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Past experience emphasized by South Huron mayoral candidates

JOHN MINER

Examiner Reporter

Asked to talk about the future of South Huron, the three candidates running for mayor in the upcoming municipal election didn't mind digging into the past to bolster their case for being the voters' choice.

Maureen Cole, George Finch, and Ted Oke participated in the candidates meeting Sept. 30 organized by the Huron Chamber of Commerce.

Billed by the chamber as a discussion, not a traditional debate, the three were given the opportunity to tell the crowd filling the South Huron District high school gym in Exeter why they are the best candidate.

Cole, who was South Huron mayor from 2014 to 2018, emphasized that her background in health care leadership positioned her well to advocate for South Huron hospital, both at the county and ministry level.

In addition, Cole said her 30 years of farm ownership gave her a strong understanding of rural economic realities and long-term land use planning.

One of her highest priorities will be financial transparency, stability and accountability, she said. "I'm committed to evidence-based practice. In God we trust, all others will provide data."

CONTINUED TO PAGE 5



(DAN ROLPH PHOTO)

HENSALL FAMILY GIVES BACK WITH CHILDCAN FAMILY FUN DAY

In recognition of the Cann family opening their family pond in Hensall to host a Childcan Family Fun Day, the organization recently presented a framed set of photos from the exciting day.

Hensall family gives back with Childcan Family Fun Day

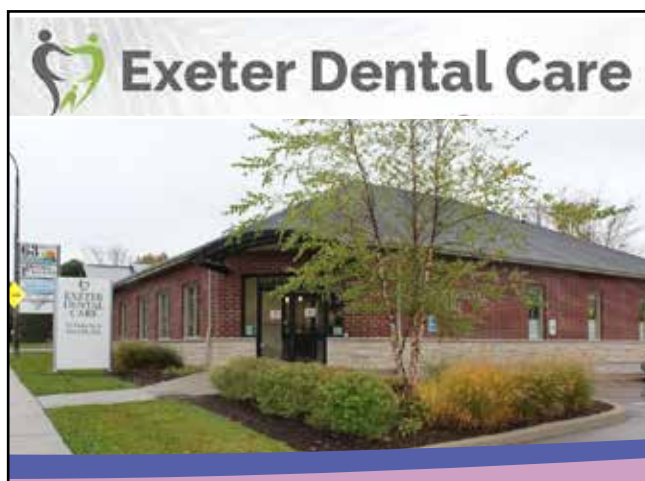
DAN ROLPH

Editor

What started as an elevator pitch in a hospital as a local boy was receiving cancer treatment led to a day filled with fun, firsts and hope for families from throughout the region impacted by a child's cancer diagnosis.

The Cann family of Hensall opened their family pond and cottage to serve as the backdrop for a Childcan Family Fun Day on Aug. 29. Even after having to change dates due to rain, the day was one that allowed children diagnosed with cancer and their loved ones a moment of normality where they could swim, fish and

CONTINUED TO PAGE 9



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This Thanksgiving, give thanks for democracy



DAN ROLPH

Editor

I've always believed that Thanksgiving is a particularly special day.

In Canada we celebrate occasions stemming from traditions that have shifted over generations. Some are born from religious practices, some are secular, and some stray so far from one origin that they

become something new entirely. Thanksgiving, I think, has become a holiday that is truly unique.

It can be easy for some to remember that our Thanksgiving is very separated from the holiday recognized in the U.S., not only by the date we mark down on our calendars, but by the continued prominence of the American myth of the first Thanksgiving.

In Canada, Thanksgiving is far simpler. It's a time of humility and reflection, when each of us can look at our lives through the lens of thankfulness and remind ourselves of how important it is to recognize the privileges we may forget through the busyness of everyday life.

For some, that may mean giving thanks for family and

friends, a safe place to call home, food on the table, good health, meaningful work or the support of a caring community.

This Thanksgiving, one of the privileges I find myself thankful for is the freedom to have our voices heard through our democracy, particularly as we approach the upcoming municipal elections later this month.

We live in a transformative age. By many metrics, the prominence of democracy on a global level is declining.

In a report released this past September by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), an organization based in Sweden that supports legitimate democratic institutions, this moment in history that we find ourselves in is

described as a "crisis" for democracies. International IDEA cited mounting pressures such as political polarization, disinformation, the concentration of executive power and a decline in public trust as drivers of that crisis.

In that report, International IDEA noted that just 21 per cent of the world's population lives in a country considered "free" in 2026, less than half of the 46 per cent from two decades before.

It's a staggering reality of the 21st century that democracy and freedom are backsliding globally, but that reality makes it as important as ever to recognize the strength of Canada's democracy as the world changes.

However, Canada is not an island. We are not immune to

the trends of the world, and we can't allow ourselves to become complacent when it comes to the rights generations of Canadians have fought for.

In South Huron, voter turnout in municipal elections dropped by nearly 10 percent between 2018 and 2022, with less than half the eligible voters casting a ballot in the municipality's last election.

That's a trend that I hope our community chooses to reverse later this month.

So as the next municipal election approaches, remember to be thankful for the good things in your life, and let your thankfulness push you to participate in this important tradition we call democracy. Fewer people in the world today have that opportunity than you may realize.

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COMMUNITY

Past experience emphasized by South Huron mayoral candidates

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Finch, the current mayor running for re-election, said under his leadership South Huron has become the economic engine of Huron County and the region. The municipality has gone from having the fifth highest tax rate in the county to the third lowest, he said.

"We need to remember where we were eight years ago, the challenges we faced, to appreciate where we are today. Ask yourself if we are in a better place now," Finch said.

