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User groups speak out at sports field meeting

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

User groups shared their feelings at the last public meeting about a proposal to create four new baseball diamonds in Tillsonburg, while selling the land for the present Annandale diamonds for development.

The meeting, held on Sept. 9, was the third of three meetings about the proposal to create four new diamonds on town-owned property on Mall Road and sell the land the Annandale diamonds are on for residential development to pay for the new diamonds. All three meetings drew enough people to fill the room and sparked lively debate about the proposal. The message that came through loud and clear at the last two meetings is that residents in the Annandale area were not in favour of the part of the proposal to turn the current diamonds into residential space.

With the input sessions complete, a report will be prepared for council about the input garnered. Council has not made a decision, nor have they voted on the development in any way at this point.

Tillsonburg Development Director Cephas Panschow, who has been leading the meetings, started by answering a question about whether rearranging the schedule at the existing diamonds is an easier solution, since they're unused at times.

"It's based on peak demand," he said. "Now we have people unable to play at the times they want."

Another pointed out that youth would be unable to ride their bikes to the diamonds, but Panschow said it would be closer for those who live in the subdivisions off Simcoe Street.

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WINGS AND WHEELS A SUCCESS

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Despite soggy ground that required some last-minute scrambling for organizers, Wings and Wheels was another success with huge crowds, about 500 classic vehicles and pilots keeping busy with Harvard rides all day. The event was organized by the Canadian Harvard Aircraft Association, and is its largest fundraiser to help offset operating costs for the organization. More photos on page 6.

Nurse practitioner clinic has space for more patients

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

The good news keeps getting better with the upcoming opening of a nurse practitioner-led clinic scheduled for later this year, or early 2027.

The Oxford County Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic was announced at the end of April as part of a plan to connect more than 13,000 people to primary care in Oxford County. It will be located in the two empty units in the North Gate Plaza.

Changes have already started in preparation for the opening. First, the name was changed to the Oxford County Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic at the end of July. It was formerly called the Ingersoll Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic, as it operated only in Ingersoll until a satellite Tillsonburg Unattached Care Clinic opened last year. The unattached clinic was originally funded by the Town of Tillsonburg, with support from Oxford OHT members, including the Ingersoll Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic, Roulston's Pharmacy – Tillsonburg, Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital, and the Thames Valley Family Health Team.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



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SCAN



Annandale land donors raise concerns about plan

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Chris Parker, spoke as a member of council, the president men's slo-pitch, and a member of the town's recreation and sports committee.

He said there is a possibility of keeping two diamonds at Annandale as there is no playground in that subdivision.

"We need to ensure we have limited impact on the residents there," he said.

When Parker started as president of men's slo-pitch in 2013, there were 18 teams. Now there are 30. Teams used to play 24 regular-season games and now have 18 or 19.

"These teams are paying more for less value," he said.

The teams have adapted by playing at the Kiwanis diamonds with lights as late as 11 p.m., and have Sunday afternoon games – although Sundays are a problem for some players. With the Annandale diamonds, games must be canceled if there is 5 mm of rain earlier that day, which creates scheduling issues. Parker also said the slo-pitch league donated the fencing at the Annandale diamonds.

A resident pointed out that numerous council members have said the new diamonds and the sale of the Annandale property should be separate, and requested that this be incorporated into the survey. Panschow answered that the survey needs to be consistent, but he suspects council will be splitting it into two separate projects.

"This will go back to council," he said. "Council will provide direction if this gets split."

Residents also raised concerns about selling land that the developer of the Annandale subdivision donated for parkland.

"If you take something away from a community that was donated, it doesn't look good," said resident Gerry Dearing.

Mike Bossy, a director with Annandale Heights, which developed the adjacent subdivision and donated the land, explained that the company donated 3.5 more acres of land than was required for the mandated parkland donation. According to the agreement, if the land was sold, the 3.5 acres needed to be conveyed back to the company.

"If they take this park, they can take all the parks," Bossy said.

"This council has repeatedly said they want green space," Panschow said.

Bossy generated applause from the audience when he suggested, "Let's get a bylaw that says once land is dedicated as parkland, it stays parkland."

Panschow explained that the proposal to sell the Annandale land made construction of the new park revenue neutral. Although the baseball diamonds could go ahead without the land sale, he said the town would have to look to other funding sources, including provincial and federal grants.

Stephen Molnar questioned if the land, which is in Norfolk, shouldn't be used for commercial purposes instead of recreation. He also raised the challenge of youth biking to the new diamonds.

"I can't fathom the community getting to this facility safely," he said.

Panschow closed the meeting, noting that turnout at the three meetings is the largest he has seen in his 20 years with the town, and he assured the audience this will show council how important this matter is.

Clinic opening expected later this year, or early 2027

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The second big change took effect on Sept. 8 and saw the Tillsonburg Unattached Care Clinic transition to the Oxford County Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic (ONPLC).

"All patients previously seen at the TUCC who wanted to be attached to the OCNPLC are now permanently attached to the clinic," said executive director Stephanie Nevins. "We will continue to work out of the co-located space within Roulston's Pharmacy until construction is completed at our new clinic, which will be located next door to Roulston's."

In simple terms, this means anyone who was a patient in the unattached clinic will automatically become a rostered patient at the new ONPLC. It also means people without a primary care coordinator can no longer make appointments at the clinic.

Nevins explained, "With the recent provincial investment into Primary Care teams in Oxford, there is now capacity for patients to become attached to a primary care provider."

So instead of coming to the clinic as an unattached patient, residents can fill out the online registration at www.onplc.ca and become patients there. Between the Ingersoll and Tillsonburg sites, the clinic will have room for more than 6,300 patients who previously didn't have a primary health care provider.

Nevins said those who live closer to Ingersoll can register at that site, or register with the Thames Valley Family Health Team, which also has capacity. Residents can also continue to wait on the Health Care Connect wait list, or remain without a health care provider.

"Many options continue to exist throughout Oxford to support this choice, such as walk-in clinics, and regional options like Virtual Care Ontario" Nevins said.

The Tillsonburg site will host five nurse practitioners when fully opened. Nevins said all have been hired and are already seeing patients at either the Tillsonburg or Ingersoll sites. Construction of the new expanded clinic is on schedule.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

The Oxford Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic is expected to open later this year, or early next year. Staff have been hired, the building permit has been issued and construction has started.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

The public made it clear that they didn't want the Annandale baseball diamonds turned into residential, as was proposed in a plan to build new diamonds and sell the land where the existing diamonds sit to fund the development.

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tillsonburgpost.com

EDITORIAL

Letter to the Editor

Dear mayor, councillors, and town traffic department:

I am writing to formally raise an urgent traffic-safety concern regarding vehicles being permitted to park on the west side of Quarter Town Line between South Ridge Road and Trillium Drive.

This is no longer simply an issue of inconvenience or parking availability. The parked vehicles are creating a serious visibility hazard for motorists, pedestrians, and residents attempting to enter or cross Quarter Town Line.

Traffic entering town on Quarter Town Line is often travelling at a speed that does not allow sufficient time to react to vehicles, pedestrians, or other hazards hidden behind the parked cars. Because the parked vehicles obstruct the sightlines, drivers approaching from South Ridge Road and the surrounding subdivision cannot always see oncoming traffic until it is dangerously close.

I have personally come very close to being involved in two accidents because of this situation. After speaking with my neighbours, I have learned that I am not the only resident experiencing these near-miss situations. This should be taken as a serious warning that the current

parking arrangement is creating an unacceptable safety risk.

The area has also changed significantly and continues to develop. There is now a daycare with nearly 100 children, the public school, a coffee shop, and the residents of the South Ridge subdivision all using and crossing this area. These facilities generate significant pedestrian and vehicle activity, including children and families who are particularly vulnerable when visibility is restricted.

There have already been accidents at the intersection of Quarter Town Line and Highway 19. At the same time, traffic volumes in this area are likely to increase substantially with the opening of the new McDonald's next to the Ford dealership and the planned development across the road, which will include retail space on the main floor and apartments above.

Given these circumstances, continuing to allow parking in a location that obstructs visibility is, in my view, a preventable safety problem. I am therefore asking the town to urgently:

1. Conduct a traffic and sightline safety assessment of Quarter Town Line between

South Ridge Road and Trillium Drive.

2. Review whether parking should be prohibited on the west side of this section of Quarter Town Line.
3. Consider installing appropriate No Parking signage and/or other traffic-control measures to restore adequate sightlines.
4. Review traffic speeds and vehicle volumes in this area, particularly given the daycare, school, residential subdivision, existing businesses, and upcoming commercial and residential development.
5. Examine the intersection and surrounding area in light of the accidents that have already occurred near Quarter Town Line and Highway 19.
6. Provide residents with a written response explaining what action the Town intends to take and the expected timeline for addressing this safety concern.

I would strongly urge the town not to wait until a serious collision involving a child, pedestrian, or resident occurs before taking action. The combination of obstructed sightlines, increasing traffic, nearby schools and daycare facilities,

existing accidents, and continued development makes this an issue that deserves immediate attention.

Residents should not have to accept near-misses as a normal part of travelling through their own neighbourhood. A parking arrangement should never be permitted to create a situation where drivers cannot safely see approaching traffic.

I am asking that this matter be referred to the appropriate town staff and treated as an urgent traffic-safety issue. I would also appreciate confirmation that this concern has been received and information regarding when the location will be inspected.

I would be willing to provide further details regarding the near-miss incidents and discuss the issue with town staff or the appropriate traffic-safety representative.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. I look forward to receiving a response outlining what steps the town will take to address this safety concern.

Sincerely,
William Welsh

Memories of remarkable people as school heads back



WRITER'S CORNER

NORMA COLLIS

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

We have all met special, and wonderful people whose unique personalities leave an impression that lasts a lifetime.

I met such a person during my time teaching in the city of Toronto. She was a fellow teacher, formerly from Australia. Both she and her husband still embraced the “hippy era” and dressed accordingly. She would turn up to teach, wearing some floaty, floor-length garment often completed by a matching feather boa. The kids loved it!

She and her husband were invited to our wedding, and I didn't even ask the reason why, when she demanded to know the colour scheme for our wedding

I knew she wouldn't provide any clues until she was ready for a “big reveal.” The couple arrived at our wedding clad in crushed velvet, tie-dyed outfits, that matched our colour scheme.

One of my ultra conservative aunts was scandalized, while other guests thought it was hilarious and asked them to join the official wedding party for photos.

This same couple helped us to find our first walk-up apartment, which was in the same building as their apartment. We were located above some small stores on the corner of Yonge Street and Manor Road in Toronto. There were just two floors above the stores with four apartments on each floor. She lived one floor above us. A very

elderly lady had lived in our apartment for years, and every room was painted pink. The front door sported five different types of locks on it.

This teacher and I took turns driving to school. Driving with her was a hair-raising “adventure”. She drove a huge and ancient van with a double-horn system that sounded like something a transport truck might own. She was a very aggressive driver and every trip to school with her, was an experience!

The air was blue as my impatient chauffeur laid on those double horns. I'm sure other drivers thought that a city fire truck needed to get through to an emergency, as traffic parted wherever possible to let us by.

One morning, my driver waited outside our apartment door as I drew back each of the five locks.

“Open up Fort Knox,” she called

“Hey, I can see you,” she proclaimed in a very loud voice.

“No, you can't,” I replied. “Oh yes I can, you're wearing a blue outfit.”

Indeed, that is exactly the colour that I was wearing. It was then that we realized that the panels in the ancient front door were so thin, cracks in the wood were starting to separate and she could indeed see right into our hallway. So much for all the so-called security of five locks. Anyone could have punched a fist through one of the panels and then proceeded to unlock those five locks one by one.

The couple often invited us upstairs for dinner, and that was an adventure as well. They used their own self-made and self-designed pottery plates and mugs to serve our dinners. She plated the food in the small kitchen, and then placed a heaping full pottery plate in front of each diner.

“Eat up boys and girls,” she would shout.

We willingly followed orders as she was a very good cook. However, as we ate our way down to the pattern on our handcrafted “plate de jour”, a very rude design would reveal itself. More rude

designs could be found at the bottom of each large pottery mug also set in front of us with a flourish. She took great delight in shocking new guests to her home as the diners innocently devoured their meals. It often took several seconds for the unsuspecting guest to fully grasp what the somewhat abstract design on their now empty plate depicted.

As realization hit, there was often a gasp followed by nervous laughter as the previously innocent diner reacted to their after-dinner surprise.

