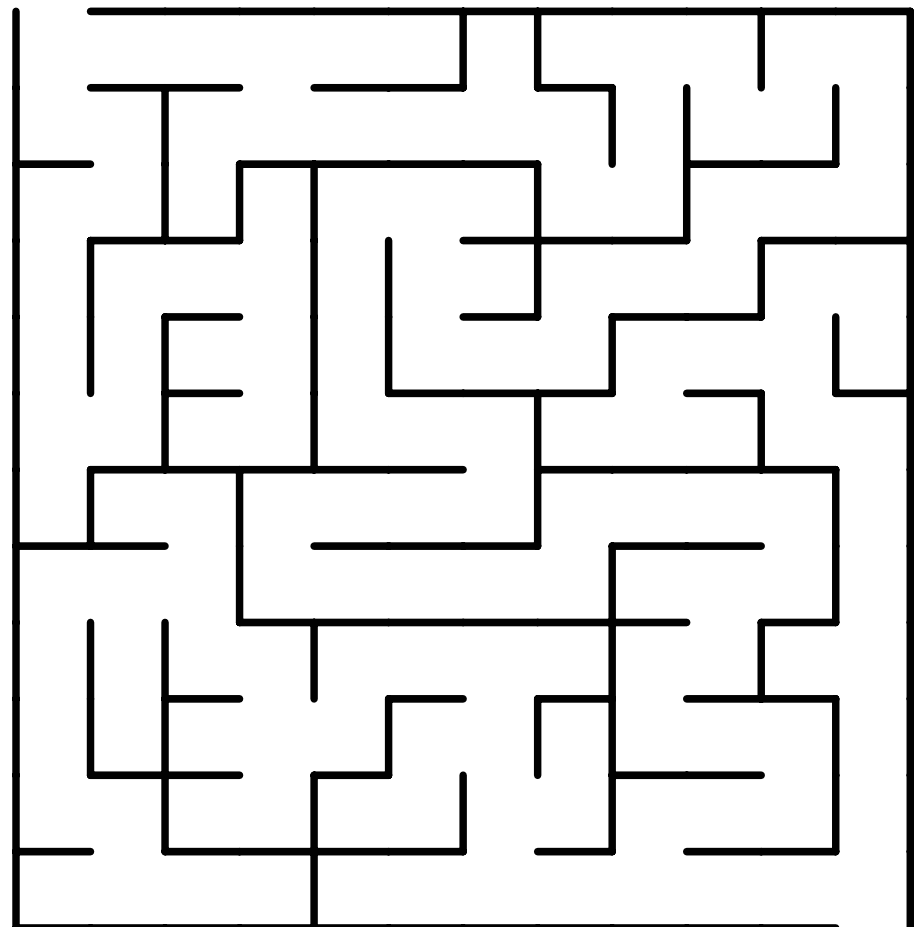
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Saturday November 22, 11:00am to be held at
554447 Mono-Amaranth TLine, Mono, ON

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

Cattle:

(40) Heifers: (10) Char, (20) Black, (10) Simm & Blk - 1st time calvers, bred Angus, vaccinated, double moved

(26) Heifers: (7) CharX, (8) Black, (11) Red - bred Simm/Red Angus X, vaccinated, all double moved

(15) Heifers - Black, bred to Black Angus bull, vaccinated

(10) Charolais cows - all bred Charolais - vaccinated

(11) Cows: (4) Black cows & calves, (4) bred cows, (3) black heifers - bred Angus/Simm X, vaccinated

(10) Charolais Cows & Calves - (4) first calf heifers with calf at side, vaccinated

(2) Charolais Cows

All Cows will be preg checked prior to sale.

Lunch Booth Washroom Available

Terms & Conditions: Cash or cheque with proper I.D. on day of sale. Owner & Auctioneer will not be responsible for any accidents or loss on day of sale. All announcements on day of sale will take precedence over printed ads.

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www.theauctionadvertiser.com/KMcArthur - Email: mcarthurbessey@gmail.com



Theatre Woodstock's Little Women heartwarming take on family and growing up

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

A literary classic will arrive on the Theatre Woodstock stage just in time for the holidays.

Kate Hamil's adaptation of *Little Women*, a Classic novel originally written by Louisa May Allcott, will run from Nov. 28 to Dec. 7. The play explores the life of the March sisters Jo, Amy, Meg, and Beth as they grow up from girls to women during the Civil War and experience sisterhood, tragedy, and what it means to be a woman.

"You're going to laugh, you're going to cry," said director Lenore Butcher. "I'm not going to sugar-coat this, you are going to cry but at the end of the day, you're going to walk out feeling like you've been with this family and you've lived with this family - I think this covers three to four years of their lives - you're going to feel like you've lived those years with them and you're going to have a window into something pretty special."

Rehearsals are going well so far, with Butcher praising the cast's talent and care for their colleagues. She said the performers portraying the March sisters, Alyssa Dutton (Meg), Katie Raymond (Amy), Lauren Tuck-

er (Jo), and Zayne Tucker (Beth), act like sisters.

"Early on in the rehearsal process, one of them said to me, 'I actually feel like you've given me three more sisters,' so the four of them are so kind to each other and so careful with each other and just really supportive of each other," Butcher said. "The actress who plays their Marmee (Karen Vance), they got a whole maternal flow going, it's really wonderful."