Finch said his goals for the next four years include pushing for an OPP reporting location in South Huron, an addition to the Exeter fire station, more affordable housing and pursuing a gymnasium and walking track. His highest priority will be continuing to advocate for health care as a region.

Oke, who has been the Usborne Ward councillor for the past 12 years, said he is running for mayor this time because he cares deeply about South Huron and believes it is time for a change in leadership.

Outside of work as a councillor, Oke noted he has spent decades working with agriculture, financial and commercial businesses.

"That experience has taught me to understand the numbers, evaluate risks, ask questions, balance competing priorities, and make decisions based on facts, and follow through."

His priorities will be affordability, responsible growth, community engagement and broadening South Huron's economic base to create jobs and reduce pressure on the tax base.

Moderator Colin Carmichael asked the candidates what should South Huron and Huron County do to increase both the supply of housing and the

range of housing types.

Finch said the municipality needs to continue to attract developers rather than wait for developers to call.

"I've actually reached out to many developers and that is why we are seeing the building we are seeing," he said.

The job of the municipality is to facilitate construction with the proper zoning.

"Supply and demand is what works, we need not over-think it."

Oke said more housing supply is needed, but also more choice.

As mayor he will encourage the county to be innovative on housing, such as supporting modular construction and design to speed up building and decrease costs.

In South Huron, more apartments, townhouses and smaller homes are needed. The municipality's role is to make sure planning rules, approvals, and infrastructure support are appropriate for appropriate growth, ensuring both builders and residents know what to expect, Oke said.

Cole said she doesn't believe municipal policies or approvals are the primary barrier to building more homes.

The challenge has been that the municipality has historically encouraged higher priced houses to be built because they generate higher revenues for taxes rather than focusing on modest home ownership options, she said.

On the topic of investment in culture and recreation, Cole said many communities, such as Goderich, operate with smaller budgets than South Huron yet achieve strong outcomes. The communities focus on partnerships with non-profits and community organizations rather than running every

program themselves.

"It is not all up to the municipality," she said.

As mayor, Cole said she would immediately form a recreational committee after the election that can look at the funding streams that are available.

Finch said South Huron's recreational facilities will be under increased pressure with 5,000 people moving in over the next 25 years.

"We are going to have problems with capacity issues and we need to do something about it."

He said South Huron needs to start thinking about an outdoor sports complex, possibly located on the 25 acres of land the municipality owns across from the cemetery.

It should be remembered that the Wagner soccer fields in Exeter are on privately owned land.

"My concerns are what happens if that sells. We have no plans in place."

Finch said he will form a committee in January to see what can be done.

Oke said if he is elected he will recommend not closing any existing recreation facilities.

He would also recommend reinstating the recreation committee made up of community members and council representatives.

"The people that use our recreation facilities should have a voice in how they are managed and what recreation opportunities we provide in the future."

Following the discussion, people attending the event had the chance to meet and individually question the contenders for the five spots on South Huron council. The deputy mayor's position has been filled by acclamation by the current deputy mayor Jim Dietrich.



Maureen Cole.

(JOHN MINER PHOTOS)



George Finch.



Ted Oke.

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Exeter Examiner Photo Quiz



Who are you looking at?
By Judy and Barry Johnson



I am an impressive flyer with a 7.6 centimetre wingspan, larger than many of my relatives. Large, multi-faceted eyes make me an expert hunter as I fly low over ponds dining on mosquitoes. Now you like me, right? I defend my territory when searching for a mate, engaging in aerial combat with other suitors. My mate touches the water when laying about 1,000 eggs; I often hover nearby for protection.

HINT: I am named for a key identifying feature and don't call me ordinary!

This week's answers are found on pg. 34

WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

1. What is the traditional birthstone of October?
2. Who bet Eddie Murphy \$100,000 he couldn't make a hit song?
3. Who was selected 1st overall in the 2026 NFL draft?
4. What is the name of the famous clock tower in Ottawa?
5. In what year did ABBA win Eurovision?
6. What disease used to be called consumption?
7. What brand introduced the first-ever fully automatic drip coffee maker in the 1970?
8. What is the color of an emerald?
9. The offspring of a polar bear and a grizzly is a what?
10. Montana shares a northern border with which 3 Canadian provinces?

This week's answers are found on pg. 34

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Two candidates vying for Usborne Ward position

JOHN MINER

Examiner Reporter

For the first time in three elections there is a contest for the Usborne ward seat on South Huron municipal council.

Ted Oke was acclaimed to the position in the 2018 and 2022 elections. This time Oke is running for mayor against the current mayor, George Finch, and a previous mayor, Maureen Cole, leaving the Usborne spot open.

The two candidates nominated for Ward 3 Usborne are Darren Boyle and Paul Passmore. Usborne has a single seat on South Huron council.

As part of its municipal election coverage, the Exeter Examiner asked each candidate:

(1) *Why did you decide to run for council? Is there a specific problem or moment that made you decide to put your name forward?*

(2) *If elected, what is the top priority you hope to focus on during your time on council?*

(3) *What experience do you bring to the table that you think will help you address the municipality's challenges?*

Here is the e-mailed response from the candidates.

Darren Boyle

(1) (2) If elected, my top priority will be to make sure there is a voice at council who will do everything to make sure that development and land use going for-

ward is done in a way to minimize impact on our area farmland and that doesn't burden us with extra debt as I look at the plans for recreation other candidates are sharing, by making fiscal decisions that make sense for all taxpayers ahead of "wants" or "nice to have" concepts.

