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Hospital Angels of Giving campaign underway

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

As the 100th anniversary year winds down for Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital, there is still a push on for the hospital foundation to meet its goal for the 100 for 100 Club as well as the Angels of Giving Campaign.

Angels of Giving is not a new campaign for TDMH Foundation as it's been going more than 20 years. This year-end campaign allows hospital patrons to donate in memory of a loved one. The name of the memorialized person is then put on an angel decoration on the Christmas tree in the hospital. For this year, there is the added bonus of any new donation of \$100 or more will become part of the permanent 100 for \$100 recognition materials.

"This is only this year in honour of the 100th anniversary," said Gerry Dearing, foundation executive director.

The work of the foundation is important as it funds highest-priority equipment purchases for the hospital. Although provincial funding is provided to hospitals, it is for operating costs and staffing and not equipment.

Every year, the foundation identifies items it will fund in the hospital. This year's big item is the start of a multi-year bed replacement campaign. With each patient bed costing \$17,000 and beds for the intensive care unit coming in at \$55,000, this is a huge commitment. Also on this year's list of target items is vital sign towers, which are the tools placed next to beds with equipment to monitor blood pressure, temperature and other vital signs. A gastroscope rounds out the wish list for 2025.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



FESTIVE RIDE PROGRAM UNDERWAY

As part of its Festive RIDE program, Oxford OPP recently conducted a RIDE program on North Street West in Tillsonburg. Festive RIDE will continue until Jan. 1 with the goal of taking impaired drivers off the roads this holiday season. Story on page 8.

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Changes are being proposed for conservation authorities

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA) board is opposing major changes to Ontario's 36 conservation authorities.

At its Dec. 3 board meeting, authority directors – who represent the communities within the watershed – passed a resolution stating they do not support the proposed amalgamation that would

fold LPRCA in with the Essex Region CA, Lower Thames Valley CA, St. Clair Region CA, Upper Thames River CA, Kettle Creek CA, Catfish Creek CA, and Grand River CA. The new entity would encompass a huge swath of Southwestern Ontario, stretching from Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River in the west, down the Lake Erie shoreline to past Dunnville. The proposal seeks to change the boundaries of the existing conservation authorities, currently based on watersheds, to just seven.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

Merry Christmas AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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LPRCA against proposed changes

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The proposed new Lake Erie conservation authority would see the number of member municipalities increase to 81. Many councils have expressed concern that this would put local representation at risk.

In a letter to the Minister of Environment, Parks

and Conservation about the proposed change, LPRCA board chair and Tillsonburg Deputy Mayor Dave Beres, wrote, "The LPRCA Board of Directors acknowledges and supports the province's goals of improved efficiency, consistency and fiscal responsibility in conservation delivery,

however, the LPRCA Board of Directors does not support the proposed Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority boundary configuration."

During a recent Tillsonburg council meeting, Beres confirmed the authority plans no budget increase for 2026. He added that LPRCA generates 67 cents of every dollar it spends through park fees, logging revenue, and permit fees, instead of relying on taxpayers.

In an interview on Monday, Beres said the proposed boundaries don't make sense, as some areas within the proposed larger conservation authority have shorelines to manage, while others don't, and some, like LPRCA, have forest assets and parks generating revenue.

"They haven't come out and told us specifically why we are doing this," he said, saying all conservation authorities are told the province is still gathering information on the proposal.

The province's news release on the proposed change states legislation to create a new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency will be released soon. The goal of the change is "improving the

province's conservation authority system to help get shovels in the ground faster on homes and other local infrastructure projects, while strengthening the vital role conservation authorities play in managing watersheds and protecting communities from floods and natural hazards."

Conservation authority boards across the province and Conservation Ontario, the provincial agency representing all authorities, continue to oppose the proposal of creating only seven authorities. Beres said the LPRCA board wants the province to revisit the proposal and extend discussions past Dec. 22.

"There's all sorts of things we're doing right and they want to change the whole system," he said.

Beres also has concerns about present and past donors to the authority. A portion of the properties the authority owns was donated by local residents.

Any residents wishing to comment on the proposal can do so through the province's Environmental Bill of Rights website at ERO No. 025-1257 Proposed boundaries for regional consolidations of Ontario's Conservation Authorities.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

One of the concerns with a larger regional conservation authority, as is being proposed, is the future of conservation areas, such as Deer Creek Conservation Area pictured here. Conservation areas assist the Long Point Region Conservation authority in generating 67 per cent of its own revenue.



SHOPPING FOR MOM AND DAD

Talk Tillsonburg's 10th annual Children Shop for Christmas event was held on December 6 at the Upper Deck Youth Centre. Thanks to generous contributions, kids were able to choose gifts for their parents and experience the joy of giving. Kelsi, left, and Maci Marten said they got something beautiful for their parents at the event.

(ROBIN KRAFFT PHOTO)

Hospital Angels of Giving campaign underway

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

One unique feature of the Angels of Giving campaign this year is the launch of the campaign was the night of the Santa Claus parade. Called Light the Hospital, the lights were turned on at a launch party that featured hot chocolate and cookies for parade watchers, with an invitation to come in and see the donor recognition wall. This event is being planned annually.

While TDMH and Alexandra Hospital Ingersoll are working on amalgamation as Rural Roads Health Services, the board of directors of both hospitals is steadfast in its commitment to retain two separate foundations.

"We believe this is a way to respect past donors and cultivate future local giving where the need is the greatest - to enhance services at the site," stated a press release on the topic.



Donations can be made through the website at ruralroadshealthservices.ca by going to the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital and click on the "Donate Now" button, in person at the hospital or by scanning the attached QR code.



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EDITORIAL

Redrawing conservation authority boundaries would be a mistake

In its latest bid to speed up development, the province is proposing to redraw the boundaries of its conservation authorities.

As it stands now, the province has 36 conservation authorities, with boundaries based on the watersheds of the major rivers that feed into the Great Lakes. The mandate of the conservation authorities is to undertake watershed-based programs to protect people and property from flooding and conserve natural resources.

Locally, the Long Point Region Conservation Authority does that, and much more. LPRCA is the steward of more than 11,000 acres of woodlots and wetlands, and operates numerous conservation area parks. It also works with landowners to plant trees and develop erosion control plans.

Although it's not entirely clear yet what is driving the proposed change in conservation authorities, it appears to be the planning aspect of the organization's responsibilities. In the province's rhetoric, the speed of approvals and consistency of policy are mentioned. If this is the case, the simple solution is to transfer these responsibilities to a centralised agency while leaving each local authority to manage its other programs.

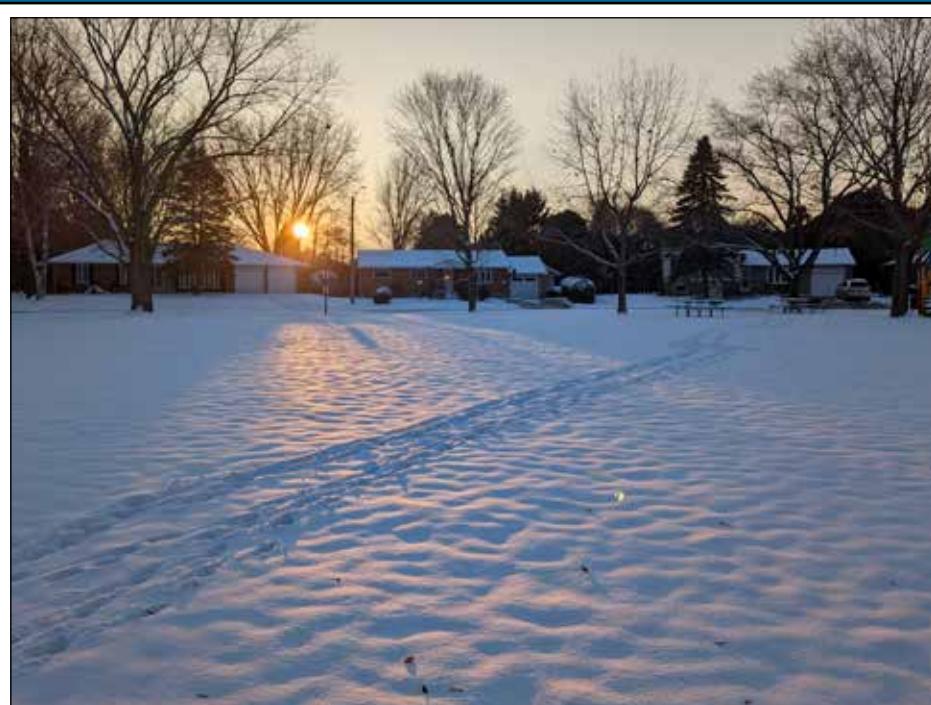
But wait – is there an overarching problem with approvals? Many stories exist of a landowner waiting months for an ap-

proval and spending thousands of dollars on studies. Yet, conservation authority staff are operating based on provincial legislation. While there is no doubt that, in many cases, the oversight is warranted, there are likely instances where it is overkill. Maybe the solution is for the province to go back to the drawing board on its own regulations instead of laying blame on those enforcing them?

The present proposal to amalgamate the 36 conservation authorities into seven would see Long Point amalgamated into a huge entity that would encompass territory from Lake St. Clair, down the Lake Erie shoreline to past the Grand River. This is a large area with different features from the Norfolk Sand Plain, which dominates the Long Point watershed. To lose local control would be the wrong way to go, and the proposed conservation area would see the number of member municipalities jump to 81 from eight.