Riding on the subway with this woman was also an adventure. We would enter a subway car, and she would exclaim in a loud voice, “Oh, Norma, look at all these people wearing their subway faces. This won't do. It won't do at all”

She would make her way down the car, chatting to everyone. “Oh, what are you reading?” she would ask some unsuspecting “bibliophile.” “What are you knitting?” “Are you a university student? What are you studying?” or “You look very tired, are you just getting off work? Was it a difficult shift for you?”

It was amazing to watch her. Soon an entire subway car full of people would be chuckling or at least smiling, if ever so slightly.

She was also an amazing teacher. She worked with special needs children. Her philosophy was that these kids were so brilliant, most of we ordinary folk, could not begin to Imagine how bright and special these kids were.

She booked one of our gymnasiums for first period each morning. Armed with plastic floor hockey sticks, she led her legion of students into the big room. The gym tumbling mats were stored by hanging them from hooks on the wall. She left the mats hanging and told the kids to beat on them as hard as they could. The kids smashed away and got rid of all the anger and frustration they had arrived at the school doors with.

“It is very frustrating to be special in a sometimes ‘unspecial’ world,” she explained to the staff. “I can not effectively teach these children

until they have gotten rid of these frustrations.”

One day she arrived at my classroom door with one of her little students in tow.

“Barbara can smell colours,” she told me. “Perhaps your children would like to see her do that.”

This is known as the “teachable moment” and my little ones obediently gathered around while my friend whipped off the sash from around the waist of yet another floaty garment and proceeded to use it as a blindfold to cover the eyes of her small student.

“Go ahead. Try her out,” she commanded.

I held up a piece of bright red construction paper. “I smell red,” said Barbara. My kids all applauded. The little girl then proceeded to identify, by smell, all the primary colours

She frowned when we held up a piece of black paper.

“I don't like this one,” she said, “I don't like the smell of black.”

Days after her visit, I would find various kindergarten, blindfolded, while a classmate tested their olfactory expertise as they sniffed away at the kindergarten collection of coloured paper.

Another day, I looked out of my classroom window to see my fellow educator and all her kids, lying prone on the grassy school lawn with their ears pressed to the ground.

I quietly opened the window and inquired in a loud whisper “What are you doing?”

“We're listening to the grass growing,” she whispered in reply.

I often still think of this event. It comes to mind as another piece of bad news hits the headlines or, if a more personal disappointment hits closer to home.

“It's time to stop for a while,” I tell myself. “It's time to stop and to listen to the grass grow.”

“It's time to remember the special, in a sometimes “unspecial” world.

Norma Collis is a local author of the Holly Colly series, including "Holly Cottage Goes on Vacation" which will be released this month.

Council candidates speak out on homelessness in town

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

One issue that many Tillsonburg residents talk about, and wish for a solution for, is homelessness, or the people who live on the streets.

There is no question the number of people on the streets has increased in the last few years. People are concerned about finding needles on the streets, and their safety. It's not just a local problem, but a nationwide one.

To look at solutions to this problem, one must first understand that homelessness falls under the social services umbrella, which is a County of Oxford responsibility in Tillsonburg. While Tillsonburg council can look at possible solutions, any costs must be included in the local budget. Any changes in enforcement of the issue would require changes in law at the provincial or federal levels.

Also to keep in mind there are already many programs out there that local residents are unaware of, some of which have been highlighted in past editions of the Post. For instance, there are shelters in the winter where the beds aren't full, and social services staff checking on the homeless.

With this in mind, candidates were asked, "Tillsonburg residents are concerned about homelessness, which as part of social services is primarily a county responsibility. If elected, would you advocate for anything additional to be done locally at the municipal level? If so, how would you fund it?"

Their answers, alphabetically, are below.

Mayor candidates

Deb Gilvesy - Homelessness is complex. We need practical tools, compassion, and partnerships with the county, while recognizing that housing and treatment cannot simply be forced on people. At Police Services Board, I supported a resolution asking the town to consider a downtown nuisance bylaw. This could be implemented within existing bylaw operating costs, providing staff with additional tools. Hired security cannot remove individuals and would still require police intervention. The town receives no provincial funding for social services; additional programs or security would therefore be funded by local taxpayers. If reserves are used, that is not free money and must ultimately be replenished through taxation.

Kelly Spencer - As mayor, I'll prioritize a one-year pilot project for a community safety ranger with a social service background, working alongside existing organizations. Their role would be to keep our downtown welcoming and comfortable for businesses, employees and patrons; connect people experiencing homelessness/mental health/addiction with available resources; reinforce municipal bylaws; and involve police when necessary. This can reduce the demands on first responders, leaving them more opportunity to respond to other needs. I have spoken with mayors in Oxford County and beyond about strategies that have worked. I would fund the pilot from reserves rather than taxation, while pursuing grants and partnerships with the county and community organizations.

Councillor candidates

Lindsey Ambrus Mejaski - I believe Tillsonburg can show compassion for people experiencing homelessness while also expecting our public spaces to be safe, clean and welcoming for everyone. Everyone should feel safe going downtown, visiting a park or using our public spaces without encountering needles, drug paraphernalia or other unsafe items. During door knocking, this has been one of the biggest concerns I have heard. I would advocate for stronger enforcement of existing bylaws and appropriate responses to open drug use, severe impairment or unsafe behaviour. Food banks and shelters provide important immediate support, but they are not long-term solutions. We need mental health, addiction, employment and housing supports to help break the cycle.

Dave Beres - It's heartbreaking some people are living out of a shopping cart. Many local residents are afraid or intimidated to go downtown and are purposely avoiding the area. Local organizations, churches, service clubs and businesses are helping and their involvement is appreciated and encouraged. Tillsonburg taxpayers are already paying their share for the county's involvement on their tax bill. However, I would encourage council to support these local groups until a better solution can be found.

Clayton Curtis - Tillsonburg residents should be concerned about homelessness and the circumstances leaving fellow community members without a place to call home. Homelessness is complex, affecting communities across the country, and those experiencing it deserve dignity, compassion, and respect. I recognize Oxford County's responsibility for health and homelessness services and the important progress made in outreach and support. However, we must be honest that our current approach is not achieving its intended goal. As a town councillor, I will work collaboratively with county officials while firmly advocating for Tillsonburg. I will not allow our community to fall to the bottom of the priority list. We can—and must—do better.

Katherine Englander - While homelessness is primarily a county responsibility, I believe the town has an important role in advocating for our community and working collaboratively with the county and local organizations. I would support exploring practical, evidence-based local initiatives that address the needs of individuals while also protecting community safety and quality of life. Before committing municipal dollars, I would want council to understand what is currently available, where the gaps are, and what approaches are most effective. Any municipal involvement should be carefully considered, with efficiencies and partnerships explored first and clear accountability for taxpayer dollars.

Ron Gasparetto - Homelessness is a serious concern in Tillsonburg. While housing and social services are primarily an Oxford County responsibility, I believe the town can still play a meaningful supporting role. I would advocate for stronger partnerships between the town, county, local organizations and community groups to ensure people experiencing homelessness are connected with appropriate services. The town can also use planning tools and incentives to encourage affordable and attainable housing. I would be cautious about creating new municipal programs that duplicate county services or place additional costs on local taxpayers. Where additional local action is needed, I would first pursue county, provincial, federal and community funding.

John Gilvesy - One of my six core priorities if elected is finding practical alternatives that create dignity for those struggling to manage. As a former Director of Goodwill Industries and Governor for Rotary International, I have witnessed the good works being done by service groups. Let's be creative, learn from successes elsewhere and listen to organizations like Goodwill, Salvation Army, and United Way who are finding solutions (employment and otherwise). Perhaps a partnership with the county, landlords or farmers? For supportive housing consider existing vacant properties. Funding could come from finding efficiencies or percentage allocation from sale of surplus municipal properties.

Steve Molnar - While housing, and in turn "Homelessness", may be a county responsibility, this is an impactful issue that will take the entire community to address. We have historically been proud of our "Made in Tillsonburg" solutions, however there are successes in neighbouring communities (St. Thomas) that we can evaluate and replicate. Some key targets, through partnership should include: education on real impact of homelessness on our community; targeted reduction objectives; shared investment in a range of accommodations; access to financial programs; focus on associated health and social concerns; and continued support from caring social agencies. We can be in a position to provide assistance while securing a safer and caring community.

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Council candidates speak out on homelessness in town

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Felix Nzemeka - Homelessness requires a strong partnership between the town and county. However, the county is responsible for social services and housing support. The town can play an important local role in creating a community where people can move from homelessness toward stability. If elected, I would advocate for the Town to work with the county to identify opportunities for affordable, transitional, and supportive housing, while connecting local organizations, like churches, landlords, and service providers. I would advocate for stronger coordination of housing, mental health, addiction, and emergency support. Funding should first come from provincial and federal programs, grants, partnerships, and existing resources before considering additional municipal spending.

Chris Parker - Homelessness is a complex issue involving multiple layers of government, and social services are funded and delivered by Oxford County. At the municipal level, I would advocate for a year-round shelter to ensure people have access to basic necessities and a safe place to stay. Any enhanced supports outreach, stabilization space, or partnerships with local agencies must be funded through the county's social services budget, with the town's role focused on coordination, zoning, and ensuring the right services can operate here. This approach respects municipal authority while pushing for practical solutions.

Chris Rosehart - Homelessness, although it affects us at the municipal level, we are not in a position to take this on. We should stay the course and be supportive to the organizations that are on the front lines of this situation. The town cannot take this on as our

project - it is too big. Although some town resources are presently used on a regular basis to assist people in this situation, our tax dollars at the county level are the primary source for financial assistance programs.

Kim Sage - I am deeply concerned about homelessness in Tillsonburg—not only because of its impact on our community, but because of the circumstances that have brought people here. Not all homeless people are drug addicts, and not all are thieves. Some are our sons, daughters, fathers and mothers. They too are our community. Too many are being painted with the same brush, and the compassion has left. We need to bring that back while addressing legitimate concerns around safety. While homelessness is primarily an Oxford County and provincial responsibility, locally I would advocate for stronger partnerships, better coordination of resources, practical municipal support, and grants before increasing taxpayer costs.

Dee Tosto - We need the town to be a stronger partner. That means collaborating with Oxford County, outreach workers, service providers, BIA, businesses, and community organizations to understand what is happening on our streets and where we can work together to improve outcomes. I would want to see better communication and coordination between the organizations already doing this work. Sometimes the answer is not another program but making sure the programs and people we already have are working together effectively. Before asking taxpayers for additional money, I would look at existing resources, partnerships, and available grants. Any new municipal spending should have a clear purpose and measurable community benefit.

Labour Day traffic initiative results for Oxford County

It was another busy long weekend for the Oxford detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) this past Labour Day weekend throughout Oxford County. Friday, Sept. 4, to Monday, Sept. 7, Oxford OPP participated in another long weekend traffic initiative, joining other detachments across the province, targeting bad driving behaviours. While still responding to over 200 calls for service, Oxford OPP charged 41 drivers for speeding, 30 occupants for not wearing their seatbelts, two drivers for distract-

ed driving and two drivers for impaired driving. Oxford OPP would like to remind everyone in Oxford County that traffic safety is everyone's responsibility. There are still so many motorists disobeying the rules of the road and increasing the risk of being involved in a collision. We ask that every driver considers giving themselves ample time to get to and from their destinations and when operating a motor vehicle on Oxford County roadways, you do so without distractions or impairment.

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WINGS & WHEELS



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Two planes flying formation provided a thrill for Wings and Wheels attendees after the planes took off together, flew side by side, and then flew over with smoke trails behind.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

A Second World War Bren gun dominated the table from the Tillsonburg Military History Club. Volunteer Randy Wallis was on hand to answer questions.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

The Harvard pilots were busy at Wings and Wheels taking the public up for rides in the vintage aircraft and making the Tillsonburg Airport runway a busy place. There were 39 Harvard flights during the day.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

About 500 cars attended Wings and Wheels, making it one of the larger car shows in the area. Tillsonburg Cruisers assisted the Canadian Harvard Aircraft Association with the car show portion of the show.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Although there was a fee for the public to fly in a Harvard, opportunities to sit in the cockpit were at no charge. Dozens of people capitalized on this, sitting in the back seat to look at the controls and radio headsets.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

The markings of the Royal Canadian Air Force remind the public that that the Harvard was an important part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan during the Second World War. The plan saw pilots from many Commonwealth countries trained in Canada, and the Tillsonburg Airport was built as part of it.