(3) The experience I bring comes from my job selling fire apparatus and equipment to municipalities. I know the ins and outs of procurement, and budgets. I also have a vast array of volunteer experience, such as being a past co-chair of the South Huron Community Committee of the United Way Perth-Huron, and I still am active in sports as well as a director of the South Huron Arts Centre and a member of the Community Theatre.

Couple my experience in being engaged in the community over the years and my work experience and I think it would make me an excellent choice to be the Councillor for Ward 3.

Paul Passmore

(1) I had no intention of running for council this year. I was getting married on Sept. 12 and going on a two-week honeymoon. I have no problem with how our municipality is being run. Our taxes were staying at an acceptable rate of increase and the municipality had addressed the concerns that I had when I attempted to run before. It was brought to my attention that the candidate running for Ward 3 is not a resident of Usborne, which is very concerning to me, so I decided to run. I believe to best represent Usborne the candidate should

reside here where they will have a better understanding of the concerns and issues that arise in this predominantly agricultural community. Trust me, Usborne is different than Exeter. It's a slippery slope to start down this path when someone living from outside your ward can represent you. Soon you won't have your own ward and Usborne will lose its voice and identity.

(2) We need to keep our rural identity and all the history and wonderful aspects of this vibrant agricultural community. Keeping rural entities alive and prosperous is necessary for this important agricultural area and also for all the small businesses that help complement this dynamic ag industry. We have Kirkton Woodham Community Centre, the Kirkton Fair, and different committees like the Thames Road and Elimville Community Park that need to be protected and supported or else Usborne will become just a thought from the past.

(3) As for what experience I bring to the table, I don't have a long pedigree of accomplishments to offer, but I have bled Usborne's purple and gold for over 73 years. I ran a successful farming business for over 48 years and I know what is needed to survive, prosper and understand what is needed to get things done for Usborne. We need to support fiscal local accountability, family farms and ag businesses. Also, we need to continue to have a fair and equitable property tax system.

The Exeter Examiner's final feature on South Huron candidates running in Ward 1 (Stephen) will be published in the Oct. 22 issue.

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AI and municipal elections in Ontario: It's the Wild West as province has no rules over its use or abuse

LEE GRIFFI

Examiner Reporter

The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) in every facet of life is upon us amid warnings of how powerful the technology could become. Now, there are warnings AI has landed in municipal election campaigns.

Ontario's Municipal Elections Act has no provisions addressing AI-generated content, synthetic media, or deepfakes in campaign advertising.

Carmi Levy is one of Canada's top tech experts and said there isn't a sector anywhere immune to the encroachment of AI, and we all would have had to have been naïve to think politics would escape its spread.

"The sad reality is we are seeing more and more AI being incorporated into political messaging up to and including the dissemination of misinformation and disinformation and deep fakes. The use of synthetic assets within political advertising and the use of social media for non-legitimate content is designed to sway political opinion."

He added voters can no longer believe what they see and can't assume the messages in their inboxes or social media feeds are legitimate. Levy said it's hard to figure out who to trust.

"It's pretty much a buyer beware and voter beware scenario where we literally have to mistrust at first glance what we see and consume until it is proven otherwise."

Levy admitted it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell the difference be-

tween something legitimate and something AI-generated. He added we need to look for the origins of an asset.

"When you receive a message that is politically motivated and you want to look at who sent it, is it a recently created account? Does it use original assets or were these assets scraped off existing accounts? Who is interacting with this account, is it part of a large network or is it known as a zombie account which doesn't have a lot of interaction but has a significant amount of content posted recently."

He said legitimate accounts have a years long footprint and others will post and react on the content whereas fake accounts show none of those signs. Levy added humanity is very difficult to recreate in a human space and with a little bit of investigation it is easy to determine all is not what it seems. He also offered some advice to eager voters.

"Verify before you engage. Make sure you are absolutely certain it is in fact a legitimate account, human, and political candidate before you decide to engage with them. By responding to non-synthetic content you amplify the algorithms of others and make it easier for non-legitimate content to be distributed and find its audience."

Levy said everyone can be part of the solution by simply changing behaviours, very slightly, in the digital space.

"By verifying first we ensure false content doesn't find an audience and others are not duped. By reporting content to the platforms they are on we also ensure the algorithm dials them down so they don't find an audience."



He added it is better to not respond and instead click in those three dots to report questionable content that tells the social media platform to reduce its priority in the algorithms so it won't find an audience.

"That is an absolutely critical step toward ensuring we do not give power to the benevolent actors who use misinformation to misinform us. Unfortunately, as the tools become more powerful, accessible and easier to use, they are going to become more widespread and we are going to have our eyes wide open."

Some municipal candidates are not overly savvy in the ways of IT but Levy said everyone on a ballot needs to keep their eyes wide open for bad actors in the

race who will use digital tools against their opponents.

"Make sure you are scanning social media platforms for signs your content is being lifted and misused. In many cases we have seen ghost accounts created by political opponents made to look like the original one but spewing content that increases the likelihood of them being perceived in a negative manner."

He added candidates need to keep an eye out to make sure they are not being targeted as they run their campaigns and skills needed as candidates build their campaign team.

"It's bad and it's going to get worse. I hope voters are smart enough to see through this," added Levy.

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Hensall family gives back with Childcan Family Fun Day

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

enjoy a day outdoors as a family.

"They were able to just be who they are, share their story and just spend time with one another in this beautiful place," said Childcan support program manager Todd Goold.

Childcan is a charity based in London that offers direct support for the families of children in the region who are navigating the challenges of a cancer diagnosis.

When Harvey Cann, 6, was diagnosed with leukemia in 2025 after a visit to South Huron Hospital, the Cann family were quickly referred to Childcan, which helps cover unexpected expenses with financial support, meal vouchers, care packages, parking passes and more.