It should be added that in the case of LPRCA, it operates efficiently, generating 67 per cent of its own budget, partially from conservation areas and woodlot operations.

The province needs to remember that bigger is not better. A 2015 Fraser Institute study on municipal amalgamations came to this conclusion. Hopefully, the present provincial government will as well.



Westmount Park.

(STELLA JURGEN PHOTO)

PHOTOGRAPHERS WANTED

Do you have a great photo you think would look good on the editorial page?

The Tillsonburg Post is looking for images to display in this space from community members who would like to share their art work. All images must be taken in Tillsonburg, or the immediate area, and should not be of people.

Images should be high resolution jpgs. Please send only one image per e-mail, and send no more than three images. Images should be sent to jeff@granthaven.com

A soft landing after a sudden, and unexpected loss



EVERYONE HAS A STORY TO TELL

ROBIN KRAFFT

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Dorothy Hrischenko moved from Windsor to Toronto in 1967, and it was a bit of an adjustment. Her father was keen to point out the advantages that Toronto offered, exclaiming, "Girls can play hockey here!"

"I was not really interested and I couldn't skate very well, but I joined the team and played for three years," Hrischenko said, laughing. "There were daughters of NHL players on our team, but I was not a natural hockey player. It was a father-daughter thing and dad was absolutely thrilled."

Dorothy finished high school at 17, and spent a year in Vancouver, working at various jobs. She returned in a van with three

other people, all of their worldly possessions, and a puppy piddling on their laps.

"One day I saw two children walking a puppy on a string," Hrischenko explained. "They said that their mother told them they had to get rid of it and that I could have the puppy for 25 cents. I gave them each a quarter and took the puppy. She was a Doberman/hound cross, and she was the joy of my life. That was probably the best thing that came out of that year in Vancouver."

Back in Toronto, she entered the Radio and Television Arts program at Seneca, and got a full-time job at Classcomm, becoming the program director.

"I loved it," Hrischenko enthused. "I did everything there, sound, camera work, editing, being out in the community, political interviews, directing, the whole process."

She worked at CTV before meeting her future husband Allyn, who worked at Global. Dorothy became Global's Chief News Librarian, overseeing staff, editing, documenting news stories that might be useful in the future, and providing video to reporters.

"I was on call the weekend the Berlin Wall came down," Hrischenko said. "I

remember pulling all kinds of video for them to use. That was probably the most notable historical event, but there was always something, every day we were in high demand."

Her focus eventually shifted to family life, and she stayed home to raise their two daughters. She took up a hobby that satisfied her love of live music performances and her need to be frugal: entering radio contests. She has an eclectic taste in music, including rock, country, and folk music, and she won plenty of free tickets through her passion and perseverance.

When they were retired and ready to move, they discovered Tillsonburg in a Toronto Star article about desirable communities. Tragically, Dorothy would make the move alone, the day after Allyn's sudden passing.

She contacted friends and family to let them know, including the morning show hosts at Indie 88.1, a Toronto radio station. They had become close over the years, and Dorothy broke down on the phone. She was dealing with a devastating loss, but also an impossible situation.

Their moving truck had left a lot behind, and the house had to be emptied that day.

"In one hour they called me back,"

Hrischenko said. "They found movers (AMJ Campbell) who would take everything to Tillsonburg for free and a junk truck for anything I didn't want. They gave me \$100 in gift certificates to feed everyone who helped. They saved my life, there was no way I could have done it."

She didn't know anyone in town, so she joined the Tillsonburg Seniors Centre once she got somewhat settled. Her sister and her new neighbour, Ange, were also incredibly supportive.

"My next-door neighbour has been an absolute gem," Hrischenko said. "I can't imagine my life being anywhere near as good if I landed anywhere else; it has meant so much to me. I volunteer where I can. I have got so much from Tillsonburg, I want to give back."

She added that her first year here is a bit hazy; she was in a state of shock, functioning on automatic. The months slipped by, and as the Christmas season approached, she agreed to be on the Seniors Centre's float in the Santa Claus parade. A night parade was new for her, and the lights and the joyful, glowing faces helped her to recover her Christmas spirit.

"I've landed in the best place possible," she said. "I just didn't know it at the time."



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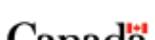
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The Ontario peninsula hosts unique Carolinian flora and fauna



THE STAGE IS THE WORLD

LAUREL A. BEECHEY

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Does Ontario have a peninsula?

We do, but it is actually, a three-in-one peninsula. Altogether, it is known as the Ontario Peninsula. The Ontario Peninsula starts down in Windsor, which is surrounded on three sides by Lake Erie, Detroit River, Lake St. Clair, and the St. Clair River, in an area known as Southwestern Ontario. As you travel northeast, the land curves around at Long Point to become the Niagara Peninsula, which is between Lake Ontario, the Niagara River and Lake Erie.

On the northwest side of the Ontario peninsula is the Bruce Peninsula the land between Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. From the Bruce and Niagara peninsulas, south is known as Southwestern Ontario peninsula. Totally, the Ontario peninsula keeps on going northeast, through Lake Ontario, into the St. Lawrence toward Montreal, entering the mouth of the Ottawa River, travelling northwest along the Quebec Boarder. Leaving the Ottawa River, the border heads west on the Mattawa River to North Bay on Lake Nipissing. Crossing the lake, it continues the French River into Georgian Bay, completing the boundaries of the peninsula.

Even more unique is what you find, if you draw a curved line from Port Huron to Toronto. It marks the north end of the Carolinian Zone, which reaches down to Essex County, Point Pelee and Windsor. It's called Carolinian Canada, and is known as a 'vegetation zone' which makes up only one per cent of Canada's total land area. Yet, it has the highest variety of wild species, highest number of species at risk and is also home to 25 per cent of Canada's population. Interestingly, the lower half of Oxford County, including Tillsonburg is part of the Carolinian Zone.

It is hard to imagine that there are some 2,200 spe-

cies of plants found in the zone, 64 species of ferns, at least 110 species of grasses and over 130 different sedges (grass-like species) and 70 species of trees.

Running about, and living in all the foliage, are reptiles and amphibians, mammals, birds, most likely more species than we can imagine make their home this region. There are about 400 species of birds. That's over half of the species in all of Canada! Several butterflies, like the Karner Blue and the Frosted Elfin are limited only to the zone. Mammals like the badger, gray fox and the Virginia opossum are also limited to the Carolinian forest. That's not all, one-third of the rare, threatened, and endangered species found in all of Canada are here. Sixty five per cent of Ontario's rare plants are found in this region, and 40 per cent are restricted to the Carolinian Zone.

Several areas are set aside to preserve the biodiversity of the area. Oxford County has one such area, the Embro Upland Forest, which is part of the Embro Pond Conservation Area, on Road 84, west of County Road 6. It is near the town of Embro, and features trails, picnic areas, a pond, and is maintained by the Upper Thames Region Conservation Authority.

Others nearby might sound familiar. The Long Point UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, which is internationally recognized as the world's longest freshwater sand spit that goes 40 km into Lake Erie, is one of many designations for Long Point, to preserve this unique natural jewel. Also, the Catfish Creek Slope and Floodplain Forest in Elgin County is another natural area.

Southwestern Ontario lands are unique and must remain so. Yet, how many today care about saving areas that have extraordinary flora and fauna. What we can do is to learn more and start in our own backyard. Inspire your neighbours and family. Learn about the SOSS, the Southern Ontario Seed Strategy. It has brought together the brightest and kindest native seed and plant folks in Ontario to create a restoration economy

The demand for native plants is growing, with the increasing interest in habitat gardening. People are experiencing climate change, loss, and a desire to reconnect with nature, which SOSS hopes to assist with. The biggest problem seems to be a serious shortage of native plants, which could cause problems with priorities and timelines. SOSS is aiming to increase the supply and support the demand for genetically-appropriate native seed.

Using native plants has been pushed the last few years. Peter and I removed the grass from our backyard and planted clover and trees to do our part.

Tillsonburg POST

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Body camera now used by Oxford OPP officers

Oxford County Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Detachment is now equipped with body-worn cameras (BWC).

The OPP supports the implementation and use of any tools or technologies that enable collecting better evidence, demonstrates greater accountability and transparency, and enhances public and officer safety in Oxford County and beyond.

After a successful roll out of in car cameras (ICC), which incorporated an Automated Licence Plate Recognition (ALPR) system, the Oxford OPP, along with other detachments within West Region, are rolling out BWC's for each individual officer.

The BWC's are worn on the front of the officer's vest and are clearly visible to anyone an officer may be interacting with. The BWC will display a visible green ring with flashing lights when in standby mode, which will turn flashing red once the BWC's begin recording.

The full deployment of the BWC's in Oxford is expected to be complete as soon as practicable, though officers who have finished training will begin using them immediately.

The Oxford OPP remains dedicated to ensuring public safety and providing proactive, innovative policing in partnership with our communities. We value your role in helping build safer communities for everyone.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Oxford OPP Constable Matthew Foster shows the new body-worn cameras that will be used by officers. The cameras will assist with collecting evidence and provide greater accountability and enhance officer safety.