COMMUNITY UPDATE

Notices

Who Can Vote?

You may be eligible to vote in the 2026 Town of Tillsonburg Municipal Election if you are:

- A resident of Tillsonburg
- A property owner
- A tenant
- A spouse of a qualified property owner or tenant

The Municipal Election is your opportunity to help shape decisions that affect our community for years to come.

Learn more at: www.tillsonburg.ca/election.

Fall Water Sysytem Maintenance

Our annual Fall Watermain Flushing program is now underway. Each week, a different area of Town will be flushed as part of this routine maintenance.

September 21 - October 2

All areas East of Participark and South of Concession St.

Visit www.tillsonburg.ca/news for the full flushing schedule and map.

If discolouring persists after 24 hours, contact Customer Service at 519-688-3009.



Leash Up Tillsonburg!

We love seeing pets out and about! Just a reminder that dogs must be on a leash when off your property, including in parks, trails, and sports fields.

Want to let your pup run free? Visit our off-leash dog park for some extra tail-wagging fun!

Thanks for helping keep our community safe and pet-friendly.

Help Keep Tillsonburg Safe This School Year.

With more students and families on the move this fall, now is a great time to refresh your crosswalk safety habits.

Always cross at designated crosswalks, wait for traffic to stop, make eye contact with drivers, walk your bike across the road, and stay alert.

Reminder: e-scooters are not permitted to be ridden on crosswalks or on any Town property such as sidewalks or roads.

To report crosswalk maintenance issues, malfunctioning crossing signals, or any safety concerns, call 519-688-3009 or visit www.tillsonburg.ca



Culture Corner

From Hardship to Hope: The Story of the British Home Children

Discover an important chapter in Canadian history at Annandale National Historic Site. Join Lori Oschefski, President of Home Children Canada, for an insightful presentation exploring the experiences of the British Home Children, the hardships they faced, and the resilience they demonstrated in building new lives. Light refreshments will be served.

Date: Saturday, September 19

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Cost: By donation, with all proceeds supporting Home Children Canada

For more information call Annandale National Historic Site at **519-842-2294**.

Tillsonburg Graveyard Tours: Symbols & Stones

Step back in time and discover the stories etched into Tillsonburg's historic cemetery. Join us on Thursday, **September 24 or Saturday, September 26 at 1:00 p.m.** for a guided tour exploring the fascinating symbols, artwork, and history found on local gravestones.

Learn the meanings behind motifs such as weeping willows, doves, and clasped hands, and uncover what they reveal about the lives, beliefs, and memories of those who came before us. You'll also explore how gravestone designs have changed over the years, reflecting evolving attitudes toward life, loss, and remembrance.

Tillsonburg Cemetery | 193 Simcoe St., Tillsonburg

Cost: By donation



Active Living & Learning Opportunities

Youth Pickleball Tournament!

Join us on Saturday, October 3, 2026, from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. at the Tillsonburg Community Centre for the Youth Pickleball Tournament!

Open to ages 10-18, this doubles (2v2) tournament features round robin play, followed by an elimination bracket, with divisions for ages 10-12, 13-15, and 16-18. This non-competitive event focuses on participation, skill development, and community, with prize draws for all participants.

Balls will be provided, but participants are asked to bring their own paddle. Registration Fee: \$16.70/person.

For more information and to register, visit: www.tillsonburg.ca/guide

Fall fun is even more affordable!

Select September Session recreation programs are now 10% off.

Whether you're looking to stay active, learn something new, or try a new hobby, there's something for everyone.

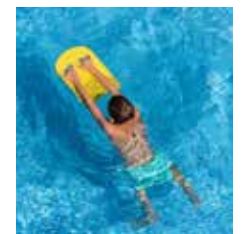
Check out the Fall Recreation Guide for a full list of eligible programs and register today before spots fill up!

View the guide: www.tillsonburg.ca/recreation

Swimming Lessons Start September 14!

Registration is open for swimming lessons beginning the week of September 14. Build confidence, develop water safety skills, and have fun in the pool. Miss this session? Another round of lessons starts in November.

Sponsor a Swim (or Skate)! Promote your business while supporting local recreation programs. Contact us to learn more about sponsorship opportunities.



A child's family campaigns to raise awareness and give her the hope she deserves

ROBIN KRAFFT

Post Correspondent

Nurse Practitioner Jessica Carrasco-Harding has been serving the Tillsonburg community over the past year, but she's reaching out now on behalf of her niece, Rylee.

"My young niece has been diagnosed with an ultra-rare genetic disorder," Carrasco-Harding said. "A potentially life-changing gene therapy exists, but the treatment comes with an estimated cost of \$2 million, an unimaginable burden for any family."

Rylee was diagnosed with FBX011-related neurodevelopmental disorder, a condition for which there is currently no treatment or cure. The rare condition was first recognized as a diagnosis of its own in 2018.

"There is no genetic link," Carrasco-Harding said. "It's not passed down and there is no genetic marker that could show up during pregnancy. It happens spontaneously at conception during the arrangement of the DNA, and it's the first in our family."

There's a wide variation in how the disorder presents and the prognosis is unknown. Kris Dowling and Grant Harding, Rylee's parents, belong to a worldwide parent support group and have an extensive medical team.

"My niece and her family are receiving care through the Southwestern Ontario Rare Disease Program at Children's Hospital, London Health Sciences Centre," Carrasco-Harding said. "While they have an exceptional medical team supporting them, our family is now focused on raising awareness and fundraising to help give her access to this groundbreaking treatment."

"Personalized gene therapy would treat the issue rather than the symptoms," Dowling said. "It would involve repairing or editing the gene that isn't functioning properly. The earlier the better, for a higher quality of life."

Rylee has been a happy baby, despite all of the tests and medical interventions that have been necessary from day one, but it's been a frightening and stressful experience for the family.

"She needs oxygen when she's sleeping because she could

stop breathing," Dowling said. "She needs a feeding tube for hydration and nutrition. She has physio, occupational and speech therapy sessions. Her milestones are delayed, but it's slow progress, not no progress. We've been working and we will keep working."

"Our family has experienced fear, grief, uncertainty, and hope all at the same time," Carrasco-Harding said. "Through it all, we've watched my niece's parents become incredible advocates for their daughter. Their strength has been inspiring. Our entire family has rallied around them with one shared goal: to give her every possible opportunity to access the life-changing gene therapy that could alter the course of her future."

The family has partnered with McGill University and The Neuro in Montreal, and they've already started building her cell line.

"If we go through all of this, all of those steps will be done and it will open the door for other families," Dowling said. "The pathway will be proven, and those families may only need to pay a few hundred thousand dollars. Usually there are grants and funding for common diseases but this is exceptionally rare."

Carrasco-Harding has observed the compassion and generosity of Tillsonburg residents, saying that kindness drives this community.

"Throughout my career, I've met people on some of the hardest days of their lives," she said. "I've witnessed families facing unimaginable loss, fear, and uncertainty. I've seen neighbors rally together during difficult times. I've watched people check in on elderly neighbors, stop to help a stranger cross the street, organize fundraisers for families facing illness, and quietly give to those in need without ever expecting recognition. Those are the moments that stay with you."

As a nurse practitioner and healthcare provider, she has spent hours digging into the medical literature and research. While she understands the science behind the diagnosis, and the possibility of groundbreaking therapy, she also understands the repercussions if that treatment is unavailable.

"It's the world's slowest heartbreak, one that you carry with you every single day," Carrasco-Harding said. "You know what's at stake, yet there are moments when love leaves you



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Rylee at 11 months old at a check up at McMaster hospital.

feeling powerless."

The funds raised through the family's website (ryleesroad.ca) will all be directed to research institutions that have invested in accepting her as a patient.

"Every person who shares her story, donates, or simply helps raise awareness gives our family something priceless: hope," Carrasco-Harding said. "We're incredibly grateful that more people are learning about her journey and the importance of access to gene therapy."

"There is support, just not funding," Dowling said. "Someone has to start somewhere. You could never prepare for this. We're in disbelief, but she's amazing at the same time. You just want to do everything you can to help her."



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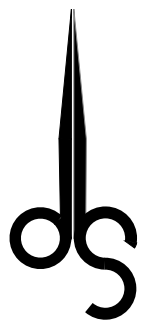
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WAR OF 1812

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTOS)



Smoke filled the air as British reenactors fire at the Americans in the mock War of 1812 battle. The British won the battle on Sunday, and the Americans on Saturday.



Youth got a taste of what soldier's drills were like more than 200 years ago in the Mini Militia.



Flintlock muzzleloaders on their shoulders, the British soldiers advanced during the battle.



A local talks with the Americans in the scenario at Backus Mills. About 175 military reenactors, both Canadians and Americans, took part in the weekend.

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TOWNSHIP OF NORWICH NEWS

No changes to Oxford Centre Road intersection, for now

LUKE EDWARDS

Post Contributor

An awkward, offset intersection on Oxford Centre Road may not be ideal, but Norwich staff aren't quite ready to recommend changes.

Instead, township staff recommended hiring a qualified traffic engineering consultant to perform a safety review of the road's intersection with Middletown Line. A staff report said the review will have a dual purpose of identifying potential improvements staff hadn't considered while also being the basis for a potential application for a court order to force a nearby resident to trim trees currently on

their property that is considered cause of some of the safety concerns.

"The concern is in relation to motorists leaving the stop sign on the west side of the intersection heading east. Drivers looking to proceed eastbound, or to turn northbound, have limited visibility to southbound traffic on Middletown Line," said Director of Operations Ken Farkas at the Sept. 8 meeting.

Residents have submitted concerns about the intersection, leading staff to conduct an internal review. While visibility is a concern, the review found motorists tended to follow the recommended 30 km/h guidelines for that stretch of road. Additionally, the report said staff

found options such as an all-way stop, traffic mirrors or right-turn-only restrictions would be ineffective.

At the same time, despite the awkwardness of the intersection, the local OPP detachment said it only recorded four motor vehicle collisions in the area between 2021 and 2025. All of them were single vehicle incidents.

However, Coun. Adrian Couwenberg suggested it might be prudent to be proactive.

"Why do we need to wait for an accident?" he said.

Visibility concerns are partially the result of mature trees along the intersection that are on private property. The report

said staff have raised the issue with the property owner, who said "she is not in favor of removing or trimming the trees."

Under a section of the Municipal Act, a municipality could get a court order to force a resident to remove or alter vegetation that is causing sightline concerns. The consultant's work could provide the basis for that court order, should councillors ultimately decide to take that route.

For now, though, the intersection will remain as is.

The consultant is expected to cost the township between \$3,000 and \$4,000. There's a \$10,000 line item in the 2026 budget for engineering requests like this one.

Proposal could lead to new Norwich Medical Centre

LUKE EDWARDS

Post Contributor

Norwich Township staff and councillors are receptive to a proposal from the Netherlands Reformed Congregation that would lead to a new, larger medical centre at a fraction of the cost to taxpayers.

The congregation has pitched a plan that would see a swap of properties where Norwich would give up the property that is currently home to the medical centre, swapping for another parcel where a two-storey, 16,000-square-foot medical centre would be built. Councillors at the Sept. 8 meeting voted to

approve the plan in principle, though a final decision isn't expected until early next year.

"I think this is an exciting project that could definitely help the community," said Coun. Linda De Plancke, echoing similar words of optimism about the proposal shared by other members of council.

The Netherlands Reformed Congregation approached the township with the plan earlier this year. With their Bethany Care Home in need of expansion, the congregation's long-term planning committee deemed the property that currently houses the medical centre as the logical space for expansion.

Likewise for the township, an expanded medical centre is needed, as they're already at capacity and Norwich is expected to grow in the coming years. Norwich's asset management plan envisions the centre needing to be replaced by 2039 and there's also \$500,000 in maintenance costs expected over the coming 10 years.

The congregation's proposal sees Norwich receive a similar plot of land fronting onto Main Street, just to the east of the current centre. The congregation would also provide the new centre, which would cost the township \$3.7 million. CAO Matt Smith said an estimate for site prep, servicing and build is

\$6.44 million.

"So that's a significant discount for the township and helps us in our long-term asset management planning," he said.

At 16,000 square feet, the proposed centre is twice the size of the current centre.

Councillors held closed door discussions regarding the proposal and properties earlier this year.

With the plan approved in principle, the township will now create a working group to perform design and costing work and that staff bring back a fully costed plan and design in the first quarter of 2027.