With Harvey having just recently passed the 500-day milestone of his treatment journey, his family said they wanted to do something to give back.

"When he was first diagnosed, his only thing he wanted to do was go up to our camp," said Brad Cann, Harvey's grandfather. "He couldn't go because he had to stay near the hospital."

"I know how much it meant to him. That's one of the reasons why we wanted this event, because it was something for the kids to look forward to, plus the parents. The parents wanted to be here as much as the kids."

The idea of hosting a Childcan Family Fun Day started when Harvey was at the hospital for treatment with his father, Justin, and his grandfather. As they spoke with Childcan about their family pond, the idea for the day started to materialize.

"With folks just seeing the inside of a hospital room or the inside of the day unit, it's just such a different feeling," said Goold. "It almost immediately just brings down that anxiety or that worry and you just get a chance to be normal and just enjoy the folks around you and the nature."

Perhaps what both Childcan and the Cann family weren't prepared for was the level of support they saw coming from the community as they prepared for the day.

When all was said and done, about \$25,000 had been raised to support Childcan during the day — far exceeding any fundraising expectations. As well, many local businesses and members of the community came together to offer everything that was needed to make the day special. Volunteers signed up to help prepare the pond for the event, firefighters from the Hensall firehall arrived with trucks for a touch-a-truck experience, neighbours agreed to man the grills for a barbecue, businesses brought activities for the children and more.

Everywhere they looked, the Cann family found people willing to step up to make the day one the Childcan families will remember for years to come.

"The donations for the event were one thing, but the in-kind services that were provided and all the help that our neighbors gave us to get the place smartened up and ready for the day was immense and unexpected and wonderful," said Hannah Cann, Harvey's mother. "People raised their hands up right away and said, 'I want to volunteer.'"

Harvey's father, Justin Cann, said the community became so invested in making the day special that volunteers wouldn't take "no" for an answer.

"I said to a couple of volunteers, 'I think we have enough people,' and they said, 'I'm not asking.'"

Goold said that level of community support is something that makes small communities special.

"You only see that in a rural community, that amount of support and connections and just willing to give," said Goold. "I was blown away. I really, really was."

The Cann family said Childcan brought extensive experience from organizing similar events throughout their coverage area, but that the family was on board to help make the day truly special in every way they could.

"Justin put more effort into planning the Childcan day than he spent planning our wedding," Hannah joked.

With Harvey having passed 500 days since his cancer journey began, he's approaching the halfway mark in his treatment.

In the early days of his treatment, Harvey was unable to go far from the hospital, and some parts of everyday life had to be put on hold as he and the family focused on his healing.

However, the family said much has changed since those early days. Harvey is now able to visit the family's camp further north, and he has recently restarted his jiu jitsu classes, with an upcoming tournament set to be his first.

"You know, you think 500 days, all the stuff you could accomplish in that time and how far we've come, it's pretty mind blowing," said Hannah.

"He's doing great," said Justin. "We've been very lucky. He hasn't done a single overnight at the hospital since we left after diagnosis."

Hannah said support from their family, friends, community and Childcan has helped them reach this stage of Harvey's treatment in a good place, and the family has focused on finding the strength to remain hopeful and optimistic through the difficult moments.

"From the beginning we've refused to be victims of our circumstance and we choose every day to make the most of it and learn through the experience," she said. "It's so easy to fall into the victim mentality of 'why was it us that this happened to?' and stuff like that, but we've decided, that's not a productive path and that if we can be in this space and greet it with open arms. We can contribute and give back while we're in it."

"That is way more rewarding, and we'll have more fond memories to look back on," she added. "The bad times are temporary, the good times are temporary, and you can choose to make the most of the bad times or the good."

For the Canns, playing host to the Childcan Family Fun Day was just one way of giving back after receiving support from the organization that has made Harvey's cancer journey more manageable.

"It was really quite a privilege for the Cann family to allow us to host here," said Goold. "It's more than the day. That feeling, those memories, the joy that those families feel, that will continue. That will help them to get through whatever treatment's next, or the lumbar punctures or the chemotherapies, then they think about these things that bring joy and meaning and connection. It's a big deal."

As for future Childcan Family Fun Days at the Cann family pond?

Brad said he's almost certain it will become an annual tradition.

"There's no way that a child is going to sit in the hospital for another year looking forward to this event and we don't have it," said Brad. "That's not going to happen."



(JUSTIN CANN PHOTO)

Harvey Cann of Hensall was diagnosed with leukemia in 2025. Though some parts of his life we put on hold, such as getting to visit his family's camp up north, he's improved and has been able to venture further from the hospital.

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Authorized by Ted Oke

Details added to street signs honouring South Huron veterans

JOHN MINER

Examiner Reporter

Street signs honouring South Huron's local war veterans are being enhanced with the veteran's name, rank and the conflict in which they served.

"It is something we are very proud of," Mike Rolph, building and planning services director, told a recent municipal council meeting.

In the past, South Huron has named streets after local veterans with a poppy symbol added to the left of the name on the sign, but no additional information about the individual.

The new signs will have the poppy, name of the street in large lettering, and the details about the veteran in secondary text below.

In a report to council, Rolph noted several new streets within various subdivisions have been approved with names in honour of local veterans, including Armstrong Street in the Windermere subdivision, Dearing Drive and Sullivan Street in the Sol Haven subdivision, McCurdy Avenue in the Huron Park subdivision, Greene Street and Triebner Street in the Buckingham subdivision, and Lawrence Street off of Snyder Crescent.

There are other existing streets named after veterans in South Huron.

The plan is to identify these streets and update the street signs.