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LIONS DONATION

Tillsonburg Lions Club members recently made a donation to the Salvation Army with money raised at its regular Monday night bingos. Left to right, presenting the cheque for \$3,000 are: Lions President Terry Fleming, Major Denise Walker, and Lions member Josiane DeCloet.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

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TOWNSHIP OF NORWICH NEWS

Toews wants feedback on Norwich services

LUKE EDWARDS

Post Contributor

A Norwich councillor wants to see what people who do business with the township think about the process.

Coun. Karl Toews put forward a motion at the Nov. 25 council meeting asking staff to produce a report “detailing the feasibility and logistics of offering residents who have completed an application process with the township the

opportunity to complete a satisfaction survey.” His goal is to get some feedback about what processes are working and where they can improve.

“I think it sends a good message that we want people’s feedback and we’re open to learning, we’re open to improving,” he said.

Toews said he wanted to keep it fairly narrow, restricting it to only those who have gone through an application process of some kind. His fellow councillors support the mo-

tion, though Coun. Shawn Gear also offered some advice, suggesting staff keep any potential survey tight and concise. Otherwise, people would be less likely to fill it out.

“Try to keep it short and connect very quickly and easily,” he said.

Toews said he expected the surveys would generate both positive and negative feedback, but hoped the process would give them some insight for how to better serve the community.

Significant progress expected on all but one strategic plan items in Norwich

LUKE EDWARDS

Post Contributor

Norwich staff say one of the 37 items in the strategic plan councillors crafted at the beginning of this term will be a challenge to make any headway on as they enter the final year of the term, but significant progress or completion is expected on the remaining items.

CAO Matt Smith provided an update on the township’s strategic plan at the Nov. 25 council meeting. Smith’s report found 11 items have been finished, with another 11 he classified as “ongoing,” meaning they’ve been worked on and are the types of projects that never really end.

Another five projects were labeled as “in progress” and Smith said he expected those to be complete or nearly complete by this time next year.

The remaining items that were labelled as “not started” are, for the most part, awaiting completion of the

Norwich Secondary Plan and township communications strategy.

“My expectation is by the time of the election next year we would have made significant progress on all of those not started action items with one exception,” Smith said.

That one item is the plan to find ways to reroute truck traffic that’s passing through the village. Smith said there’s been some conversations with their Oxford County colleagues, but the lack of appropriate alternative routes has left them stuck for the time being.

“In order for us to divert truck traffic around the Village of Norwich we would have to have full load roads that they could travel on,” he said.

There aren’t any existing full load roads that are close enough to the village to convince truck drivers to bypass the village. Any alternate route would be too far out of the way for truckers, and limited enforcement ability would likely make those efforts a waste, Smith said.

There was a second item the report noted as in the “not started” category and unlikely to be implemented in this term, and that was a plan to hold council open houses. Staff said it would be ineffective to hold such an open house in the final year of a term, but noted specific meetings could be accommodated. Similarly, an annual strategic plan open house next term was supported in the report.

The 37 action items developed at the start of this council term were based on five priority areas: Facilitate and address potential impediments to sustained growth; ensure that adequate, timely and appropriately serviced property is available for commercial and industrial development; improve pedestrian and traffic safety; continue updating the township’s asset management plan with new information and continue to base capital spending on decisions in it; enhance the township’s communication to and its engagement with township residents and businesses.



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Weekend Quiz

by Jake Grant

1. The Four Horsemen of the _____ appear in the Book of Revelation.
2. What is the largest 2nd Hawaiian island?
3. What year were seatbelts made mandatory in Canada?
4. What do Americans commonly call Emmental cheese?
5. The flowers on the
6. Who originally sang "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer"?
7. What year was the Toonie introduced?
8. What part of the body is affected by glaucoma?
9. What is the capital of Norway?
10. Which star guided the three kings to Baby Jesus?

This week's answers are found on pg. 26

tillsonburgpost.com



Rain or Shine Play Centre excites children

A whole new world has opened for play time in Tillsonburg.

Rain or Shine Play Centre, Tillsonburg's first indoor play centre, located at 55 Broadway Unit B, offers a modern 2,500 square-feet indoor play area.

There are slides, zip lines, climbing areas, soccer area, toddler area, toy cars, and merry-go round, all in bright, fun colours.

"Parents have a relaxing spot to sit while they watch. It's very open, bright and inviting so parents can see their kids at all times," said Rain or Shine Play Centre owner Lori McDonell.

The Play Centre is known for its drop-in play time, birthday parties, 'mom meets,' and two-hour private events, which are new to the play centre. It is open seven days a week from 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday to Saturday, and 10-6 on Sunday.

"I think it's perfect for the size of the town," said McDonell.

Some kids play for an hour or two, some up to four or five hours. The fee is structured as a one-day pass – 'play all day' – and you can come and go all day if you want. A one-day pass for 4-12 year olds is \$13.99 and \$9.99 for ages 0-3. Monthly and yearly passes are available as well as 10-card passes. Gift certificates can also be pur-



Lori McDonell, owner of Rain or Shine Play Centre, at 55 Broadway Unit B, is looking forward to a busy holiday season.

chased – great for the holiday season.

"Some days are busier than others, but I would say daytime and weekends are busiest. There's really no rhyme or reason, but we do know PD Days are going to be busy.

"The private events are new here. We try to make sure everyone knows well in advance. So we post them on our website, we post them on our doors, and we put them on social media (Facebook and Instagram) every once in a while.

"Birthday parties are probably our number one thing - we have two party rooms," said McDonell, noting it's also a great place for informal 'Mom Meets.'

"Moms meet with other moms here."

Each party room can host up to 20 people, but their

biggest birthday party, so far, was 34.

"That was just to eat (in a party room), then they came out to play. We found a way to make it work."

They also have an 'imaginary play' room, created for children who need a quieter space, or moms to be with their little ones, although sometimes the room is not that quiet, smiled McDonell, who is a psychotherapist (mental health professional) working in play.

"I know how important play is."

Play ages are listed at 0-12 years.

"I would say that most kids up to 10 are really the ones who most enjoy it. And I would say 'bring a friend.' Most kids find it more exciting when they have people to play with.

Except for the little ones,

they don't seem to mind. But for the older ones, six, seven, eight... they need a partner."

Parents are responsible for their own kids, but Rain or Shine also offers special PD day events which offer a structured program and food (\$60).

"Parents can drop their kids off for PD days and we take care of them. So it's like a camp."

PET SPA

"We have a pet groomer that comes in, when they are booked, and during that time the kids can play here free. The parents can sit and watch while they wait for their dog to be groomed."

It takes about one hour, she said, and if the children want to play beyond the one hour, the play time fee is reduced 50 per cent.

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OPP's Festive RIDE program underway

Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers across West Region's 13 detachments continue their efforts to get impaired drivers off our roads and highways this holiday season.

The 2025 Festive RIDE (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) campaign began across southwestern Ontario on Nov. 20 and runs until Jan. 1. Throughout this annual enforcement and education campaign, drivers can expect a heightened OPP presence on West Region roads and highways, as officers conduct RIDE checks 24 hours a

day, seven days a week throughout Ontario.

The first two weeks of the campaign saw 1,055 RIDE check events in Western Region's 13 detachments. As a result, 95 impaired driving charges were laid and 39 warn-range suspensions were issued. Of this total, six charges and one warn-range suspension were in Oxford County.

RIDE is part of Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) commitment to ensuring Ontario roads are safe from alcohol and drug-impaired drivers. Drivers are reminded

to do their part during the campaign by never driving after consuming alcohol or drugs and preventing others from driving if you know or suspect that they may be impaired. Drivers are reminded that no amount of alcohol or drugs in your system is safe when driving.

Further, young and novice drivers are reminded that if you are 21 and under or have a G1, G2, M1 or M2 licence, you cannot have any drugs or alcohol in your system.

If you suspect an impaired driver, make that lifesaving call and dial 9-1-1.

Local MP sees federal budget won't help average Oxford resident

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The recently-passed federal budget won't do a lot to assist the average resident in Oxford County, the local MP maintains.

MP Arpan Khanna says residents hoped the budget would help them get by.

"Affordability is the number one issue, and it is in Oxford County as well," he said, saying he is hearing from residents saying they can't afford rent, can't buy food and can't buy their children Christmas presents.

During debate on the budget, Khanna provided examples of the stories he has heard in the riding when speaking to the budget. Nicole, a mother of an autistic child, works two jobs for 70 hours per week and barely makes enough to pay her rent. Khanna said she may end up losing her home.

"Usually, when you sacrifice, you get some light at the end of the tunnel. We aren't seeing that," he said.

Shane, a trucker from Oxford, is impacted by tariffs, trade wars, and an industrial carbon tax. Combined with the rising cost of living, these pressures forced him to sell his belongings. Meanwhile, CAMI workers have been laid off.

Khanna said the budget may help big industry, but won't help the average Canadian. He noted that spending on consultants has increased, as has overall spending and debt.

"Even the Independent Budgetary Officer has said he (Prime Minister Carney) is cooking the books and the debt is more than he says," Khanna said, adding there has also been a warning that the country's credit rating could go down if this continues.

For farmers, Khanna said the budget lacks relief from the industrial carbon tax and packaging laws, and there's been no lifting of canola tariffs.

Speaking further on tariffs, Khanna questioned where the tariff relief the prime minister promised is.

"Who is making money? Brookfield is making massive profits, they are signing deals," he asserted.