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What's New

in Tillsonburg and surrounding areas

Nikki's Western Outfitters – your Western Wear destination

It may have been an impulsive decision getting into Western Wear, but it was a good one for Nicole Van Brenk, owner of Nikki's Western Outfitters.

"I've always loved the Western way of life and line dancing - it really caught my eye," said Van Brenk. "I just thought maybe there's an opportunity... it's something that's in my heart, something that I'm passionate about."

Nikki's carries a full line of Western Wear including jeans, tops, outerwear and boots for men and women, and kids apparel. And of course, the cowboy hats – felt and straw – in a dozen styles.

"We do a lot of online sales. Western Wear is huge in America, but Canada is always a few years behind. It will pick up, it's developing."

They also offer hunting and fishing attire, and Van Brenk wants to expand those.

"It's some people's everyday attire. It's a little bit of everything. You can do cowboy, you can do country – there are so many country concerts and country fairs country fashion events and country weddings. Construction, blue-collar, farmers, you can do the hunting and fishing scene. A little bit of everything – that's our goal, that's our vision. We want to cater to everyone."

Nikki's Western Outfitters first started selling cowboy hats at the Norfolk Pro Rodeo, then the next rodeo, and the next...

"Before I knew it, all my weekends were booked up. People love wearing cowboys hats – everyone wants to be a cowboy."

"The Norfolk rodeo is a big one," said Van Brenk, who now travels across North America setting up at rodeos from Colorado to Alberta, and of course, her home Ontario.

"All over the map," she laughed. "We go everywhere. Every weekend I'm on the road."

Her sales are equally divided between in-person shows and online sales.



Nikki's Western Outfitters is "where the west lives in Ontario."

"Rodeos help get our name out there, which is mostly what we do it for. It's great to meet everyone and be more face-to-face with the customer. And people love wearing cowboy hats at rodeos. We also have the opportunity to encourage people to come to our shop to get their full outfit, their full gear at our shop."

"At rodeos we just have some things, like our hats or T-shirts, whereas at the store you can come get your full wardrobe on."

Located at 1418 Bell Mill Side Road, Tillsonburg, Van Brenk said she loves the community.

"I'm from Tillsonburg and I absolutely love Tillsonburg. I think it's kind of a hidden gem. I think there's a lot of opportunity and potential."

Tillsonburg also draws a lot of music artists who swing through town on their way to gigs.

"There's a lot in Tillsonburg that people don't really realize – it's a very popular place actually."

For more about Nikki's Western Outfitters, which is open Monday to Friday, 10-5, and Saturdays 10-5:30, you can email nikkisoutfitters@gmail.com or call 519-842-0777.

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SHRINER BARBECUE

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTOS)



The annual Shriner Pork Barbecue continues to be a big draw, attracting 523 people for supper this year in the Tillsonburg Arena on March 9. Attendance was up roughly 10 per cent from last year.



Mason Bill Irwin was one of the volunteers assisting with cooking the pork in the new smoker that was used this year. The new smoker produced more tender pork.



The line-up for pork, corn and all the trimmings kept the food servers hopping throughout the evening. No one went away hunger from the all-you-can-eat event.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Delhi
bia

Business Improvement Area

**Thursday November 12, 2026 at
6:00 P.M. at the Delhi Hungarian
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**THE
LOST
TRIBE**

JEFF TRIBE

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Big-game rod bending in a tight arc, I braced my feet on the chair rail and hung on for dear life, thankful it was attached to me and I to the boat. Unseen, the bluefin tuna headed straight down into 20 fathoms of Atlantic Ocean, 300-pound test monofilament line screaming off the massive big-game reel.

You can read all the articles you want. And watch every video you can find.

But nothing, absolutely nothing, will prepare you for the adrenaline rush of a 500-pound fish making a run.



Will Bouck (left), originally from Long Point, battles a Nova Scotia bluefin tuna under the watchful eye of first mate Ken Snow (right).

"The power, the sheer fight in the fish is unbelievable," said Tuna Fever Fishing Charter First Mate Ken Snow in the aftermath, pointing out reels are set for between 35 and 40 pounds of drag. "And they're just screaming the reel."

"And then when you're trying to get it back... man against beast, this is literally man against beast."



An estimated 500-pound bluefin tuna breaks the surface close by Tuna Fever Charter Boat Melissa and Papa III.

I was in better hands than the tuna, aboard captain Billy Bond's custom-built 38-foot Cape Islander Melissa and Papa III, christened after his daughter and her nickname for his father. A lifelong resident of Canso, Bond got his first fishing licence at the age of 13. His 50-year career on the water spanned smelt, mackerel, cod, snow crab and shrimp, before a current focus on lobster and tuna.

Years ago, tuna were considered a nuisance, unintentional bi-catch in nets. But in the 1970s, a small market developed says Bond, Asian and other buyers eventually lining up on the wharf to bid on freshly caught and cleaned fish, prices running from \$20 to as high as \$55 a pound.

He purchased his tuna licence later, which today, means one to two tags per year. Fish are now sold through buyers, Bond describing a 'prime' specimen dressing out at 330 pounds going for \$12.50 a pound earlier this season. That multiplies to a good number, until you factor in overhead, \$2 per litre diesel fuel and crew wages, or the fact additional tags purchased from other fishermen come at a cost of \$2,000 per.

"Guess what, we're doing it for fun," laughed Bond. "That's what we're doing, because we like tuna fishing."

The practical season for bluefin off

Canso is spring, summer and fall, around winter migration for spawning. Ninety per cent of fishermen are cooperative, helping each other locate fish which can be found a mile offshore or 20 miles out.

"It's a big ocean," said Bond. "It's hit and miss, but normally we do all right."

In his mind, bluefin tuna are the most beautiful fish in the ocean, large, powerful, graceful and aerodynamic, like bullets going through the air, except through the water.

"They're a big fish, it's a big game. You're not playing with a little trout in a lake."

A 500-pound tuna will give a good fight, five or six good runs, some of them outlasting heavier fish in terms of time taken to get them to the boat. But there was the estimated 1,100 pounder which Bond and Snow fought for six-and-a-half hours, only to have it snap a brand-new line, right alongside.

"Got him up, had a look at him, that was about it," smiled Bond, adding with a laugh, "and then I cried for two hours."

'Fifteen or 20' years ago, he entered the charter business. Bond has appeared on The Discovery Channel (Catching Monsters), Fishing Canada and also visits the Toronto Sportsman's Show annually. He has two booking agents and clients can also schedule trips directly through his website: <https://www.tunafeverfishingcharters.com/> or connect via his email bill.bond62@outlook.com or phone number 902-366-2934.

Tuna tactics include trolling sets of rubber squid on a steel bar, one 'stinger' with a hook trailing the rest.

"That's pretty much it, the weakest guy gets it," explained Bond, who trolls mostly in the fall.

This day, we began a drift over the point of an underwater shoal 'eight or nine miles' offshore with presentations of live mackerel. Two lines held circle-hooked swimmers on the end of six-foot fluorocarbon leaders. A third illustrated Bond's preferred method, a skilful and well-practised kite/second line combination taking the bait 10 metres off the starboard side and holding it on the surface.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 16

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Port Rowan resident trades Long Point bass for tuna

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Long Point native Will Bouck has traded battling Inner Bay smallmouth bass for Nova Scotia bluefin tuna Tuna Fever Fishing Charter captain Billy Bond.

Obviously, one is there for tuna but the overall experience of embarking from a maritime wharf, passing lighthouses, other vessels, finding a whale or two if you're lucky, is not to be understated. A hook-up with a six-foot blue shark proved an added bonus, if unwelcome for the crew. They have a habit of rolling when hooked, tangling themselves in leader, line and hook. "He wraps it up, bites it off and everything's gone," explained Bond.

This time, the trio managed to cautiously and safely extricate the hook, photo ops included.

There's also the chance to hang out in the open Atlantic with experienced fishermen who happen to be Maritimers. This is Nova Scotia after all, where when my

wife got hung up on the side of the road, six vehicles stopped to help, converted a tie-down strap into a makeshift tow rope and had her back on the road before you could say 'ceilidh.'

Great place, great people.

Snow, who returned to his father's native Nova Scotia from the Barrie area at 11, operates his own lobster boat. He joined Bond tuna fishing and acts as auxiliary captain when he's unavailable.

"I don't know if we've caught a thousand," said Snow. "But it's been hundreds."

The third crew member, Will Bouck, is a Long Point, Ontario native who grew up fishing for trout and salmon on Lake Ontario and perch, pike and bass on the inner bay, trolling little perch Rapalas with his dad Larry on sand flats out of Old Cut.

"Deadly, deadly," said Bouck. "There wasn't a bass opener we didn't come home without our limit."

He has been in Nova Scotia for five years, fishing for four, with Bond for three, for both lobster and tuna.

"Straight adrenaline from the second you get hooked up," said Bouck of the latter. "The adrenaline rush and just the size, the size of them when they come to the boat."

We were comparing notes on sea duck hunting on small, rocky Nova Scotia islands to Long Point, and checking out a massive non-typical buck on Bouck's phone, when as it does, calm turned into chaos.

"Oh, oh, oh!" Snow exclaimed, indicating a pole on the port side, which had abruptly done a 180-degree turn. "Hooked up!"

It was an organized chaos, other poles quickly reeled in to avoid tangling, the 'fish on' model tied off with a rope (one does not wish to lose a \$3,000 reel, \$1,000 pole and \$500 worth of line), before being carefully moved and anchored in the port position on the stern where Bond could see runs unfold and drive in response. Snow placed himself in between, anticipating and communicating with the captain as Bouck took point on the pole, an efficient partnership reacting in a hurry.

"You go from zero to 60 faster than a

Ferrari," Snow laughed.

In general, when the tuna ran, Bouck watched the reel peel. When it paused, he would recover line with his gloved, left hand and reel with his right. And when it ran toward the boat, he reeled like a madman. Guided by he and Snow, as well as his own experience, Bond expertly steered the boat to keep the line clear, while also strategically, encouraging the tuna's natural tendency to go deep, a vertical hook-up having better odds of staying put than a shallower angle.

Battling a tuna is a mental as well as physical game.

"Find your zen, your calm spot," Snow explained.

Bouck spoke to getting past that first adrenaline rush, controlling one's breathing and 'getting back on.'

"You get fighting a fish, it doesn't take long to wear yourself out. We always tell you just take your time, deep breaths and reel the fish in when he lets you. Because when he first hooks up, he's just going peel line and run, run, run, run."

After several powerful runs, the fish entered the finishing phase, a 'death circle' near the surface, showing 'colour' while lying on its side. It's a critical period, tuna trying instinctively to chafe the line on the keel or propeller, says Bouck.

"They're really smart, they know how to get underneath the boat and break themselves off."

Twenty-five minutes after Snow's ini-

tial cry, an estimated 400-pound 'but-terball' lay alongside the boat. On this catch-and-release trip the fish's health was paramount, line holding a biodegradable hook quickly snapped, tuna returning to the depths.

Having expected to be only an observer, a second hook-up provided an unexpected opportunity to be shepherd and assisted through a turn on the back end of the pole by Bouck and Snow.

No, I did not find my 'zen.'

And yes, I did wear the 'wussy' tag for reeling with both hands.

But I'll happily take it for an experience which can only be described as indescribable in terms sheer elemental power and adrenaline, a greater understanding of Ernest Hemingway's classic novel.

We headed back from a great eight-hour journey, photos and video captured, a bucket list item checked, an opportunity I never expected, shared. It was difficult to adequately express 'thanks', save for the deep understanding in one for whom the experience never gets old.

"They're just an amazing fish to catch," Bond concluded. "It doesn't matter how many years you've been at it, it's still exciting to catch one."

Video

For associated video, search Tuna Billy Jeff Tribe The Lost Tribe on Youtube or copy and paste the following URL:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=js-v9I8zV2Z4>

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(JEFF HELSDON PHOTOS)

TDMH GOLF TOURNAMENT

About 80 golfers took part in the Tillsonburg District Hospital Foundation's annual golf tournament, held at the Bridges of Tillsonburg on Friday. The event raised \$40,000 to purchase equipment in the hospital. (Left photo) Steve Burn of the MY FM Broadcasting team tees off on hole #12. (Right photo) Ryan Francke of the Execulink team prepares to hit the ball on hole #2, with the backdrop The Bridges is known for in the background.

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Big Brothers Big Sisters Month: Raising awareness and advocating for young people who are waiting for a mentor

ROBIN KRAFFT

Post Correspondent

September is Big Brothers Big Sisters month, highlighting the vital role that volunteers play in mentoring children and youth, celebrating their efforts, and raising awareness about the need for more mentors.