When she was nine years old, Butcher received a copy of *Little Women* from her favourite aunt and always loved the story. She also read the other books in the series, *Good Women* and *Little Men*.

"When I read it, I was completely enamoured of the March sisters. I read every book that Louisa May Allcott wrote about them," she explained.

Butcher thought Jo March was the most relatable character when she first read it, but now finds she can resonate with the other sisters too.

"I thought I was Jo. I think every girl thinks she's Jo. As I've gone through the process, I've started to realize that we're actually a little bit of everything. We're all a little bit



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

(Left to right) Katie Raymond, Lauren Tucker, Karen Vance (center), Zayne Tucker, and Alyssa Dutton will portray the March family during Theatre Woodstock's production of *Little Women*.

of Meg, we're all a little bit of Jo, we're a little bit of Beth, and yes, we're even all a little bit of Amy at times. It's always resonated deeply, such a beloved story."

The story of the March sisters has several adaptations in theatre, literature, and film combined, touching on themes still relevant today, like PTSD, post-partum depression, and what it means to be a woman. Butcher went with Hamil's version because of how she tackles womanhood.

"She's really highlighted Jo's struggles

about what it means to be a woman, and I think every woman goes through that identity at some point in their life - trying to figure out how they're going to work in society when society already has rules you have to live under and how do we live by those rules or live without those rules," she said.

Tickets are \$28 each, or \$20 on Thrifty Thursdays. They can be purchased at the box office at 22 Reeve St., by calling 519-537-2582, or online at www.theatrewoodstock.com.

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Annual arts and craft show attracts big crowd

The community came out in full force on Saturday, Nov. 15, as the 43rd Woodstock Arts and Craft Show transformed the Oxford Auditorium into a bustling marketplace of creativity. Running from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., the event welcomed attendees of all ages who took advantage of the chance to explore the work of over 100 talented artisans. Makers from across Southwestern Ontario presented an extensive range of handcrafted products—everything from home décor and candles to

soaps, wreaths, wood creations, and specialty pet items. Many visitors left with gifts in hand, having found that special something they had been searching for. With \$5.00 admission and free entry for children 12 and under, families and shoppers alike enjoyed a vibrant atmosphere that celebrated artistry, craftsmanship, and community spirit. Organizers were pleased to see the long-running event continue to thrive and inspire.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Shoppers admired the one-of-a-kind holiday décor that Michael from Garden Concepts brought to the show



Custom Crochet and More's Alexandra and Colette delighted shoppers with their variety of handcrafted pieces



Crowds moved through the busy auditorium as they looked for special one-of-a-kind items

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Mrs. Claus' Closet
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www.thistle-theatre.com

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A portion of proceeds will be **donated to Woodstock Hospital Foundation & Alexandra Hospital Foundation**, helping provide care and comfort to local families.

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3. Notre Dame
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5. Nov 10th, 1975
6. Mariah Carey
7. Brian Griffin
8. A drey
9. Italy
20. James Gandolfini

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

RONALD JOYCE

AUGUST 9, 1939 - NOVEMBER 7, 2025



It is with broken hearts and profound sadness that we announce the passing of Ronald Robert Joyce 'Ron' at LHSC - Victoria Hospital on Friday November 7, 2025, in his 87th year.

Ron was born and raised in Toronto (Willowdale) and after retirement resided in Huntsville and Woodstock. He was a bookbinder for 33 years at Photoengravers and Electrotypes in

Rexdale, Ontario. Golf was his passion after retirement. He was a Golf Marshall at the Deerpark Resort for several years while living in Huntsville. After moving to Woodstock, he was a member of the Southgate Community Centre Seniors' Golf Club for several years. In his younger years, he enjoyed downhill skiing, boating, camping and cottaging. One of the highlights of his life's journey was when he went "swimming with the sharks" in the Caribbean. He was an accomplished woodworker and carpenter. Ronnie was very social and enjoyed a good gathering of friends and family with a ready smile and infectious laugh. He was extremely kind and always keen to lend a helping hand. Ron was generous with his knowledge and eager to teach others valuable lifelong skills in many areas including golf, woodworking, auto and home maintenance and boating. Ron also sang with the Muskoka Music Men for several years while he lived in Huntsville.

Ron is survived by Valerie (nee Springall), his wife of 47 years, and two daughters - Terry Lynn (John) and Catherine (Brian). He adored and was so proud of his five granddaughters - Shannon, Christine, Lauren, Erin and Audrey. He will be missed by a large extended family. Predeceased by his father Norman and his mother Elsie (nee Pearce) and his brothers Arthur and Douglas.

Cremation has taken place. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, if desired, donations may be made to the Canadian Cancer Society - Wheels of Hope or to a charity of your choice would be appreciated. The family wishes to acknowledge the incredible dedication of Dr. Singh of the Spine Surgery team at London's Victoria Hospital, her very dedicated team members, and the very kind and compassionate nursing staff at Victoria Hospital who provided palliative and comfort care in the last few days of Ron's life.

Wareing Cremation Services, 225 Norwich Ave., Woodstock, Ontario has been entrusted with Final Arrangements. Your messages of remembrance and condolence may be shared at www.wareingcremation.ca

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