Pressed for more details, he said Brookfield signed a deal with the United Arab Emirates a few days before the prime minister was there. He also alleged that Brookfield signed a deal in the United States and will be a beneficiary of the European space deal.

"We have to hold this government accountable and ensure they are lining the pockets of Canadians, or are they lining the pockets of Brookfield?" he said.

The budget does have tax relief for those in the upper tax brackets.

"For the average Canadian who works their butts, who make the sacrifices, nothing," Khanna said.

He also wants Oxford residents to note the prime minister's absence in question period.

"The prime minister owes it to give us some transparency on these issues," he said.

Municipal benefits

There have been times when past federal budgets have launched infrastructure programs in conjunction with the province, making dollars available to municipalities for large capital projects. That isn't the case with the budget, or at least not in a manner that would benefit Tillsonburg.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy explained there is a provincial and territorial stream, worth \$17.2 billion over the next decade, to support housing-related infrastructure.

"However, it comes with a significant caveat: municipalities must reduce or eliminate development charges to access these funds," she said. "Development charges are paid on new construction and are essential for funding the infrastructure and facilities required to support growth."

In Tillsonburg, development charges funded the recent construction of three new pickleball courts, which Gilvesy said were in response to the community's expansion.

"These charges play an important role in responsible, growth-related community development," she said. "It remains unclear how the budget's conditions will impact existing plans or whether the new funding streams will be sufficient to support them without shifting additional financial pressure onto current ratepayers."

Business input

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce provided mostly favourable comments on the budget's investments and incentives to assist businesses, but also raised concerns about Canada's level of debt.

A complete analysis is available at <https://occ.ca/rapid-policy/2025-federal-budget/>



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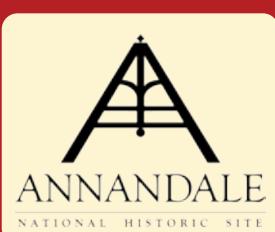
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Oxford school board trustee opens up about being shut out

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

David Cripps wasn't allowed to talk to the media as a vice-chair and trustee of the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) – but the Ingersoll resident said nothing is holding him back now. The province assumed control of the TVDSB in April 2025, and on May 1 appointed supervisor Paul Bonifero to oversee all financial and operational decisions. According to the government, the intervention was prompted by longstanding concerns about financial mismanagement, including persistent deficits and several spending decisions it deemed unacceptable, leading the province to conclude that direct oversight was necessary. Even though Cripps and his fellow trustees aren't being paid and have no access to their email accounts or any other information, he is still doing what he can to help. "Director of Education Bill Tucker will take my calls, so if someone approaches me, I am still able to relay information to him, but that's really the extent of my role.

There's been no guidance other than the minister's musings, I'll call them." The Ingersoll resident and small business owner acknowledges that change is needed within the school board system, but emphasized that it must include local, trustworthy, and accessible people who can support education on the ground—especially in Oxford and other rural communities. Cripps admitted that trustees are not always the best positioned to solve every education issue but said having a local voice is an important starting point.

"As a parent, it always brought me comfort and faith in the system, knowing there was someone in Ingersoll or Woodstock or East Zorra-Tavistock I could reach out to and have a conversation with to at least get some direction on how to navigate the system. In my opinion, we are at risk of losing that." The Ontario government recently passed Bill 33, granting the Minister of Education significantly expanded powers to investigate school boards and intervene in their operations. Under the new legislation, the minister can launch probes into

board governance, issue binding directives, and, in certain circumstances, assume control over a board's decision-making authority. Supporters argue the changes will improve accountability and strengthen public confidence in the education system, while critics warn the bill undermines local democracy by weakening the role of elected trustees and centralizing power within the provincial government.

The Minister would be able to issue binding directives to boards in the "public interest." If boards fail to comply, the province could assume their powers, in effect, overriding democratically elected trustees, as has occurred at the Thames Valley District School Board.

The current education minister, Paul Calandria, has said he will bring forward a plan by year's end to eliminate school board trustees "100 per cent". Cripps takes the minister at his word but is concerned about a lack of transparency and clarity from the province. He would also welcome a conversation with Ontario's top brass.

"I would appreciate the



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)
David Cripps.

and she's on a back road. I was able to work with the superintendent, and we were instantly able to recognize there was a data problem with the bus company."

Cripps, a father of four, decided to run for office after having positive experiences with the education system when his children were in school.

"I have four kids and during my time there were all kinds of things that cropped and I felt super supported by principals and board staff, but there were also occasions when it was a bit of a challenge." He added the trustees he reached out to were al-

ways open and accessible.

"I wanted to continue that openness and lots of folks in Oxford feel we sort of play second fiddle since everything is in London. I made it part of my mandate to open up that accessibility."

Cripps believed he and fellow Oxford trustee Leeanne Hopkins were making progress and the pair addressed each municipal council in the county in recent months.

"A number of the mayors reached out directly to us with issues they had directly experienced and we were able to help those folks. I think we were going down the right path."

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Finck's 'aces in the hole' lift Gemini senior volleyball girls to fifth-set victory

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

It was the long way around. But a trio of euchre-playing Tillsonburg Gemini senior girls' volleyball players did finally get the 'ace in the hole' reference.

"I've heard it, but I don't know what it means," confessed Megan Mullen, admitting she was not a poker player, the card game where the expression originated. For the

record, 'ace in the hole' references a player holding an ace, an advantage based on it being the highest card in the deck - in the hidden hole card position.

"I love euchre," interjected Kherington Spanjers.

"Love it," agreed Mullen.

"My family hosts euchre tournaments - so I love it (too)," said Meesha Finck.

Finck did provide the Gemini with a pair of literal aces in a hole

in the St. Thomas Parkside Stampeders defence Tuesday, Dec. 2 inside Glendale's Community Gym, an advantage pushing their lead in the fifth and final set to 12-6.

"Served two aces, right down the middle," credited Spanjers.

"They were 'tanks,'" added Mullen.

"They were rockets," Spanjers concluded.

Finck, who has played at the Ontario Volleyball Association (OVA) level with the St. Thomas Spikers and Chaos, added a solid defensive dig, setting up a kill finished by Hailey Lindie to up Tillsonburg's lead to 13-7. The Stampeders got back to 10 before the Gemini 'trumped' (a more recognizable euchre reference) Parkside for a 15-10 win, salvaging the fifth and final set of the match.

Tillsonburg hadn't started badly 'out of the gates' in its first Thames Valley Regional Athletics match of the season said coach Raelene Stockmans, displaying some good defence in its first set. However, dropping that one 25-15, they came out flat in a 25-10 second-set loss. Parkside wrapped up the match victory with a 25-14 win, taking the fourth set 25-9.

The Gemini were scheduled to be back in action the following day in Woodstock. Challenged by illness and work conflicts preventing as full a practice roster as she would prefer, Stockmans looks forward to building on the team's potential as the season progresses.

In the interim, the Gemini weren't about to fold their collec-

tive hand, keeping things positive.

"Even though we lost, we were still having fun," said Spanjers.

"Only going to get better," Mullen added.

TVRA SCOREBOARD

Senior Girls Volleyball

Wednesday, Dec. 3

Woodstock CI 25, 25, 25; Gemini 15, 13, 16

Tuesday, Dec. 2

Parkside 25, 25, 25, 25, 10; Gemini 15, 10, 14, 9, 15

Junior Girls Volleyball

Wednesday, Dec. 3

Woodstock CI 25, 25, 25; Gemini 16, 20, 8

Gemini 25, 27, 21, 25; Parkside 23, 25, 25, 14

Senior Boys Basketball

Wednesday, Dec. 3

Woodstock CI 53, Gemini 43

Tuesday, Dec. 2

St. Thomas Parkside 65, Gemini 45

Junior Boys Basketball

Wednesday, Dec. 3

Woodstock CI 62, Gemini 51

Tuesday, Dec. 2

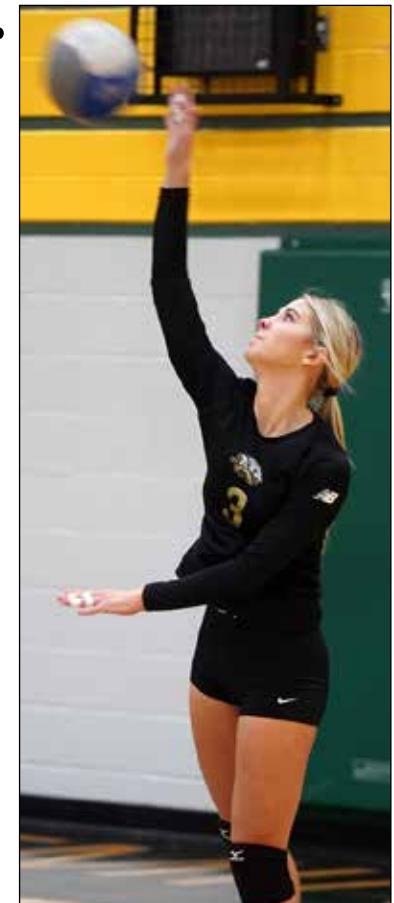
St. Thomas Parkside 65, Gemini 45

Girls Curling

Wednesday, Dec. 3

Woodstock Huron Park 6, Gemini 4

Wednesday, Nov. 26



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Gemini Megan Mullen serves it up against Parkside.