Rolph said the approximate cost for a new street sign is \$100 and is expected to be accommodated within the transportation department's existing operating budget. The honorary signs installed in active subdivisions will be the responsibility of the developer.

Along with the new street signs honouring veterans, the planning department has been working with the Huron County GIS services team to create an interactive map denoting the location of all veteran memorial streets.

A poppy symbol on the map can be clicked on for details about the veteran, including a short biography, photos, and newspaper clippings. The material can be updated on an ongoing basis as additional information is collected.

Mayor George Finch thanked municipal staff for the initiative.

"This is an excellent tribute to our veterans."

Coun. Aaron Neeb said it is important to commemorate veterans and what they stood for and fought for.

"We're coming up to a municipal election and it is easy to forget how lucky we are to be able to take part in elections. There are places in the world where they don't have that and these veterans fought for that."



(JOHN MINER PHOTO)

South Huron municipal staff Don Giberson, left, and Mike Rolph hold up an example of the new street signs to honour war veterans. Additional information on the veterans will be included on an interactive website map.

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Lakeshore Eco-Network launches major tree planting project

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

Lakeshore Eco-Network (LEN) will launch its Tree People project Oct. 3, which they say will see some 12,000 trees planted on public lands in Lambton Shores over the next four years.

The project has been dubbed “Tree People” because the goal is to plant one tree for every resident of Lambton Shores. It is funded by grants from the Lambton Shores Vibrancy Fund, the Ontario Community Environment Fund, the Rotary Club of Grand Bend, and the Sunset Community Foundation. Community partners include Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, the Municipality of Lambton Shores, and Lambton Shores Nature Trails.

“As we see the impact of climate change in our own communities – everything from drought and record high temperatures to wildfire smoke and flooding — it’s more urgent than ever to plant trees,” said LEN chair Pat Morden. Trees absorb carbon and give off oxygen. They clean and cool the air, prevent erosion, absorb excess water, reduce noise pollution, and provide shelter and food for wildlife. Research shows that they’re also good for the physical and mental health of people.

LEN’s tree experts are working with staff at the Municipality of Lambton Shores and others to identify planting sites and select the appropriate native tree species. Plantings will include seedlings, saplings, and larger trees depending on the needs of the site.

“Lambton Shores is already a natural paradise and now we are adding more trees,” said Mayor Doug Cook. “This is a great benefit for all residents.”

Planting will begin in October and continue through spring 2030. On Oct. 3, volunteers planted the first “Tree People” trees at the Lambton Heritage Museum. Two special “Husband and Wife” trees were planted in front of the Canatara Cabin. This is an old tradition that couples once used to celebrate their love and the completion of a new house. The trees are Hemlocks, grown locally from locally harvested seed.

The public is also invited to participate in two other tree plantings this fall:

- Thursday, Oct. 22, Coultis Park, Forest, from noon to 2 p.m.
- Friday Oct. 23, Relow Park, Grand

Bend, from 9:30 to 11 a.m., and noon to 1:30 p.m.

For future planting dates, check the LEN Facebook page or website (www.lakeshoreeconetwork.ca). Training, equipment, and snacks will be provided.

Lakeshore Eco-Network was founded in 2014 as a response to the tornado that destroyed thousands of trees in Grand Bend. Today, LEN raises awareness about issues of biodiversity loss and the climate crisis, and promotes the use of native trees and plants, the reduction of plastic pollution, the use of renewable energy sources and active transportation, and the preservation

of mature trees. It works primarily in the municipalities of Lambton Shores, South Huron, and Bluewater.

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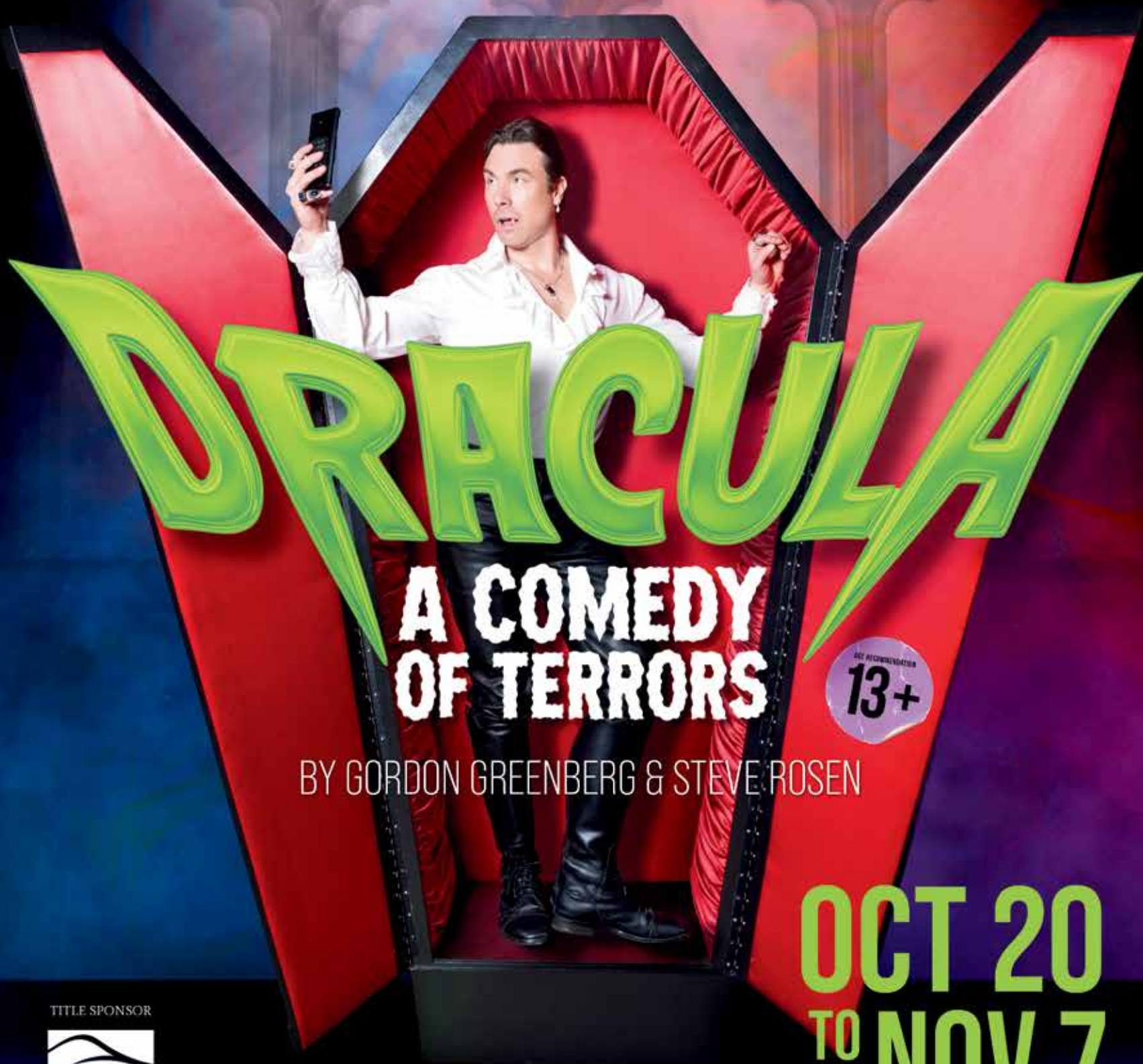
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IPM 2026 draws largest crowd since pandemic