“Our experience has always been that Tillsonburg residents care deeply about their community,” Executive Director Kristen Ralph said. “We believe one of the barriers is that many people may not realize the extent of the need, the range of programs we offer, or the different ways they can help. That is why awareness campaigns like Turn the Town Teal are so important: they help us reach potential mentors and donors while also ensuring families know that support is available.”

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) has been invested in young people and their potential for over 100 years in Canada, and the campaign is a nationwide effort. BBBS Oxford has been organizing volunteer mentors and supporting local children and families for 55 years, and this year they’ve added something new to their traditional campaign.

“This year, we are partnering with Two Rows Creations to Turn the Town Teal and Orange,” Ralph said. “By incorporating orange into the campaign, we also want to recognize the significance of Sept. 30, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.”

The collaboration with Two Row Culture and Community Centre honours the children who survived residential schools, those who didn’t return, their families, and the communities who are still dealing with the impact.

Local businesses, offices and workplaces can help to raise awareness by registering for a free Turn the Town kit online (oxford.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca) and decorating their space with teal and orange. It’s an opportunity to get creative and draw attention to a worthy organization that makes a real, measurable and meaningful difference in a child’s life trajectory.

“Tillsonburg is an important community for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oxford County,” Ralph said. “There are many children and youth in the area who want, and would benefit, from the support of a mentor. While we are very grateful for the volunteers and supporters already involved, local volunteer and financial support has not yet kept pace with the need. This challenge is not unique to Tillsonburg; it is something we are working to address across Oxford County.”

In their most recent reporting year, BBBS Tillsonburg served 106 children and youth in town, but 28 are still waiting to be matched with a mentor. Those waiting range in age from six to 15 years old. The average wait for a mentor is three years. One child has been waiting eight years.

“The challenge is not a lack of care in Tillsonburg,” Ralph said. “It is ensuring that more people understand how significant the need is and how they can be part of the solution. Not everyone can commit to a long-term one-to-one match, but there are many different ways to mentor, donate, advocate, or help us connect with others. Every new person who becomes involved helps us provide more Tillsonburg children and youth with the

consistent, caring support they deserve.”

Volunteer mentors are needed in all the Tillsonburg programs:

- Community-Based One-to-One Mentoring, the traditional Big Brother and Big Sister matches
- In-School Mentoring (a great program for anyone who can give an hour during a school day, a popular option for seniors and retirees)
- short-term group programs offered during the school day
- evening group programs, including SOAR
- Teen Leadership Mentoring for high school students

“We are very grateful to continue to call Tillsonburg one of our homes, and we look forward to more people learning about what we do and how they can get involved,” Ralph said. “Anyone who would like to connect with us in person can usually find us at our Tillsonburg office at 96 Tillson Avenue on Thursdays and Fridays. We are also happy to arrange an appointment outside of those days if they do not work with someone’s schedule.”

Nicole Nguyen has been a volunteer mentor with BBBS Oxford since 2024, beginning as a group mentor in the SOAR (Social Opportunities Activities Relationships) program before becoming a 1:1 mentor.

“One of the things I really like about BBBS is that there are different ways to get involved, depending on your schedule and what you’re comfortable with,” Nguyen said. “The group programs are a great option if you have an hour or two a week and want a shorter-term commitment. There are different types of programs, from active sports and recreational activities to quieter activities in places like the library.”

Nguyen wanted to give back to her community and always enjoyed being around young people, and the SOAR program worked with her schedule, allowing her to participate in shorter 8–12-week group programs.

“Through SOAR, I’ve had the opportunity to spend time with youth ranging in age from 7 to 16 and partic-

ipate in all kinds of activities, including board games, a community garden, movie nights, arts and crafts with seniors, mini-putt, disc golf, sports and outdoor games,” Nguyen said. “The program helps youth build positive social and communication skills, expose them to new experiences and activities with youth while they wait for their 1:1 match.”

Nguyen found the experience very rewarding, getting to know the youth, enjoying their energy and enthusiasm, and seeing how they responded to trying new things and making connections with others. She decided to become a Community-Based 1:1 Mentor (a ‘Big’) early this year, building a relationship with one young person.

“This program gives you the opportunity to build a consistent longer-term relationship with one youth and really get to know them — personal interests, school, family, friends, aspirations, opinions, likes and dislikes, and all the amazing little details that make them unique,” Nguyen said. “My role is to act as a positive role model and to help support my ‘Little’ in building their confidence, discovering their unique talents and interests, and growing into a healthy and happy young person.”

The pair have been enjoying some wonderful adventures together; building a relationship and establishing trust takes time. Nguyen encourages anyone who might be interested to investigate the various program options. Even if you only have a couple of hours a week to give, your contribution is valuable.

“You don’t necessarily need a lot of free time; you just need a willingness to show up, participate and build positive connections with young people,” Nguyen said. “One of the things I didn’t fully expect is how much I would get out of the relationship too. I learn from her, I’m constantly challenged to be a better listener and communicator, and I get to see the world from a different perspective. You don’t have to have all the answers or be an expert to be a good mentor. Sometimes simply showing up, listening and being genuinely interested in a young person can make a meaningful difference.”

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The plants of autumn and waiting for the daffodils of spring



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CRYSTAL TROJEK

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

I was thinking this week about the arrival of fall mornings, the first time I venture out with camera in hand, and think I should have worn shoes instead of sandals, and a coat.

I've started saving newspapers to pack up dahlias, and started to consider buying more daffodils to plant. I want daffodils because they push green leaves past so much other dirty stuff in the April garden, they conquer the leftovers of the wars of winter, snowflakes fought in the air and on the ground. Daffodils subdue the stiff and soiled old snowbanks, the soggy ground, the old battered leaves, obstruct the rivulets of melting water that pass by their feet, the garbage the wind threw their way while thoughtfully relocating a few scattered seeds from last autumn. Green, so green they are as they rise in the spring sunshine, streaking into the welcoming arms of the brightest of blue skies. Daffodils, shiny and new, looking so different than everything around them, and they don't care.

It takes some prolific and vibrant imagination to picture a spring garden when the dahlias tower over everything just now. Large and wearing my favourite autumn shades, I trust dahlias to outlast the autumn thunderstorms and awaken each morning still standing. Aided by some photos from the previous April, I secure a plan for the location of more spring flowering bulbs.

It's painful to slice those wonderful sleepy daffodil bulbs with a misdirected shovel, the ones who sang so cheerfully just a few weeks ago in my spring garden, already snugly planted in the ground.

I usually purchase two perfectly interesting new daffodils, calmly placing them in the car and even more subtly informing husband I will not buy any more spring flowering bulbs this year. (He knows that is a lie, even though I plant them when he is not home)

I purchase pots of fall mums and asters, sprinkling large pools of colour through the garden as a fond farewell, while overhead, the leaves begin to turn on the trees and we try to ignore it. A few leaves have scattered their pretty selves across the faces of mums on the barely frosted mornings, edged the sidewalk, they turn colour while we blissfully sleep. Daffodils forget there ever was a winter. Daffodils will paddle their daffodil boat far into the future days of gardening, beyond the rising and wind tossed waves of falling red, yellow, and orange leaves.

We take time touring country avenues as we often do, birding and looking for pumpkins from an enterprising young person who has set up shop by the side of the

road. Every year there are more colours of pumpkins, the most interesting cross-pollinated ones are purely fascinating, their design and decorating possibilities are endless. I place the last recently-purchased pumpkin in the garden or on the front porch, whisper in its ear, "You are the last one I'm buying, I'll happily keep you until you are frozen solid."

Husband always seeks to hasten the disappearance of pumpkins, "I think that one orange one is rotten." "You can't fill the composter with any more than five, it will be too heavy and they won't take it." "Two of them are buried under leaves, don't forget them or you will have 500 pumpkins growing in the flowerbed next year." A pumpkin looks so cheerful when it first arrives in my garden, so sad as I look at it for the last time in the gloom at the bottom of the composter, sharply closing the lid like I never loved it at all.

Autumn is a time of gathering for floral artists, my supply of such things from the natural world is often very diminished by September. Time once more to preserve autumn leaves, sort dried herbs and flowers for winter floral imagination, collect pine cones and such interesting discarded branches, bark, and sticks as I can find on an autumn adventure. Who knew the glossy chestnut could be a star in an autumn wreath?

Hearty grapevine, I miss the days at the farm when I had enough grapevine in the fence row to perhaps make a rope that would stretch from here to Nova Scotia. Empty seed pods, rose hips, leaves, vines, grass, a glue gun and the front door fol-

lowed by the fireplace mantel will also welcome autumn.

There have been some Septembers when I get really depressed. I might write a lot, or not at all. I might spread lyrical poetic lines of many autumn words across a page, sometimes the page stays empty. Sometimes my best writing appears in the early morning darkness before you can see if there was a frost in the garden last night.

Sometimes the best stories are just buds, waiting for their turn to form a word picture. There are still lots of buds in my garden, and I don't entertain the idea that some of them won't make it, I believe that they will surprise me. Gardens are full of surprises every day, these are the garden days of carefully so carefully avoiding personal encounters with large spiders.

After the sleepy, heat-filled days of mid-summer it is time to make some decisions and move forward again. I often decide on new directions, new projects, I pause briefly with the memories of the view of the waves spreading across the lake behind our boat for that last ride before storage, beyond the bow of our boats there are new horizons. I look at the distant shore, not the weeds that we pass and leave behind at the lake, or the faltering plants in my garden that know it is autumn. We rise in the present and walk towards the future.

Good morning, my garden. Hello daffodils.

The next meeting of the Tillsonburg Horticultural Society will be Oct. 6 at 7 p.m., at the Senior Centre ~ Tillsonburg Complex ~ 45 Hardy Street, Tillsonburg (Green awning entrance).

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Senior of the Month



Jay Jackson

If you would like to nominate someone for Senior of the Week, contact us at info@tillsonburgpost.com

Maple Manor Nursing Home is pleased to recognize Jay Jackson as our Senior of the Month and to congratulate him on becoming our new Residents' Council President! Jay brings valuable experience to this important role, including his past involvement working with the trade union OPSEU. Jay understands the importance of listening to others, representing different viewpoints, advocating for people's needs, and working together toward positive solutions. As Residents' Council President, Jay has an important responsibility to help ensure that every resident has an opportunity to have their voice heard. Residents' Council provides a place where residents can share ideas, raise concerns, celebrate successes, and make suggestions about life within our home. With Jay's leadership and experience, we look forward to finding new ways to make Maple Manor an even better place to live.

Local group from First Baptist Church helps Mexican people

JEFF HELSDON
Editor

A group based at First Baptist Church in Tillsonburg is helping seniors and youth in the Mexican village of Zihuatanejo. Zihua Gospel Ministries was founded four years ago after Dave and Marguerite Jackson traveled to the town in the winter. "We used to go down to Zihuatanejo, and we felt God called us to work with the seniors in the mountains and the children in the mountain areas," Dave said. Zihuatanejo is a fishing village on Mexico's Pacific coast, just south of Ixtapa and between Puerto Vallarta and Acapulco. Outside tourism, the area is primarily a fishing village. The Sierra Madre Mountains surround it, and some of the villages are in the mountains, on dirt roads with rivers crossing them. The Jacksons rent an apartment there for the winter. "Although you see high-rise resorts, within five minutes people are living in shacks," Dave said. He explained the seniors live in colonies, and there are 18 colonies around Zihuatanejo. "The seniors in the area receive about \$100 to live on," Dave said. "They're doing without their basic needs, and a lot are scrounging for food and the necessities of life." Dave explained that most of the seniors live in open-air shacks. Although they have roofs, holes are common, and the walls don't completely enclose the buildings, so when it rains, water leaks in. Although the Jacksons have been assisting for four years, their group, Zihua Gospel Ministries, received formal government approval as a registered charity in April. Both the Jacksons are directors, along with Pastor Dave Heinrichs and congregation member Deb Young. When the Jacksons head south later this fall, their Explorer will be packed to the roof with donations, and they'll also have two rooftop carriers and another on the hitch. They take donated items, plus things that are difficult to find in Mexico. Packed in with the goods going south are 250 donated Sobey's grocery bags that will be used to put produce purchased in Zihuatanejo in for distribution.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 21



Annual Memorial Forest Dedication Service

The 2026 Memorial Forest Dedication Service will be held on Sunday, September 20, 2026. Call us at 519-842-4242 or visit us online at lprca.on.ca to learn more or to make a donation to the Memorial Forest.