Gemini 8, Parkside 2

Boys Curling

Wednesday, Dec. 3

Aylmer East Elgin 13, Gemini 2

Wednesday, Nov. 26

Parkside 7, Gemini 3

Girls Hockey

Wednesday, Dec. 3

St. Thomas St. Joe's 3, Gemini 0

Thursday, Nov. 27

East Elgin 4, Gemini 0
Boys Hockey

Wednesday, Dec. 3

Gemini 4, East Elgin 1



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Gemini Hailey Lindie (right) powers a kill against St. Thomas Parkside.

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Tight games result in five ties in Club Oxford B Division

JEFF GWYN

Post Contributor

B-Line Trucking vaulted to second place in Club Oxford's B Division in a week of tight games with multiple ties.

Nov. 30

A Division

Health Hut 3, Fody's 1

Health Hut had a bit of an upset in this one as a short bench and a rookie goalie helped keep the momentum going. Fody's had some great chances, but couldn't get a bounce and had some trouble keeping Health Hut from getting their speed going.

Travis Horvath had two points for Health Hut. Christian Clifford had the goal for Fody's.

ReMax 3, Apple Shack 2

ReMax held off a late Apple Shack charge to secure the win. Their top line was pressuring all night and helped tilt the ice. Apple Shack stayed in this one, even after a late empty net goal. Late pressure couldn't find the back of the net.

Brendan Soares had three points for ReMax. Brandon Velda had two goals for Apple Shack.

B Division

Carquest 3, Royal LePage 3

Carquest was able to find some secondary scoring in this one. They looked to be heading for a win, but just couldn't

hold off a late Royal LePage push. Royal LePage has turned it around the last bit and fought hard for this point. Some good pressure late paid off.

Chad Homick had two points for Carquest. Landon Thibert had two points for Royal LePage.

B-Line 4, RND 4

B-Line played a solid offensive game, as they found some different ways to score. They took advantage of their rush chances. RND has worked well as a team lately, and it showed tonight as they pressured late in the game. Gritty work in front helped secure the point.

Hunter Luscombe had two points for B-Line. Johnathan Bouck had two points for RND.

Source 5, Prouse Mortgages 2

Source jumped out to an early lead and never really looked back. They were buzzing in the offensive zone all night and had some great chances. Prouse Mortgages were caught off guard early. They took a bit to get going, but then couldn't get their normal pressure or chances.

Mitch Wass had three points for Source. Jeff Prouse had a goal for Prouse Mortgages.

Airmount 2, Glass 2

Airmount played a solid all-around game. They didn't let Glass get in close, but also found their passing game to create chances. Glass played a good game, but

couldn't get their chances in close. They kept their focus late to keep the point on the table.

Ryan Carroll had a goal for Airmount. Chase Corbeil had two points for Glass.

Dec. 3

B Division

Prouse Mortgages 2, Carquest 2

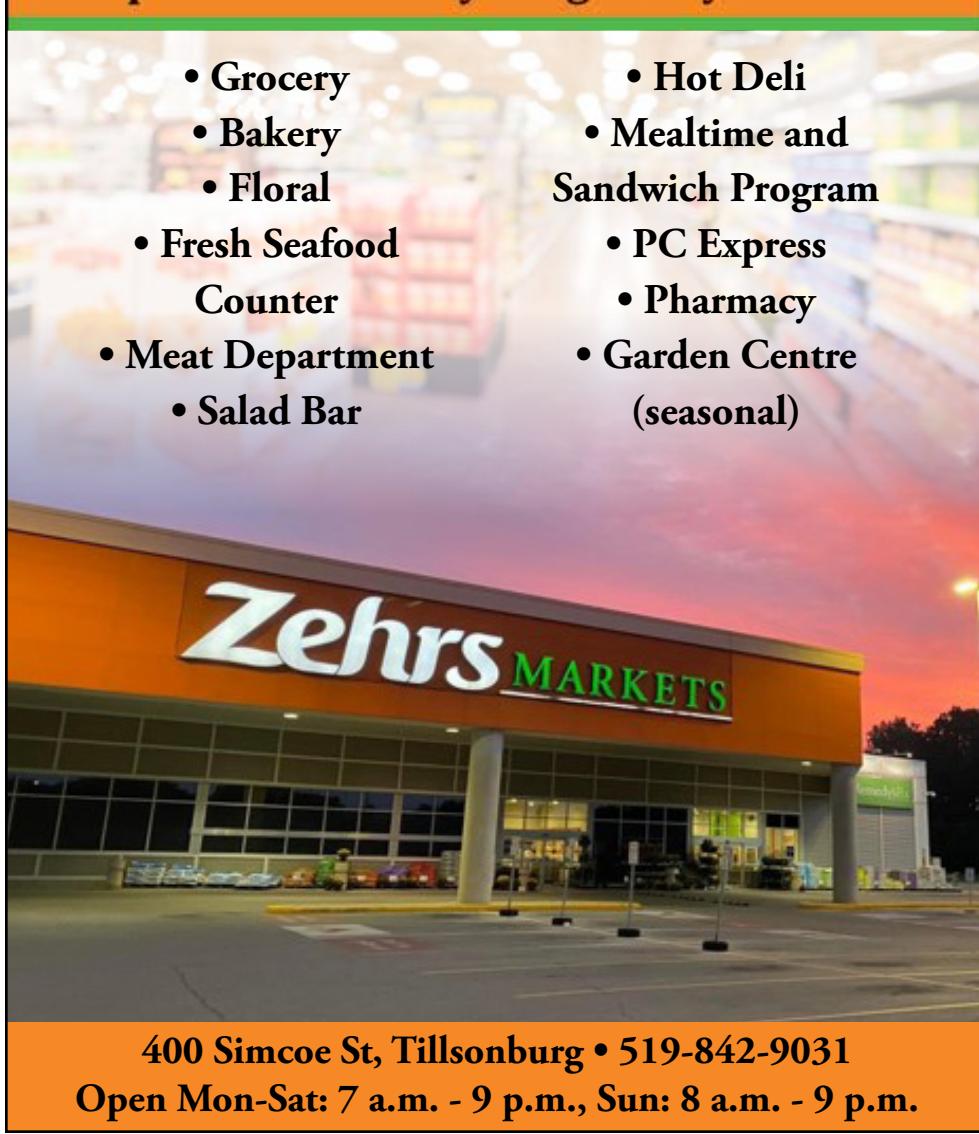
CLUB OXFORD A DIVISION	GP	W	L	T	PTS
REMAX REALTY	12	9	2	1	19
FODY'S AUTOMOTIVE	12	8	4	0	16
THE HEALTH HUT	12	3	7	2	8
THE APPLE SHACK	12	2	9	1	5

CLUB OXFORD B DIVISION	GP	W	L	T	PTS
SOURCE FOR SPORTS	12	10	2	0	20
B-LINE TRUCKING	13	6	4	3	15
JEFF PROUSE MORTGAGES	13	5	4	4	14
TILLSONBURG GLASS	13	5	4	4	14
CARQUEST AUTO PARTS	13	5	4	4	14
ROYAL LEPAGE	13	3	6	4	10
RND CONSTRUCTION	13	3	6	4	10
AIRMOUNT FARMS	12	2	9	1	5

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Thunder shut out Flames on home ice

CHRIS ABBOTT

Post Contributor

The Tillsonburg Thunder need a winning streak in the second half of the 20-game 2025-26 OEHL season.

Winning 8-0 Saturday night at home against the visiting Delhi Flames might be the first step.

"I feel like we've been struggling the last couple of weeks, so we just wanted to play a full 60 minutes and finish it off clean, give our goalie (Zack Johnston) a shutout," said Thunder's Sebastian Guastadisegni, who had two goals and an assist. "That was our goal for tonight and we did that."

Johnston made 34 saves for his first shutout of the season.

"It was a great performance, he was huge for us tonight," said Guastadisegni. "I thought we played good defensively as well to help him out. He gave little to no rebounds, so just an all-around clean game, which is what we needed tonight. A good team win."

"I feel like in the last couple of weeks, we're starting to come together... starting to gel together. We had a couple tough losses, and that was weighing on us, so this was big for us and for our momentum going forward as a team. It felt good."

Playing on the second line with Danny Attridge and Luke Sinclair, Guastadisegni said they've been figuring out where guys are on the ice – especially in the last two weeks.

"Going forward, we need to string a couple games, a couple weeks in a row with some wins to get back to the middle-upper half of the pack."

Delhi goalie Cameron Huff faced 56 shots.

Veteran Thunder defenceman Mike Findlay's assist on Guastadisegni's second goal did not show on the score-sheet. Not surprising, his pass from the corner to Guastadisegni in front of Tillsonburg's net was overshadowed by Guastadisegni's spectacular end-to-end rush to score on a clean wrist shot.

Findlay, who made his Thunder debut in 08-09 (the only season Tillsonburg missed the WOAA/WOSHL playoffs), acknowledged the significant turnover from last year's WOSHL roster to this year's Ontario Elite



Tillsonburg Thunder's Danny Attridge tries to deflect the puck past Delhi goalie Cameron Huff.

(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)

Hockey League team.

"When we decided to go to this league, basically it made everyone a free agent," the 39-year-old Findlay noted. "We lost a lot of guys."

"This was the first year that I walked into the room during camp and thought, 'Who are all these guys?' It was the first time I had ever had that, looking around, it was like 'I don't know everybody... this is crazy.'