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

The attendance numbers are in, and there is plenty to celebrate following the 2026 International Plowing Match and Rural Expo (IPM) in Bruce County.

A total of 71,330 visitors came through the gates of the five-day event, held Sept. 22 to 26 in Walkerton — the largest attendance recorded at an IPM since the event returned following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2026 Match was the 5th IPM held since the pandemic, making the result an important milestone for an event that, like many large-scale gatherings, has worked to rebuild attendance and momentum in a changing post-pandemic environment.

Attendance grew every day of the match, culminating in a crowd of 18,670 on Saturday — the busiest day of the week. For the local committee, the final numbers are particularly meaningful after years of planning and an extraordinary community effort involving more than 1,700 volunteers.

“We dreamed big from the beginning, and our community stepped up in an extraordinary way,” said Gord Lang, chair of the IPM 2026 local committee. “To welcome more than 71,000 people to Bruce County and record the largest attendance the IPM has seen since the pandemic is something our entire community can be incredibly proud of.”

“We set an ambitious target and more than 71,000 people chose to spend part of their week with us and see, first hand, what Bruce County had to offer,” Lang said. “Our attendance grew every single day. What a tremendous success.”

At the heart of that achievement were the more than 1,700 local and provincial volunteers who helped build, operate and support virtually every aspect of the massive event.

For two years leading up to the match, volunteers served on committees, developed programmes, recruited sponsors and exhibitors, prepared the site and worked through the thousands of details required to transform

farmland into a temporary city capable of welcoming tens of thousands of people.

During match week, they were everywhere.

“Our volunteers were the heart and soul of IPM 2026,” Lang said. “They welcomed visitors, drove shuttles, directed traffic, served meals, supported our competitors and exhibitors, answered questions and solved countless problems behind the scenes. More than 1,700 people gave their time and talents to make this happen. This success belongs to them.”

The 107th International Plowing Match and Rural Expo transformed farmland outside Walkerton into a five-day showcase of agriculture, rural life and community.

Visitors experienced competitive tractor and horse plowing, agricultural exhibits and demonstrations, hundreds of vendors and exhibitors, live entertainment, parades, educational programming and special events.

Competition remained at the heart of the match, with plowmen and plowwomen from Ontario, the United States, Belgium and Ireland competing throughout the week.

Six Ontario competitors also earned the right to represent the province at the 2027 Canadian Plowing Championships: Junior Champion Dugald McIntosh of Seaforth; Reserve Junior Champion Brendan Hickey of Auburn; Tractor (Conventional) Champion Brian Davenport of Owen Sound; Tractor (Conventional) Reserve Champion Mark Varkaamp of Hagersville; Tractor (Reversible) Champion Tom Evans of Tiverton; and Tractor (Reversible) Reserve Champion Robert Sterling of Chatham.

The match also saw Carmen Ward of Grey Normanby crowned the 2026–2027 Ontario Queen of the Furrow, while Saturday provided an encouraging glimpse at the future of the plowing tradition. A record 35 young competitors took to the fields for the Junior Plowing Competition, including two competing with horses.

The 2026 match was also rich in history, marking the 50th anniversary of the first IPM hosted in Bruce County in 1976 and returning to the same Walkerton-area farmland that welcomed the match in both 1976 and 1993. Today, much of that land is part of Lang Farms, with the

2026 match hosted on lands including the farm of Tony and Elaine Lang.

Another piece of Bruce County IPM history returned to the spotlight with the return of Team Farmall and its square-dancing tractors. The hometown crowd favourite first delighted IPM audiences when Bruce County hosted the Match in Teeswater in 2008, and returned to perform at IPM 2026 after a seven-year hiatus.

The match provided Bruce County with an opportunity to introduce tens of thousands of visitors to its agricultural sector, rural communities, businesses and people.