Over the past year, donations were made in memory of the following people:

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Barbara Bradley	Kathleen Jones	Allan Spriet	Fran Vuylsteke	Peter Drost
Bill Bradley	Kauleen Lockwood	Andrew Charles Gillard	Frank De Dobbelaer	Richard Sander
Brad Squires	Kim North	Ben Dugas	Gail Oliver	Rick Rosehart
Carl Woodford	Klaus Heyer	Bob "Smitty" Smith	Glenn Rice	Roger Seghers
Chris Rayner	Lloyd Wood	Bob Lauwerier	Gordon "Mac" Stewart	Rose Musch
Christine Taylor	Lynne Hagen	Bob Plato	Henrietta Scholten	Roy Wells
Constance "Connie" Williams (Barr)	Malcolm Mann	Bob Racher	Howard "Ken" Jackson	Scott Winger
Darrell Smith	Margaret Marion Buchanan	Bonnie Bailey	Hugh Hyndman	Sean Mudge
David Marcyniuk	Marilyn Foster	Bryan Granger	Irene Spohn	Sheila Presant
Denise Matthys (DeWulf)	Martha Jacques	Buddy "Bud" McDonald	Jason DeJonge	Siegfried Blondeel
Dennis Banks	Mary Hill	Catherine "Kay" Couwenberg	Jean Miller (Dair)	Smokey Rose
Don Blake	Muriel Winger	(Pearce)	John Clayton	Suzanne Walton
Doreen Squires	Murray Malcolm	Charlene Turenne	John David "Red" Wamsley	Tammy Nigh
Douglas Jerome Hallman	Nicholas Dye	Chris Coulthard	Joyce Hanson	Tara Rombout
Dr. Deb Hutchinson	Norma (nee Trickett) Mussell	Colleen Goodwin	Judith Cullen	Terry Lee Helmer
Edwin Burton "Ted" Rohrer	(Bouck)	Cyril Develter	Julie Christiaens	Valerie Vepy (King)
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Frank De Dobbelaer	Richard Anthony Teigrob	Danny Young	Lawrence Dalle Vedove	Violet Bahula
Fred Soenen	Robert Boyd Dickinson	David Harold Hoover	Leah Shelley	William "Bill" Elliott
Gustof "Gus" Van Daele	Robert Boyd Wilson	David Henry Seely	Lyle Rooke	Yuliana Kiroyan
Gwenda Martin (Langfield)	Ruth Clayton (Waldick)	David Mason	Margaret Howey	
Howey MacLaren	Stu MacKeigan	David Roberts	Margerit Mudford	
Irene Krawczyk	Sue Snider Hartnett	Dean Young	Maria Stekli	
Jack Marr	Tammy Birnstiel	Donald MacDonald	Marlene Knack (Sherman)	
Janet Kirton		Doug E. Wilson	Mary Ann Soenen	
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Zihua Ministries assists the elderly and youth in Mexico

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

Among the goods the Jacksons are taking are 700 T-shirts and hoodies for seniors, and four boxes of school supplies and ladies' items donated by My Top Drawer. They take quilts, clothing, and hard-to-find necessities, while they purchase produce there. Soap is one thing they buy in Canada.

"That's something they (average citizens) don't have," Marguerite said. "I was surprised at how expensive a bar of soap is there."

She added that soap costs the same as three bags of rice, and asked which choice most people would make.

Children in Mexico don't have to go to school, but if they do, they must supply a uniform and supplies.

As congregation members at the Tillsonburg First Baptist Church, they brought the church into the fold. For instance, the church Sunday school is having a bake sale to purchase uniforms.

"It was their idea," Marguerite said. "They came to us and said, 'Can we do a bake sale?'"

Church members also send letters and cards to people in Mexico.

"They became pen pals with people in our church," Deb said.

Some may question the safety in this area of Mexico. Dave said they've been in areas where the cartel is, and they know about Zihua Ministries. He said they are avoiding the things that cause issues – flashing money, going in bars late at night, or being involved in the drug trade.

"Because we are helping people there, there is respect for us," he said.

Marguerite said that when they go into the mountains, they go with a Mexican social services worker.

"That's why we go with them: for safety, and they know where the communities are," she said.

Zihua Ministries is looking for financial donations from local individuals and businesses.

"Our ultimate goal is to build something better for seniors there, maybe a tiny home that is five meters by seven meters," Dave said.

More information is available on the website zihuaministries.ca



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

The team behind Zihua Gospel Ministries assists seniors and children in Mexico with the necessities of life. Standing next to the vehicle that will be packed with goods are, left to right: Deb Young, Dave Heinrichs, Marguerite Jackson, and Dave Jackson.

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Outdoor collectibles show this weekend

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

The Canadian Decoy and Outdoor Collectibles Association's annual show will be held at Backus Heritage Conservation Area this Saturday.

Running from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., the show will feature vendors selling all sorts of sporting collectibles. This includes older vintage fishing tackle, artwork, knives, anything related to hunting, fishing, and trapping, vintage duck calls and game calls, antique fishing nets, sporting books, and early camping equipment.

"Certainly the focus will be antique and vintage decoys," said organizer Bruce

Malcolm.

The Long Point area has a long history of waterfowl hunting, with guides from many local clubs carving their own wooden decoys.

"There will be a significant amount of Long Point material, but there's certainly not a focus on it," Malcom said. "You never know what people will bring. There will certainly be decoys from Norfolk County."

Amongst the 23 different exhibitors will be four auction houses showcasing high-value decoys they have been assigned to sell in upcoming auctions.

The \$5 admission includes admission to Backus. Visitors can also visit the newly opened Davidson Decoy Gallery that day.



ALL CANDIDATES FORUM

2026 Municipal Election



Tuesday, September 29



Lion's Auditorium
45 Hardy Ave, Tillsonburg



6:00pm - 9:00pm



Open to all

Co-hosted by:



South-West Oxford residents invited to candidates meet and greet

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Residents of South-West Oxford will have an opportunity to meet local candidates, ask questions and share their thoughts at an upcoming Candidates Meet & Greet in Mount Elgin.

The event will take place on Tuesday, Sept. 29, from 7 to 9 p.m. at Mount Elgin United Church, 324105 Mount Elgin Road.

The evening is being organized as an opportunity for residents to meet the candidates seeking to represent them, learn more about their priorities and

ask questions about issues affecting the community.

Residents will also have the opportunity to share their concerns, ideas and thoughts directly with the candidates.

The event is intended to encourage open and respectful dialogue and provide residents with a chance to become more informed about the candidates before the election.

All residents of South-West Oxford are welcome to attend.

Come out, meet the candidates, ask your questions and have your voice heard about the future of South-West Oxford.

Houghton Fair planned for Sept. 24

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Over the past 172 years, the Houghton Fair has retained its agricultural roots.

The one-day fair, planned for Thursday, Sept. 24 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., starts with a parade from the neighbouring Houghton Public School at 11 a.m. Students have the day off school to enjoy the old-time fair. A performance by Valley Heights Secondary School's cheerleaders follows the parade, and introductions from dignitaries. Then the fair is everything expected of fair.

There are contests for fruits and vegetables, a baby contest, and adult competi-

tions for nail pounding, potato peeling and log sawing. The oldest man and woman present also are recognized. The 4-H Club will be on hand with a display for animals.

"It's a great day, it's a great afternoon to have fun and eat some fair food," said Houghton Agricultural Society President Dan Mayer.

The fair food includes vendors selling ice cream and candy floss, plus the society booth selling hamburgers, hot dogs and French fries.

Admission to the fair, which is held in downtown Fairground, is only \$5.

The fair starts to wind down after the students head home on the buses. The fair is over shortly over.

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TOUGH MUDDER/SPARTAN WEEKEND AT GOPHER DUNES



(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)

Gopher Dunes, south of Courtland, hosted the Toronto Tough Mudder on Saturday with 5-km and 15-km routes filled with endurance-based obstacles. On Sunday, Sept. 13, Gopher Dunes hosted the Spartan Race London on a new transformed course for a racing experience.



(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)

Teresa Phillis from Parry Sound crosses the Tough Mudder finish line Saturday at Gopher Dunes. Thousands participated in the one-day Tough Mudder, crawling through sand, climbing over rope and wall obstacles, and plowing through water.

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Moon Market planned for Oct. 29

JEFF HELSDON
Editor

The moon will be almost full, providing the perfect ambiance for a new event hosted by the Station Arts Centre on Oct. 29.

The Moon Market, a combination of dance, food trucks, a costume parade, an artisan market, and more, will take place from 5 to 10 p.m. It will be held on top of the Downtown Tillsonburg BIA's Witches' Night Out, a themed night in its Late Night Thursday series downtown.

Tabitha Verbuyst, executive director and curator of the Station Arts Centre, explained that the event will be a fundraiser in place of its fall gala and will be held in partnership with the BIA's event that same night. The event will generate revenue through a silent auction, drink sales, and vendor fees.

"It's a stepping stone pilot project, " said Cailey Coderre, the Station Art's Centre social media lead and the one looking after planning details for the Moon Market. "We're trying to fill an event need as we do at our Holiday Arts Market, while raising money for the station."

The Moon Market will build on the Witches' Night Out event two years ago at the Station Arts Centre. That event had vendors and dancing. The Moon Market will expand on the concept.

Coderre said there will be a costume parade that will go along Bridge Street, a Harvest Circle with live music and local food trucks

designed for the whole family, a Moon Tavern for those over 19, and the Witch's Ball.

"We'll all end the night together, dancing the night away," Coderre said.

The night is intended to complement the Witches' Night Out taking place in downtown stores and restaurants.

"You can experience the downtown and then come over and experience the artisans, enjoy the dancing, that type of fun thing," Verbuyst said.

The event is also intended to give young families something else to do in Tillsonburg. Although there will be definite Halloween connections, the Moon Market is also associated with harvest.

"It's not meant to be spooky-scary; it's meant to be a fun family event," Verbuyst said.

There will be changes to the Witch's Night Out this year as well, with aa passport system to encourage people to visit multiple vendors. It promises shopping, as well as the same themed drinks at local bars.

"What we're doing is cross-promoting our events so people who go to the late night shopping, go to the Moon Market and vice versa," said Vanessa Fortner, . "It's essentially two events coming together supporting each other."

More details on the Moon Market were released after the press deadline and are available on the Station Arts Centre's website and will be featured in a future article.

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FIREFIGHTER BARBECUE

(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTOS)



Tillsonburg firefighter David Hietkamp's 'on the grill.' Firefighter Steak BBQ patrons had the option of grilling their own steak on one of three outdoor barbecues or asking one of the firefighters do it for them.



Almost 500 tickets were sold for the Tillsonburg Firefighters' Annual Steak Barbecue Sept. 12, 4-8 p.m. at the Tillsonburg Community Centre.



Maureen Docherty and Bill Chapman came early for the annual Tillsonburg Firefighters Steak Barbecue on Friday – and enjoyed their steak dinners.



Firefighters Larry Staley, right, and Dave Metselaar collected tickets and helped BBQ patrons select their steaks.



Sarah Barclay, Tillsonburg Firefighters Association, and a line of volunteers helped serve 'the sides' Friday at the firefighters' fundraising steak barbecue, which included baked potatoes, beans, mushrooms, and coleslaw.



Donna and Brian Cybulskie from Eden browse at the silent auction table during the Tillsonburg Firefighters Association Steak Barbecue.

Grant Haven journalists recognized nationally

STAFF
Grant Haven Media

The Canadian Community Newsmedia Awards (CCNAwards) celebrate the best in community publishing from across the country. Therefore, it was a thrill earlier this week to see several of our journalists recognized for the valuable work they do in their communities.

The 2026 competition included more than 650 entries in 29 different categories which spanned the areas of editorial, photography, multimedia and general excellence from the 2025 calendar year.

Tillsonburg editor Jeff Helsdon won first place for “Best Business Writing (print circulation up to 9999)” for ‘A look inside Shaw’s, Tillsonburg’s own ice cream plant’. Helsdon also won second place for “Best Historical Story” for his Oct. 9, 2025 article, ‘Reimagining Tillson’s journey to launch Dereham Forge’.

“This month marks just our second anniversary for the Tillsonburg Post, but thanks to the excellent reporting that Jeff and his team provides, the newspaper has been very successful right out of the gate,” said Publisher Stewart Grant.