"But everybody's been great, we're getting along really

well."

Findlay said the team's goal as they push to make OEHL playoffs – and make some noise in the playoffs – is to 'figure out what we're good at.'

"We have to outwork teams. We don't have the offence that we've had in the past. We have to find different ways to win. But we also have unreal goaltending, so if we can get it figured out, our goalies are going to take care of the net, we take care of our end, then the offensive end will take care of itself. That's the plan – we have to collectively figure out the back end first."

"We have a pretty fast team. If we outwork them, first on pucks, we're a tough team to play. But we've got to get it in their end, get more pucks on net."

TEDDY BEAR TOSS

Tillsonburg Thunder host Milverton Four Wheel Drives on Saturday, Dec. 13th for their annual Teddy Bear Toss game. Puck drops at 7:30 p.m. – bring stuffed toys to throw to the ice when the Thunder score their first goal. The stuffed toys will be donated to families in need over the holidays.

Thunder 8, Flames 0

Thunder scoring: 1. Andrew Oosterveld (Braden Roberts, Jaden Vansevenant); 2. Derek Slacht; 3. Roberts (Kurtis Heggie, Mike Stolar); 4. Sebastian Guastadisegni (Danny Attridge); 5. Oosterveld (Roberts); 6. Symon Reddin (Heggie, Attridge); 7. Guastadisegni; 8. Attridge (Guastadisegni, Heggie).

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Busy month on the ice at Tillsonburg Curling Club



ON THE BROOM

NORA PETER

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Where has November gone? There was so much going on that the month just zoomed by at the Tillsonburg Curling Club!

Three successful major club bonspiels, and a well-supported euchre night had the club busy every weekend. All the leagues that are the usual workings of the club were active too. The leagues where teams are changed every few weeks have checked in with their winners, beginning with the Monday Mixed where Team Gasparetto was declared the winner of Draw 1 with his team Cindy Hildebrant, Terry Hildebrant and Gary Smith.

For the Ladies league, Dave Martin, owner of Verne's Carpet One, was on hand to award the trophy to Gail Harris, Brenda Jones, Anne Omerod and Diane Burgess. Prizes for second place went to Karen Robinson, Sandy Buchner, Susan Howe and Rena Pittao. As prizes, the ladies were given gift cards to local businesses: Two Girls and Cheeses, and Betty's Marketplace. Thanks

to Verne's for their on-going support of our club.

In the Thursday night Men's 10 team draw, Walter Kleer and his team of Alan Robinson, Paul Blouin and John Lamont finished with the high points for their first draw. All these leagues have moved into their second draws with new teams.

The Jolly Jackpot fundraiser draw will finish up on Dec. 19 – only 1000 tickets are sold so there aren't many left; the winner of the Early Bird Draw was Chris Buchner. Tickets are available at the club, good luck to everyone for that final draw. The 50/50 draw tickets are also available at the club, and the big prize will be drawn March 23 – the current jackpot stands at \$350.

Our Canadian Olympic curling teams have been declared with Rachel Homan's rink surviving the trials. While I did expect her to win the right to represent Canada, I thought she was challenged more than I expected by the young team Black in the finals and team Sturmay in the round robin. The Team is ranked number 1 in the world so there are high expectations for a medal. In my last column, I predicted that team Jacobs and team Dunstone were likely to come through as one of the finalists and they were the two teams that faced each other in the best two-of-three final games. Jacobs came through in the finals taking two games straight. Team Jacobs is heavy with Olympic experience but not as a team, which should help them adjust to the experience. Gallant who throws second on the Jacobs team, will also compete with his wife Jocelyn Peter-

man as Team Canada in the Mixed Doubles event. Canada has not reached the top of the podium since 2014 which led CCA to set the trials up to mirror what the Olympic games will be like. Changing the trials to a full round robin with only the top three teams moving on to finals and using LSD (Last Stone Draw), rather than tie-breaker games to decide any ties after the round robin are two things that were changed.

The curling stones used for trials were the same kind of stones that will be used in Italy. Curlers and commentators were referring to the stones as "fat" rocks as their profile is

a little different than the rocks used at most events in Canada. I was surprised when I investigated what the regulation curling rock dimensions are for competitions at the Olympics and other world events. The range in the dimensions is interesting: the circumference can be no greater than 91.44 cm (36") and the height no less than 11.34 cm (4.5"); the weight, including the handle and bolt no greater than 19.96 kg (44 lbs) and no less than 17.24 kg (38 lbs). Hopefully these preparations will get us back to the top of the podium!

More next time! Curling rocks!

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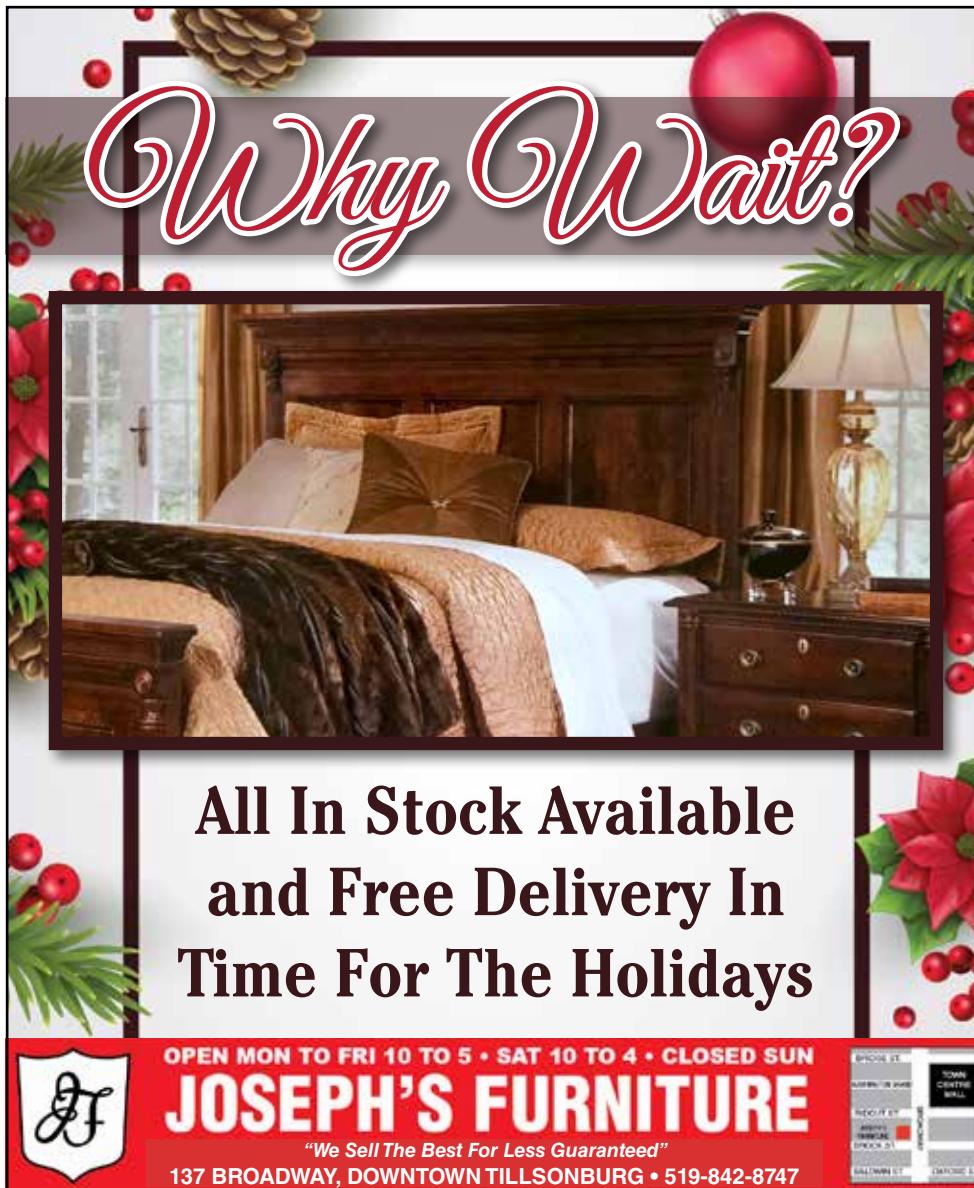


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Tillsonburg Skating Club showcase brings Christmas classics to life

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Tillsonburg Skating Club's annual Christmas showcase will bring a number of classic Christmas movies to the ice.

Skaters with the local club will take to the ice on Dec. 17, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., at the Tillsonburg Community Centre. The theme of this year's show is Holiday Blockbusters.

"It's looking at holiday classic movies and the group numbers are going to be focused around holiday movies this year," said Yvonne Wheeler, club secretary.

She gave a few examples of the movies that will be featured, mentioning the Grinch, Home Alone, Elf, Rudolph, National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation, Polar Express, and A Charlie Brown Christmas.

Each number will showcase the various age groups within the club. There are also 15 soloists performing throughout the evening.

"We just do it for the kids to showcase their skills half-way through the season at Christmas," Wheeler said.



(FILE PHOTO)

For the youngest skaters, this will be their first time performing live in front of an audience.

Tickets for Holiday Blockbusters are available at the door. Admission is cash only and the price is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children ages four to 12 and children three and under are free.