The week also coincided with Ontario’s inaugural Rural Ontario Week, providing an especially fitting backdrop for an event rooted in celebrating the people, businesses and communities that contribute to rural Ontario.

“The International Plowing Match has endured and evolved for more than a century because communities continue to embrace it and make it their own,” said Ontario Plowmen’s Association (OPA) president Melvin Switzer. “Bruce County did exactly that. The enthusiasm of the volunteers, sponsors, exhibitors, competitors and visitors could be felt throughout the week.”

But for organizers, some of the most important measures of success cannot be captured by attendance numbers alone.

They are found in the school children discovering agriculture, the conversations between farmers and consumers, the competitors carrying forward generations of plowing tradition, the businesses and organizations making new connections, and the friendships forged among more than 1,700 local and provincial volunteers working toward a common goal.

“For five days, we had the privilege of showing tens of thousands of people what makes Bruce County special,” Lang said. “They saw our agriculture, our communities and our hospitality — but most importantly, they met our people. We hope they left with great memories and a reason to come back.”

With the 2026 match now complete, the International Plowing Match and Rural Expo tradition moves on to Petrolia in Lambton County, host of the 2027 event.



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Spelling Scramble

Unscramble these Thanksgiving mystery words!

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KYERUT _____

YGRVA _____

FFUSNITG _____

ERNVMEOB _____

Answers: Pilgrim, Turkey, Gravy, Stuffing, November



Happy Thanksgiving

Pinery Fall Classic supports access, education and conservation



The Pinery Fall Classic is returning Sunday, Oct. 18, offering several different runs and walks in support of The Friends of Pinery Park. Pictured are The Friends of Pinery Park executive director Kevin Williams and chair Cathy Forster as they show some of the accessibility equipment available at the park thanks to the organization's efforts.

DAN ROLPH

Editor

Hundreds of runners and walkers will return to Pinery Provincial Park on Oct. 18 for the annual Pinery Fall Classic Run and Walk, a major fundraiser supporting research, education and conservation initiatives in the park.

Organized by The Friends of Pinery Park, the event is marking its 18th year at the park. Each year, the run and walk usually attracts around 400 participants, featuring a two-kilometre run and walk, a 4.8-kilometre trail run, and five- and 10-kilometre runs.

"It's a very popular event," said The Friends of Pinery Park executive director Kevin Williams. "People return year after year, and we start getting calls in May with, 'can I register yet?'"

Each year, the Pinery Fall Classic serves as a major fundraiser for The Friends of Pinery Park, supporting the organization's efforts to improve the park the experience of parkgoers through accessibility improvements, education, preservation and more.

The Friends of Pinery Park was established in 1989 and was the second-ever Friends organization in the province. Today, there are 24 Friends organizations supporting parks throughout Ontario.

Since its creation, The Friends of Pinery Park has supported stewardship of the park through community science projects, such as making bat detectors

accessible and promoting photo monitoring in areas considered ecologically significant, allowing parkgoers to use their mobile devices to take photos that are used by ecologists to monitor environmental changes.

The organization has also worked to ensure that Pinery remains accessible to as many people as possible through the availability of all-terrain wheelchairs, which can be reserved for free.

"Over the past decade, we have been trying to improve visitors' experiences with mobility devices that allow them to get off road onto the trails as well as onto the beach," said Williams. "(Pinery) is getting lots of emails back saying this is just the greatest thing. It's really worked out well."

Some of The Friends of Pinery Park's initiatives, such as its recycling committee, help both to both protect the environment and fundraise for the organization. Volunteers collect and sort through recyclables to both reduce waste and fundraise through returning refundable bottles and cans.

The organization is also responsible for The Friends of Pinery Park Nature Store. The store offers souvenirs, clothing, books and more, and has long been a popular offering at the provincial park.

"We have people that come in November, and they do their Christmas shopping in the store," said The Friends of Pinery Park board chair Cathy Forster. "Their kids might be getting a



(DAN ROLPH PHOTOS)

Bryan Getchell and Jill Haygarth are volunteers who collect recycling at Pinery Provincial Park, ensuring the park stays clean while simultaneously fundraising for The Friends of Pinery Park with refundable cans and bottles.

sweatshirt, or a new hoodie."

With many initiatives under its purview, Friends of Pinery Park is looking ahead to a new project that will expand the park's outreach.

"Our new initiative is to work with the park in developing a 'discovery on the go' mobile unit," said Williams. "The park naturalists will be able to take it to sites outside of the visitor centre within the park, so other areas in the park, as well as when they do a number of school visits and attend special events throughout the county."

Williams said the mobile unit would make travel and setup easier for the

park's outreach staff, and the organization has considered implementing the idea for years.

"We're happy that we are now moving forward with that project," he said.

As Friends of Pinery Park moves ahead with the proposed mobile unit, support from the upcoming Pinery Fall Classic will help the organization continue expanding access to the park's natural and educational experiences.

Registration for the Pinery Fall Classic is available through raceroster.com.

For more information about The Friends of Pinery Park, visit pinery-park.on.ca.

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SOFT SURFACE? HARD PASS.
Charge on a hard, flat surface like a table, desk, or bare floor.
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FOR TOOLS AND RIDES, CHARGE OUTSIDE.
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Why it matters: These batteries are larger and store more energy. Fires can grow quickly if the battery fails.

FEELS HOT? STOP USING IT.
Stop using your device if it feels very hot, starts to swell, smells strange, leaks, smokes, or makes popping or hissing sounds.
Why it matters: A damaged battery can overheat and start a fire.