The company’s original newspaper, the St. Marys Independent, recorded a trio of third place finishes within the General Excellence section for newspapers with circulation of 1,500 to 6,499 copies. The Independent, under the leadership of editor Galen Simmons, took the bronze for “Best All-Round Newspaper”, “Best Ed-

itorial Page”, and “Best Front Page”. In each of these General Excellence categories, the Nunatsiak News (Nunavut) and Town and Country This Week (Athabasca, AB) took the first and second place spots, respectively.

Simmons also won third place for “Best Local Editorial” for his June 12, 2025 column entitled ‘Little St. Marys stands up to provincial giant’.

Stratford editor Connor Luczka won first place for “Best National Editorial (print circulation up to 9999)” for his patriotic April 4, 2025 editorial ‘A eucatastrophic nation’. He also won top honours in the category of “Best Local Civic Journalism (print circulation up to 9999)” for his May 16, 2025 article entitled ‘Do municipalities have legal authority to fight strong mayor powers? Not according to experts’.

Finally, the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette took third place nationally for “Best Agricultural Edition” with its 24-page March 27, 2025 special. Along with stories from editor Galen Simmons, the farm feature included articles by Lee Griffi, Emily Stewart, Gary West, Julia Paul, Luke Edwards, Jeff Tribe, Diane Baltaz, Tim Rau, and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

Grant added that any of Grant Haven’s past articles and editions from recent years can be accessed by visiting the company’s website at granthaven.com, selecting the newspaper of choice from the drop-down menu, and viewing the PDFs from the Past Issues menu.

County supports Tillsonburg request for Hwy. 19 traffic review

JEFF HELSDON
Editor

Oxford County council supported a request from the Town of Tillsonburg for a traffic review on Highway 19 outside of town limits.

The issue was raised through a letter from the town to the provincial Minister of Transportation asking for a review of traffic data on Highway 19, north of Tillsonburg, determine if further traffic enforcement is needed and for neighbouring municipalities to also undertake a review.

Tillsonburg Mayor Deb Gilvesy, a county councillor, made a motion at the Sept. 9 meeting that the county support the town’s motion in principle.

“There have been some significant accidents, unfortunately some loss of life on Highway 19,” Gilvesy said at the meeting. “The volume is increasing and it would be

prudent for the Ministry of Transportation to take a look.”

She also encouraged the Oxford OPP to look at the data to determine if targeted enforcement is needed.

“We are not traffic experts, and we cannot be allowed in operational. It’s completely up to them what they should decide to do in the future if anything,” she said.

Following a question if the matter had been sent to the Oxford County police board, Coun. Mark Peterson, who is chair of the board, volunteered the matter could be brought up at its next meeting.

“This is why we’re here so we can all encourage this at our detachment boards,” Gilvesy said.

The motion was originally brought forward by Tillsonburg Coun. Kelly Spencer at the Aug. 10 following collisions on the highway between Tillsonburg town limits and the 401.



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EXPECT MORE.

Fraser Frase brings comedy, magic and hypnosis to town



BEN ANDRESS

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

You are getting very sleepy Tillsonburg. Very sleepy. This Friday night we have professional entertainer and certified stage hypnotist Fraser Frase bringing his unique show to town. It will be an entertaining night where comedy, magic and hypnosis collide.

Fraser Frase, also known as Fraser Hood, has spent more than 20 years entertaining audiences across Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and beyond. His show combines comedy hypnosis with mentalism and magic, creating

an unpredictable night where audience volunteers become part of the entertainment.

"They can expect anything to happen," Frase explains. "Nobody knows what the volunteers are going to do."

That unpredictability is a major part of Frase's appeal. Rather than simply performing for an audience he brings volunteers onto the stage and uses hypnosis to have them act out bizarre and hilarious scenarios.

For Frase some of the funniest moments are the ones that even he cannot predict.

"Hard to pick one thing," Frase replied when asked about his funniest moment on stage. "However, I did have a lady once spend the entire evening trying to figure out why she had an extra finger."

Frase's career in entertainment began with a background in television broadcasting. He attended Fanshawe College in London and graduated with the Class of 1991 with a major in TV Broadcasting. Early in his career, he lived and worked in Ottawa, where he hosted his own local comedy room.

He later trained privately under one of Canada's top corporate hypnotists, before becoming a certified stage hypnotist. Since then, he has performed at corporate events, fundraisers, nightclubs, comedy clubs and schools around the world. He also holds the distinction of being the first comedy hypnotist to perform a show in Playas del Coco in Costa Rica.

Some of his other performing highlights include being a runner-up in the Last Laff competition, being named Best Frosh Week Show at the University of Windsor for five years in a row, as well as starring in a Peppermints commercial.

While hypnosis might sound intimidating to some audience members, Frase says there's nothing to be concerned about for those who volunteer.

"Nothing to worry about when coming up and going under hypnosis," Frase explains. "It is fun and everyone has a good time."

The show is designed to be as much about the audience's experience as it is about the volunteers on stage. With magic and mentalism added to the hypnosis,

Frase promises a performance that can move in unexpected directions throughout the evening. Ultimately, the ideal audience is one ready to forget about everyday stresses and simply enjoy themselves.

"An audience excited to let go and have fun and laugh," Frase says with a smile. "Leave your worries and problems at the door and take advantage of making memories."

For anyone looking for something different on a Friday night Fraser Frase's Comedy Magic & Hypnotist Show promises an evening where no one will quite know what is going to happen next. "Enlightenment is always preceded by confusion" is a quote from American psychiatrist and psychologist Milton Hyland Erickson and these words might best explain the show.

The show on Sept. 18 takes place at The Copper Mug. Tickets are available for this 19+ event by visiting www.eventbrite.ca or calling the venue at 519-842-6227. Tickets are \$25, however you can save \$10 and get them for only \$15 if you purchase in advance.

UPCOMING SHOWS IN TILLSONBURG

SEPT. 17 - MICKEY MOONE, THE WASHOUT & TREVOR KOSTYRIA
The Copper Mug
\$10 - 7 p.m.

SEPT. 18 - JUSTINE CHANTALE, KAREN EMENY, NICK ROSS & CHASE BERES
Paddy's Underground
\$10 adv./ \$15 drs - 8 p.m. - 19-plus

SEPT. 18 - COMEDY & HYPNOTIST SHOW W/ FRASER FRASE
The Copper Mug
\$15 - 8 p.m.

SEPT. 19 - KARAOKE NIGHT
The Copper Mug
No Cover - 8:30 p.m.

SEPT. 24 - COTY ROBINSON
The Copper Mug
Free Entry - 8pm

SEPT. 25 - RIPCORDERZ W/ THE MCBAINS, JOHNNY TERRIEN & RAPID TENSION
The Copper Mug
\$20 - 7 p.m.

SEPT. 26 - DOGHOUSE ROSE W/ THE LEXINGTON CURE
Paddy's Underground
\$15 - 8 p.m. - 19-plus

SEPT. 26 - SUGAR KINGS
The Copper Mug
Free Entry - 8 p.m.

OCT. 8 - HAILEY ECKER
The Copper Mug
Free Entry - 8 p.m.

OCT. 9 - KICKIN' KOUNTRY
The Copper Mug
Free Entry - 7 p.m.

OCT. 15 - YOUTH FOUNTAIN W/ WE WERE SHARKS & SUCKERPUNCH!
Paddy's Underground
\$22.60 - 8 p.m. - 19-plus

OCT. 16 - GHOST TOWN CITIZEN
The Copper Mug
Free Entry - 8:30 p.m.

OCT. 17 - SIX2S W/ NOTHING SHOCKING & THE HEADCASES
Paddy's Underground
\$10 - 8 p.m. - 19-plus



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SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 18 | 6:30 PM
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Basement of St Mary's Church on Rolph
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SEPTEMBER 19 | 10 AM - 3 PM
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SEPTEMBER 24
THE 172ND HOUGHTON FAIR
Hall in Fairground
Admission \$5. The parade begins at 11 and
opening ceremonies to follow. There are games,
crafts, food vendors, music, log sawing, tobacco
tying, car, truck, tractor show, face painting and
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SEPTEMBER 28 | 9 - 10 AM
FREE CLASS/OPEN HOUSE AT
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SEPTEMBER 29 | 7 - 9 PM

**SWOX CANDIDATES MEET &
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Mount Elgin United Church
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OCTOBER

OCTOBER 3 | 10 AM - 12 PM
ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE
MESSY CHURCH
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Crafts, games, music, story, snacks and a hot
lunch. Children should be accompanied by an
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OCTOBER 3 | 2 PM
BONNIE SITTER
The Edison, Vienna & are Museum, 6209
Plank Rd. Vienna
Admission by donation, maximum 60 seats.
Author Bonnie Sitter will take us on her
incredible journey from the beginning of her
book, Onion Skins & Peach Fuzz" to how it
became and award winning documentary called
"We Lend a Hand", the forgotten story of "The
Farmerettes". Email - bayhamhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com for further information

OCTOBER 24 | 10 AM - 3 PM
OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY
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is required and anyone over the age of 12 is
welcome (children from 12-15 with an adult,
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the Ingersoll Pipe Band Hall, 108 Wonham
St. S. Ingersoll. The first night is free, and after
that the cost is \$7.50 per person each Monday,
paid monthly at the start of the month. For more
information, contact Julie at 519-535-3314.

**2ND TUES. OF MONTH (SEPT. TO MAY) |
2 - 4 PM**
**4TH TUES. OF MONTH (SEPT. TO MAY) |
7 - 9 PM**
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Street, Woodstock Ontario N4S 1C7
If you have never belonged to a stamp club,
now's the time. Meet new friends, grow your
knowledge and collection. Contact: Don Eaton
dheaton3e3@gmail.com. Website: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>

3RD WED. OF MONTH | 10 AM - NOON

LYNN RIVER PROBUS CLUB
Army, Navy & Air Force Club, Simcoe,
ON. Corner of Water St. and Culver St.
Simcoe. Enter via Culver St.
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fellowship. We have interesting speakers at our
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St. and Culver St. Simcoe. Enter via Culver
St. For more information, please visit our
website at: lynnriverprobus239.com or email
lynnriverprobus239@gmail.com

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS | 7 - 9 PM
SATURDAYS | 10 AM - 12 PM
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purchase mats and uniforms, and our instructors
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a business—any donations go straight back
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a \$20 monthly donation helps support the
program, but if not, classes are completely
free. **Classes are open to anyone 14 and
older.** If you'd like to try a class, please arrive
about 15 minutes early to sign waivers and
get fitted for a uniform. Information can be
found at: <https://www.northbroadwaychurch.ca/nbmfa>,
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TILLSONBURG BRIDGE CLUB
Two games weekly at the Tillsonburg
Senior Centre - 45 Hardy Ave.
SOCIAL BRIDGE - Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m.
A relaxed, friendly game for learners, returners
and everyone else.
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Still friendly, but a bit more structured and
competitive.
Please arrive 10 minutes early.
Questions? tburgbridge@gmail.com or FB:
TburgBridge

COMING EVENTS

SATURDAYS, JUNE 6 - SEPT. 19 | 10 AM - 4 PM

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TILLSONBURG LIONS**

The Tillsonburg Lions meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays. You are invited to their dinner meetings in the Lion's Den at the Community Centre. If you are interested in giving back to your Community contact Jim at 519 409 0876 for more information.....all are welcome.

**1ST WED. OF MONTH | 7 PM
WAGNER MEMORIAL
TEETERVILLE LEGION BRANCH
526 - MEMBERS GENERAL MEETING**

The Wagner Memorial Teeterville
Legion Branch 526 - 3890 Teeterville
Road, Teeterville, ON

Not a member? Contact us to join. For More Information Call, the Legion 519-443-5588.
www.teetervillelegionbranch526.ca

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Contact us today to learn more about VON Oxford Supportive Care Programs: Email: oxford.griefsupport@von.ca, Phone: 1-888-866-7518. All Programs are Free-of-charge.

MEET THE PEOPLE OF THE MEMORIAL VETERAN BANNERS

William (Bill) Mabee

William (Bill) Mabee enlisted in the Canadian Army Corps of Engineers and was trained in England to build bridges and other structures to support the movement of troops and supplies. He landed on the beaches of Normandy in France on D-Day and served in the European Theatre through France, Belgium, Holland and Germany until the end of the war. Bill was discharged in 1946, and he never spoke about his experiences.