On behalf of the Glendale Community, it is with great pleasure that we acknowledge the following donors for their generosity and support of awards at Glendale High School:

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MUSIC CORNER

Where's Shane brings a brand new sound to the Tillsonburg music scene



BEN ANDRESS

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Tillsonburg has a new band with familiar faces ready to make the holiday break a little more rocking before we ring in 2026.

Where's Shane is a freshly-formed local four-piece of

well-known faces in the town's thriving music community. The group features Marcy Dunkin on vocals, Taylor Simpson on guitar, Dan McMillan on bass and Jackson Cronmiller on drums and percussion.

The band has been working hard and is excited to kick things off the same way so many local bands have built early momentum.

"Playing venues like The Cooper Mug is always a blast. They are always so supportive of everything in the community," Dunkin says. "Connecting with fans is so important and small venues in small communities are a huge part of reaching that goal."

The band's formation actually comes from a bit of Tillsonburg music lore with having the band name come from an

unexpected moment in another familiar venue in Tillsonburg.

"A couple of years ago, Marcy, Jackson and I were down at Paddy's Underground when Billy Gibbons came over to our table. Years back Shane, Jackson, Billy and I were all in the band The New Revolutionaries," Simpson explains. "Somebody recognizing the three of us together asked 'Hey! Where's Shane?' We all laughed and Jackson said 'That is the question'. One of us at the table replied how that would be a great band name and the name just stuck."

Musically, the band Where's Shane pulls inspiration from many corners of the punk rock and alternative world. The band's vocalist proudly points to her own roots citing influences that shaped her voice.

"I have a few artists that I have always loved such as Sublime, NOFX, Bad Religion and Gratitude but my biggest influence is No Doubt," Dunkin explains. "Specifically, their album Tragic Kingdom. Gwen's voice and her storytelling abilities are something I have always aspired to."

The band's guitar player grew up moving through eras of guitar-driven rock and describes his own musical compass in fine detail.

"As a kid, I started out listening to classic rock and 80s rock," Simpson details with excitement. "During my teen years when I started playing guitar, I got into grunge, punk and alternative rock. A few of the most influential albums on my playing would be Sponge's Rotting Piñata, AFI's Sing The

Sorrow, Mötley Crüe's Shout At The Devil, Guns N' Roses' Appetite For Destruction and Nirvana's Nevermind. Trust me when I say that this is a very narrowed-down list."

With only a few shows under their belt, including gigs opening for Danbert Nobacon of Chumbawamba as well as The Monsters Of Schlock, the four already have their eyes on the coming year.

"In 2026, the plan is to tighten up our originals and hit the studio to record an EP. We are possibly looking at doing a split EP later in the year as well. That is all I can say about that right now though," Simpson says. "The next step is to get some merch done and expand our audience by posting some songs online and playing some shows across Southern Ontario

and Quebec as well. Other than that, we are really looking forward to Buddies Fest II."

To end 2025, the band is focused on introducing themselves to hometown listeners and what better gift is there for local music fans than a new Tillsonburg band lighting up the stage during the quiet days right after Christmas. Music fans can expect a night that blends the punk spirit with alternative rock packaged neatly and proudly with that local Tillsonburg charm.

Where's Shane performs Saturday, Dec. 27 at The Copper Mug, opening for Sega Saturn The Console and The Lexington Cure. Doors open at 8 p.m. with a \$10 cover charge. You can follow Where's Shane on social media at www.instagram.com/wheresshanemusic

UPCOMING SHOWS

DEC. 11 - YOU HAD ME

The Copper Mug: No Cover – 8 p.m.

DEC. 12 - BOBNOXIOUS

Paddy's Underground: \$20 – 8pm - All Ages/Licensed

DEC. 12 - SUGAR KINGS

The Copper Mug: No Cover – 8 p.m.

DEC. 13 - KING CASHEW, PRINCESS PEACE & ROTTEN EPPLES

The Copper Mug: No Cover – 8 p.m.

DEC. 14 - TOO COUNTRY

The Copper Mug: No Cover – 5 p.m.

DEC. 19 - MUSIC TRIVIA

The Copper Mug: No Cover – 8 p.m.

DEC. 22 - DAYGLO ABORTIONS W/ HELLAPHANT

Paddy's Underground: \$20 – 8 p.m. - All Ages/Licensed

DEC. 27 - WHERE'S SHANE, SEGA SATURN THE CONSOLE AND THE LEXINGTON CURE

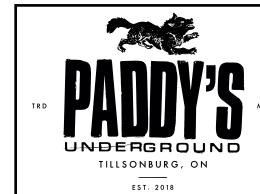
The Copper Mug: \$10 – 8 p.m.

DEC. 31 - KID'S NOON YEAR'S EVE PARTY

The Copper Mug: \$10 – 2 p.m.

JAN. 10 - ACE OF SWORDS & THE DEEPER CUTS

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Chrissy's Catering and Carriage Hall offer a restaurant and catering

Chrissy's Catering, and the associated Carriage Hall restaurant is a blend of a long-standing local business and a new enterprise.

Today, the new includes a recently-added lounge in the front of the restaurant at street level. A cozy space with a fireplace and soft seating, it provides people a quiet spot to relax and have a drink. In the summer, there is a patio outside, and the loft inside is popular for private gatherings and a curtain can provide privacy from the remainder of the restaurant.

Bands and entertainers provide live music outside on Friday nights during the summer. Occasional music nights are also held inside throughout the year.

Pecan turkey salad, which is served in an edible taco bowl, is one of the unique items on the menu. Quesadillas and nachos, famed for meat layered through the serving, are popular. Specialty nights include burger night on Wednesday, wing night on Thursday and an all-you-can eat buffet for \$20 on Friday. The latter always includes roast beef, a chicken dish and pork or fish.

The business' roots go back to owner Marcel Rosehart's mother, Chrissy, running Chrissy's Corner Store and catering mostly cold food, such as sandwiches, cold cuts and cheese trays.

Marcel started working in restaurants while going to Fanshawe College, and then Western University, for business. He worked for various companies in London for 26 years, including



Olive Garden, Hook's and others, moving from a parking attendant to working in the kitchen to a manager.

He and wife Lauri then took over the family business. In 2009, the Roseharts heard the present location on Brock Street was for sale. Locals will remember the building as many different businesses: Sam's Bar, Gordy's Bar, a temporary location for RBC while the present location was being built, a church and even a disco run by the Knights of Columbus. Most recently before the Rosehart purchase, it was owned by Alan Conroy Catering and just used for the kitchen.

"We heard that Alan Conroy was going off to B.C. to work with his wife and had it for sale," Marcel recounted, explaining he was busy with catering and needed a spot.

After the purchase, he found the building dated back to 1893 and was originally a barn for shoeing horses and a blacksmith worked there. There was a

loft on top for residential. Hence the name Carriage Hall was born.

Initially, Chrissy's Catering just used the building for a kitchen. After initial renovations, they used it as a hall for catered events, and then the restaurant started in 2020. The restaurant was one of the positive outcomes from Covid. At the time, there was no catering because large gatherings weren't allowed, and

restaurants set up patios. From there, the restaurant continued to flourish.

"We didn't do a lot, but did some," Marcel said. "Covid took it to the next level."

The Carriage Hall is open Monday to Wednesday 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, and 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday. There are longer hours during the summer from Thursday to Saturday.



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Denise Walker.

(ROBIN KRAFFT PHOTO)

ROBIN KRAFFT

Post Contributor

The Salvation Army's new officer, Major Denise Walker, is enjoying her first Christmas season in Tillsonburg.

Walker arrived in early July, moving from Calgary, Alberta, where she served for the past seven years. She has family scattered around Stratford, Wingham, and Blythe, and she wanted to come home as she gets closer to retirement. Compared to her former posts, Tillsonburg is a much smaller community.

"Calgary was a larger congregation, so my focus was often on people in crisis," Walker said. "There was a lot of pastoral care, and it was hard to get to know everybody. For me, the smaller congregation is great. I can get to know everyone on a personal level and be a part of their journey. I'm getting to know people outside of the church as well, to hear their stories and really see one another."

Walker attended Sunday school as a child at the Salvation Army Church in Wingham, but she went to work at Crossroads Christian Communications before fulfilling her calling to become a pastor.

"I worked first on the 100 Huntley Street program. I love the TV environment and really blossomed there."

Walker was the production assistant, responsible for much of the organization behind the scenes before moving on to the special projects department. She spent a year-and-a-half helping Bruce Stacey re-

alize his vision of transforming a story he had written for his children into the classic CTV program "Kingdom Adventure". Walker was the associate producer of the show.

She applied to the Salvation Army's College for Officer Training in Toronto and was commissioned as a Salvation Army officer in 1994. She started as a youth pastor at Glenmore Temple in Calgary, returning in 2018 as the senior pastor.

Walker also produced a Bible study interactive video designed for children seven to 10 years old called "Ready to Serve" for the Salvation Army that is still used across Canada.

"I have enjoyed appointments in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Nova Scotia and beautiful Bermuda," Walker said. "I like to hear people's stories. To support people (and youth) is my passion."

Walker explained that the title Officer of the Salvation Army is often used, rather than pastor. The role involves much more than pastoral care; she is responsible not only for the church, but gives oversight to Community and Family Services and the Thrift Store as well. As the pastor, she conducts Sunday services at the Tillsonburg Salvation Army Community Church, favouring a story form teaching style.

"I like to offer people a worship experience, to come together as believers and gather with our mind and our heart, because our spirit is connected to God's spirit."



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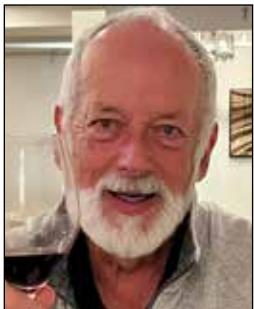
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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO!

PAUL KNOWLES

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

As we were slowly making our way to the summit of the Citadel in Antequera, Spain, we encountered an unexpected figure: an elegantly robed, Moorish aristocrat. And, it turned out, that was exactly who he was – for the moment, anyway. He was an actor, in character for a television show being filmed in a site that includes elements dating back thousands of years.

This juxtaposition of a 21st century TV crew and ancient ruins seems an apt symbol of the complexity you'll find in Antequera, one of the many interesting places we visited during our Senior Discovery Tours sojourn in the Costa del Sol.

I am always fascinated by places where you find layer upon layer of history. I have to say that few have more on display than Antequera.

Let's start back as far as history will allow us to go – with the Lovers' Rock. As you stand on the hilltop that is home to the Moorish Citadel, you have a view of a rock formation that looks remarkably like the profile of a man's face. In most circumstances, it would be called "The Sleeping Giant", but there is a legend attached to it that gives it its actual name, the Lovers' Rock. The name comes from a story, in which a Muslim girl and her father's Christian slave boy fell in love, fled the city, were pursued by her father, and chose to leap to their deaths together rather than be separated.

However, while the rock may owe its name to this story, its historical significance dates back many centuries before the (probably fictional) lovers' leap.

Because if you shift your focus to a spot closer to the Citadel, you will see a UNESCO World Heritage Site that was created in the Neolithic era (10,000 – 2,000 BC). This is the locale of the Dolmen of Menga, "an important masterpiece of megalithic architecture" that served as a spectacular tomb, millennia ago. The Dolmen can be visited today.

Turning away from the view of the dolmen, the Lovers' Rock and the ancient city panorama, we walked past ancient walls and began the climb to the top of the Citadel.

Even here, there was an intriguing mix of historical eras. The walls were built by the Moors – the Muslim conquerors of southern Spain who ruled here for more than 700 years, finally defeated in 1492. The Citadel dates back to the 11th century.

However, we couldn't help but notice that the walls included some features that were clearly older – they were stone tablets from the time of Roman rule in Antequera. The Romans were here from a couple of centuries BC until the fifth century. And evidence of Roman times is everywhere in Antequera – including built into the Moorish walls.

Higher up, at the top of the Citadel, there is an impressive, excavated Roman tomb.

And – back to the view of the dolmen and the Lovers' Rock – what we didn't notice when we were gazing back into the Neolithic age, were excavations closer at hand that had revealed an extensive Roman bathhouse.

All of this time travel can be a bit overwhelming, but the solution is close at hand, in the Municipal Museum of Antequera. This truly excellent, five thousand square meter museum carries visitors through the history of the city, and also presents some modern elements.



An unexpected Moorish aristocrat roaming the Citadel in Antequera. (PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The museum boasts that it's where "the Roman past comes to life and the cultural present awaits you."

Antequera's rich history is well presented, of course – including an indoor, restoration of a Roman tomb – and its cultural heritage is celebrated, with paintings and sculptures dating back through the city's complex past. One of the best examples is a delicate sculpture of the head of the goddess Venus, from the Roman era. Even better – a unique, life-size bronze of a young man, also from the time of the Romans.

Moving ahead several hundred years, I was especially impressed with an ethereal, life-sized statue of St. Francis of Assisi, created in 1665 by Pedro de Mena.

But the museum comes as advertised, bringing visitors right up to date with the current artistic accomplishments of this part of Spain. The museum's art collection includes 692 works by 34 different artists. Not all are on display, of course – but you can actually see most of them if you visit the museum's excellent web-

site, <https://museoantequera.es/en/>. And yes, that gets you the English site.

One current Antequera artist who captured my attention at the museum was Cristobal Toral. The museum has an extensive collection of his paintings, many of which include dramatic images of – wait for it – luggage! A biography accompanying a Toral exhibition at the museum explained that he is intrigued by the fact that "humanity is essentially nomad... the continuous transit of human beings... For this reason, Toral has chosen the suitcase to be an icon of our time."

And there we were – facing an artistic expression of "our time", only steps away from Neolithic, Roman, and Moorish times. What more could any would-be time-traveller wish for?

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



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

A view of the Lovers' Rock, and the neolithic dolmen (the hill in mid-range in the photo)



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

Recently excavated Roman baths in Antequera, with the Lovers' Rock in the distance.

Merry Christmas Colouring Contest



Decorate this Christmas picture with your favorite colours, then drop it off before **Monday, December 22nd, 2025** at:

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3 lucky winners will be chosen by random draw on **Tuesday, December 23rd!** Each winner will receive a **\$25 Gift Card!**

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1. Contest is open to children ages 4-10. Relatives of newspaper employees or contest sponsors are not eligible to win.
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I have wheels and a seat, but no engine at all. You pedal to move me so I can roll. What am I?
Bicycle

I'm found in a bank but I'm not money. I flow in a river but I'm not water. What am I?
Current

I'm written in lines, sometimes I rhyme. You read me slowly, one verse at a time. What am I?
Poem

I live in a case and have many strings. You pull on me gently and music sings. What am I?
Guitar

I'm made of glass, I open and shut. I let in the light but keep out the gust. What am I?
Window

SUDOKU

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5			6			3		

Level: Beginner

Solutions on Page 26

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X	A	F	L	S	K	W	H	B	T	A	Q	K	C	A	R	O	L	S	D
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HOLLY

CAROLS

SEASON

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WOODSTOCK
WHEN: 3rd Saturday of every month
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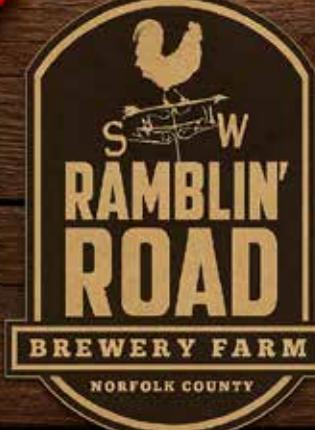
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3. 1976
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5. Yellow
6. Gene Autry
7. 1996
8. The eyes
9. Oslo
10. The star of Bethlehem

SUDOKU

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9	6	2	5	3	7	4	1	8
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OBITUARY

DIANE BENOIT-NEWMAN



Diane Benoit-Newman passed away with loving family by her side on Monday December 1, 2025 at People Care Nursing Home in Delhi, Ontario. Diane Benoit-Newman of Tillsonburg, Ontario at the age of 56, daughter of the late Lucien "Mitch" Benoit and late Henriette Benoit (nee Letourneau) formerly of Tillsonburg. Much loved wife of the late Ian Newman. Loved and loving mother of Alexxus Leigh Newman (Jaclyn Robb) of Toronto. Sister of Allen and Wendy Benoit of St. Thomas, and Annette (late Doug) Oncz of Tillsonburg. Proud Aunt of Jason (Alysha) Oncz of Muskoka, Michael (Nicole) Benoit of Waterloo, Kimberly Oncz (Brad VanOpstal) of Tillsonburg, and Matthew Benoit of Toronto, and Great Aunt of Daxton, Peyton, Nelson, and Leila. Predeceased by her mother-in-law Rosemary Newman, father-in-law Jim Newman, brother-in-law Christopher Newman, and sister-in-law Christine Newman.

Diane grew up in the then small town of Tillsonburg. She went off to college, met and married her college sweetheart Ian. After a diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis Diane settled down in Cambridge and had her daughter Alexxus. She lived the dream of sailing on their sailboat to different destinations. Ringette with their daughter kept them busy as did keeping up with Alexxus and her many interests.

Diane participated in and fundraised over a decade with her family and friends in the Super Cities Walk for MS to raise awareness, research money, and funds for people living with MS. Diane was chosen to be the first across Canada for an experimental drug for the treatment of her MS and was featured in the Cambridge Times, Cambridge Reporter and Canadian Living magazine. After Diane's husband passed and her health began to deteriorate Diane returned home to Tillsonburg. Diane enjoyed crafts, gardening, scooting around on her scooter, meeting new people, thrift shopping, children, bird watching and travelling when she could. Diane's boisterous and contagious laugh could be heard whenever she entered a room and it did not take her long to engage in conversation with anyone she met. Diane endured many health challenges more so over the last year but she strongly moved through each of them with courage.

Diane will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

Special thanks to Luke whose company she enjoyed while in hospital, and the wonderful Staff at People Care Delhi who worked diligently to provide and assist her with her care making it a wonderful place to be. Special thank you to Dr. Thorogood who so genuinely cared and helped Diane through her journey while at the home. All of their love and compassion will never be forgotten.

In keeping with Diane's wishes cremation has taken place. A Celebration of Life will be held on Sunday December 28, 2025 from 1 to 4 p.m., at the Carriage Hall, 25 Brock Street West, Tillsonburg, Ontario. Wareing Cremation Services, 161 Broadway Street, Tillsonburg has been entrusted with Final Arrangements. Your messages of remembrance and condolence may be shared at www.wareingcremation.ca

Merry Markdown

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