His first job after returning home from the war was upgrading a railway trestle in the St Thomas area. He was proprietor of a service station on Simcoe Street in Tillsonburg for several years before becoming owner and operator of a service station in Walsingham, Bill retired in 1971 and passed away in 1972 at the age of 57. He is buried in the Bethel cemetery at Eppels Corners just outside Tillsonburg.



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Sunday: Closed

Why the world comes to Stratford



**OH,
THE
PLACES
WE'LL
GO!**

PAUL KNOWLES

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

As we sat in the Festival Theatre, waiting for the lights to dim, I found myself wondering about the hundreds of people sitting around us. Where were they from? How many had travelled north across that now-controversial border?

It's easy to forget that familiar old Stratford is one of the key tourist destinations in Canada. But it certainly is, with multiple thousands of visitors coming to the community every season.

Once the play started – that fantastic, hilarious, energetic musical called “Something Rotten” – those thoughts disappeared, as I surrendered to the sheer delight of the performance. But a few days later, the question popped back into my head.

So I went to the source. I emailed Stratford Festival publicist Helena Turpin, and asked two questions: “Where do Stratford audiences come from?” and “How many tickets does the theatre sell?”

I found the answers fascinating, and I decided to share them with you, including a full list of the nations represented in those audiences.

The answer to the second question is uncomplicated. In 2025, the Festival sold 482,000 tickets. Many of those are to locals, but that also represents a heck of a lot of tourists.

And I find the information about where these people come from to be very interesting. Helena told me that my question about country of origin was not something she has seen before, and that she was intrigued

by the data she accessed through the online ticketing system. She called the findings, “interesting and inspiring”. I agree.

So here, stats and trivia lovers, is a full list of the countries from whence came Stratford Festival attendees this year. Top two, not surprisingly, are Canada and the United States – still sharing culture despite all the controversy.

After that, Helena shared the list in alphabetical order. People came to Stratford from Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Japan, Malawi, The Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, New Zealand, Panama, Peoples' Republic of China, Portugal, Qatar, Singapore, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sweden, Spain, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom.

And while the theatre is undoubtedly the biggest draw, there is so much more about Stratford to enjoy. This summer, we have attended outdoor concerts, we have picnicked beside Lake Victoria, we have dined in local restaurants, relaxed in pubs, and enjoyed walks along the water, parks, and streets boasting amazing front yard gardens. And, we have attended plays.

The two most recent we took in have reminded me of the sheer excellence of Stratford theatre. This was most obvious because, in the case of both plays, somebody didn't show up.

The plays were “The Tempest”, and “Something Rotten”. Both are on the classic thrust stage of the Festival Theatre – and two more different uses of that space cannot be imagined.

Both are brilliantly staged, with great performances. But some of those performances were especially noteworthy because they were carried off by understudies.

Most impressive was the work of Ben Carlson in *The Tempest*. Carlson, who usually plays a lesser character, was elevated to the leader role of Prospero, because he is understudy to Geraint Wyn Davies, who was unavailable.

I don't know about you, but when I see



(DARIANE SANCHE PHOTO)

Members of the company, *Something Rotten*, including Dan Chameroy, third from left.

that dreaded slip of white paper tucked into the play brochure, announcing an understudy, I feel let down.

Wrong. Carlson was amazing. He carried off his new duties flawlessly and convincingly. His interactions with Marissa Orjalo, who played the exotic spirit Ariel, were emotionally moving. Altogether an amazing accomplishment.

You might think that the *Tempest* – Shakespeare's final play written solely by the bard – and *Something Rotten*, a musical written only a decade ago – would have nothing in common. Essentially, that's true. Except for the whole understudy thing. Because again, when we saw this terrific musical, one of the lead roles – Portia – was played by an understudy. And again, Michelle Bardach, stepping into the role, was amazing. No offense intended to the usual actor, but I can't imagine a finer portrayal of the character.

Something Rotten is actually “something unusual”, in that it was presented at Stratford only two seasons ago. But it's back and I'm glad – it has become one of my favou-

rite musicals ever. The entire cast is terrific (including the astonishing dancers, put through their paces by the great Donna Feore, who both directed and choreographed the play). And I confess a special affection for Dan Chameroy, who plays the entirely outrageous Nostradamus, and my friend Steve Ross, whose Shylock comes to a much better end than Shakespeare ever imagined.

I'm going on at this length about understudies because I think this is strong evidence of the excellence of productions at Stratford. This quality is maintained without missing a beat. And quality is the reason people have come from 30 countries or so to our part of the world.

Now that fall is upon us, we locals still get the opportunity to take in some of the finest theatre in the world. *The Tempest* is on stage through October 24; *Something Rotten* runs through October 31.

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.



Marissa Orjalo as Ariel with members of the company in “*The Tempest*”. (ANN BAGGLEY PHOTO)



(ANN BAGGLEY PHOTO)

The great Fiona Reid as Gonzala and David Collins as Alonso with members of the company in “*The Tempest*”.



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If you throw a black stone into the Red Sea, what does it become?

Wet.

I am a protector who sits on a bridge. Only one person can see through me, while others cannot. What am I?

Sunglasses.

Why did the golfer have to get new pants?

He put a hole in one.

I am always old, but sometimes also new. While I'm never sad, sometimes I am blue. I am never empty, but only sometimes full. What am I?

The moon.

What bats, but never hits; is near a ball, but never thrown?

Eyelashes.

Why did the gardener plant a light bulb in his field?

He was trying to grow a power plant.

SUDOKU

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

Solutions on Page 34

Level: Beginner

PET OF THE WEEK

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Nominate your pet to be Pet of the Week by emailing info@tillsonburgpost.com

WORD SEARCH

SAFE SPORTS

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

- ATHLETE
BRACE
CLEATS
CONCUSSION
CONDITIONING
- CONTUSION
COOL DOWN
ERGONOMICS
GOGGLES
HELMET
- HYDRATION
IMPACT
INFLAMMATION
MOUTH GUARD
PADDING
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WARM-UP



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WEEKEND QUIZ

by Jake Grant

- Who is lead singer of Pearl Jam?
- What is the name of the AI chatbot developed by OpenAI?
- What sport is featured in the television series Ted Lasso?
- Which social media platform is known for its "For You" page?
- What is the best-selling console of all time?
- What is the name of the fictional city where Batman lives?
- Which company owns Pixar?
- Which famous toy has the slogan "You can be anything"?
- What year did Canada fully abolish the death penalty?
- Mach 1 is known as what?

This week's answers are found on pg. 34



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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2026

8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

132 LOSSING DR., NORWICH

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“We must slow the pace at which we improve the capabilities of AI models. Progress will still seem fast, and we must make wise use of the time we gain.”

Excerpt from Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei's essay published on Saturday, Sept. 12, in one of the many warnings issued by industry professionals this past week regarding the potential dangers of rapidly-advancing artificial intelligence.

OBITUARY

BEATRICE ANN GAMBLE

DECEMBER 24, 1951 – SEPTEMBER 12, 2026



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Beatrice Ann Gamble, age 74, born in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

Beatrice will be lovingly remembered by her spouse, David Shelley, her daughter Marjorie Buchanan, her 5 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren and her brother Carl Gamble, sisters Judy Sager, Edna Swing and Pearl

MacDonald, along with family and friends.

She was predeceased by her parents, Mable Ann Gamble and Arthur George, her sister Ruth Smith and her brother Cecil Gamble.

Beatrice will be deeply missed and forever remembered by all who knew and loved her.

Visitation was held on Wednesday September 16, 2026 from 9:00am until 11:00am at Ostrander's Funeral Home, 43 Bidwell Street, Tillsonburg, ON N4G 3T6 (519) 842-5221. Funeral Service was held in the funeral home chapel at 11:00am following the service. Cremation to follow the service.

Donations in memory of Beatrice can be made to the Canadian Cancer Society and can be done online directly with the charity or via cheque payable to the charity by contacting Ostrander's Funeral Home. Condolences can be made at www.ostrandersonline.com

Forever Loved, forever missed.

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PENELOPE “PENNY” MARGARET HOVORKA

(MARCH 21, 1945 – SEPTEMBER 7, 2026)



It is with deep love and heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Penelope “Penny” Margaret Hovorka, who passed peacefully at 3:03 a.m. on September 7, 2026, at the age of 81, with her loving family by her side.

Penny will be dearly missed by her children, Kelly Hovorka, Patrick Hovorka Jr. (Karen Hovorka), and Thomas Hovorka; her grandchildren, Brooklyn Hovorka (Emma O'Connor), Matty Hovorka

(Lisa Craib), Staten Vienneau-Hovorka, and Quinn Hovorka (Karlie Dahms); her great-grandchildren, Georgia and Frankie; her brother, James Kennedy (Deb Kennedy); her nephew Jimmy Kennedy (Stephanie Kennedy) and her many nieces, nephews and cousins. She is also lovingly remembered by her special niece, Courtney Morse (Partlo), her cousin Fran Hewson, and by her dear friend Peg Parker, whose friendship and continued visits were a beautiful gift to Penny right up until her passing.

Penny was predeceased by her beloved husband, Patrick Hovorka Sr; her parents, Eva Kennedy and Jack Kennedy, her stepfather, Paul George; her brother, Donald Kennedy; and her nephew, Jay Kennedy.

Born in Calgary, Penny spent most of her life in Tillsonburg, where she built a life centred around family, friendship and community. At just 18 years old, she met her beloved husband Patrick while they were both serving in the army. They fell in love, moved to Tillsonburg, and raised their family there.

Penny was a mother to her three children, but her care extended far beyond her own family. She was a caregiver to many throughout her life and had a remarkable gift for shaping the lives of young people simply through her presence. She made people feel cared for, welcomed and loved. Her kindness was unconditional, and her loyalty to the people she loved ran deep.

She was funny, dedicated, fiercely loving and always ready to support the people around her. She showed up for her children and grandchildren in everything they did, cheering them on and taking genuine joy in their lives. Family was at the centre of everything, and she was deeply devoted to the life she and Patrick built together—including their love of baseball.

In midlife, Penny discovered a great love for slo-pitch. She was one of the founders and beloved players of the Sockettes in Tillsonburg, where she found friendship, laughter, community and a place to simply have a really good time. Those years brought her tremendous joy, and she absolutely thrived on the ball diamond. And when there was music, Penny was never far from the dance floor. She loved to dance—another place where her joy, humour and zest for life came fully alive. Between the ball diamond and the dance floor, she knew how to have a good time. It was, by all accounts, the time of her life.

Penny endured a long journey with dementia and other health challenges. While her family will feel the profound absence of her physical presence, there is comfort in knowing that her long journey is now complete and that she is at peace.

The family would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to the many people who cared for Penny over the years. Special thanks to the staff at Multi-Service Centre, especially Suzanne (Care Partners) and Daphne, and to the nursing team and staff at Terrace Lodge for the impeccable and compassionate care they provided.

Penny leaves behind more than memories. She leaves behind generations of people who were shaped by her love, her humour, her loyalty and her willingness to show up. Her life lives on in her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, family, friends and in all those she cared for along the way. She will be so dearly missed.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, September 26, 2026, from 1:00–4:00 p.m. at the Tillsonburg Soccer Club. Light snacks and refreshments will be served. In true Penny fashion, dress code is casual and colourful, in keeping with her personality.

Everyone who knew Penny is invited to share favourite memories and photos, express personal condolences or contribute memorial donations to the “Alzheimer Society” via Penny’s online tribute page at www.verhoevefuneralhomes.com or by contacting the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes, Tillsonburg (519) 842-4238.

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

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Eddie Vedder
2. ChatGPT
3. Soccer (football)
4. TikTok
5. PlayStation 2
6. Gotham City
7. Disney
8. Barbie
9. 1998
10. The speed of sound

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*Pre-tax purchase. Single use per day, per Triangle Rewards account. Conditions apply. See inside back page for details.
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TIRE SALE

WEEK 2

ON/OFF ROAD TRUCK

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ON/OFF ROAD TRUCK

ALL SEASON TRUCK & SUV

 FIRESTONE SAVE 20% WITH Instant Rebate* DESTINATION A/T2 ROAD RATED 95.5*	 FIRESTONE SAVE 20% WITH Instant Rebate* DESTINATION X/T ROAD RATED 95.4*	 GOODYEAR SAVE 25% WITH Instant Rebate* WRANGLER SR-A ROAD RATED 95.4*	 FIRESTONE SAVE 25% WITH Instant Rebate* DESTINATION LE3 ROAD RATED 94.2*	 MOTOMASTER SAVE 25% HYDRA EDGE HD ROAD RATED 99.6*
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