OUT OF SIGHT? NOT IN FLIGHT.
When on a plane, keep devices where you can see them while charging. Do not charge e-cigarettes or vapes on the plane. Tell a flight attendant if you notice a problem with your device, such as if it feels very hot, starts to swell, is smoking, or has a strange smell.
Why it matters: If a battery overheats or fails, it is important for the flight crew to be able to respond quickly.

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Staff Contribution

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ium battery fires reported, which is an all-time high and represents a significant increase compared to previous year. This indicates a growing trend of lithium battery fires in Canada.

Advice to prevent lithium battery fires includes using the original cord and charger that came with your phone, remember to charge on a hard, flat surface, unplug when fully charged, for larger items like e-bikes, scooter and power tools, charge outside, stop using your device if it feels very hot or starts to swell, smell strange, leaks, smokes or makes hissing sounds, and when on a plane, keep devices where you can see them while charging.

When these batteries are not used, stored, installed, disposed of, or charged properly, they can overheat, leak, burst, or cause a fire or explosion.

If the battery overheats or there is a different smell, noise (hissing), bulging, cracking, change in the shape or colour, or any other sign that is not usual, move the battery or charger away from items that can catch fire if safe to do.

According to local fire department staff, if a fire occurs, evacuate the area immediately and call emergency services. Lithium batteries can explode and cause injuries.

The way batteries are charged can make a difference in helping prevent home fires. It comes down to using simple habits each time the device is plugged in.

Other advice includes installing a smoke detector in the area where the battery is charged and develop emergency response procedures to address scenarios related to battery charging and fires.



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EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

In 1956, the Exeter Kinsmen Midgets U18 team became Ontario Baseball Champions — a first for a team from Exeter.

70 years later, four of the players who were on that groundbreaking squad were welcomed to Alvin Willert Field on Wednesday, Sept. 23, to remember the achievement that inspired generations of local young athletes.

Jim Hennessey, Jim Russell, Doug Kelson and Cy Blommaert, the surviving members of that team, stepped onto the diamond before a match between South Huron District high school and Central Huron secondary school. They were recognized with a presentation of commemorative pennants and a ceremonial first pitch to start the match.

The 1956 provincial championship team faced squads from Mitchell, Blyth, Port Elgin and New Hamburg to make their way into the finals, where they went head-to-head with Caledonia.

Though Caledonia won the first match of that final series 7-3, Blommaert secured the win in game two with a walk-off single. The third and final game in Ingersoll saw Caledonia ahead going into the 9th inning, but a slide home by Russell under the tag locked in the winning run for Exeter.

Since then, 23 teams from Exeter have followed in the 1956 team's footsteps to become provincial champions.

The locale chosen for the Sept. 23 commemorative ceremony proved to be fitting for the team that was managed by Alvin Willert — the Exeter diamond's namesake. Also playing

a pivotal role in guiding the team to their victory in 1956 were coaches Jim Glover and Don Gravett.

Kelson, who was described as a player who was "fast as lighting" during the ceremony, travelled from Ottawa to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the team's win.

"With only four of us left, it's even more gratifying to be here," he said. "We think about our teammates."

Kelson said he was pleased to see such a strong love of baseball continuing in the community and spoke highly of the field that bares the name of his former manager.

"It's such a great venue here."

Though 70 years have passed since

the championship game, Kelson arrived with a piece of memorabilia that turned heads as he walked onto the field — his 1956 championship jacket.

"It was actually too big for me," he said. "I've worn it a lot, but it's still in pretty good shape. It's been hanging in the closet. I felt it was important to keep it."

Kelson said he and his family moved away from Exeter soon after the championship game, though he has continued to stay in touch over the years. However, he said the ceremony at Alvin Willert Field was the first time he's been able to see his former teammates since he left the community.

"It's been amazing."



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SPORTS

Community honours team that inspired generations of Exeter baseball



(DAN ROLPH PHOTOS)

Jim Hennessey, Jim Russell, Doug Kelson and Cy Blommaert stand in front of a banner at Exeter's Alvin Willert Field recognizing the 1956 Exeter Kinsmen Midgets U18 team.

DAN ROLPH

Editor

In 1956, the Exeter Kinsmen Midgets U18 team became Ontario Baseball Champions — a first for a team from Exeter.

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"It's been amazing."



The 1956 Exeter Kinsmen Midgets U18 team was recognized during a Sept. 23 ceremony at Exeter's Alvin Willert Field, celebrating the 70th anniversary of the team's provincial championship win. From left are Drew Kraemer, South Huron Mayor George Finch, and 1956 team members Jim Hennessey, Jim Russell, Doug Kelson and Cy Blommaert.



The four surviving members of the 1956 Exeter Kinsmen Midgets U18 team threw the ceremonial first pitch before a match between South Huron District high school and Central Huron secondary school.

MINOR SPORTS

SCRAPBOOK

(DAN ROLPH PHOTOS)



The South Huron District High School varsity boys baseball team held their first home games of the fall baseball season Sept. 23, walking away with back-to-back wins. The Panthers first hosted Stratford's St. Michael Catholic secondary school at Exeter's Alvin Willert Field, winning 4-2. The team then played Central Huron secondary school, who they defeated 3-2. Pictured is Mason Finkbeiner as he pitches against Central Huron.



Nolan McCann crosses home plate in the Central Huron matchup on Sept. 23.



Jackson King of the Panthers throws the ball toward home.



Hunter Heywood winds up a swing as the Panthers play against Central Huron.



South Huron pitcher Adam Munn delivers a pitch in the beginnings of the Sept. 23 game in Exeter.



Panther Carter Peeters sprints for first base after hitting the ball.

Exeter Hawks rack up two wins over weekend

DAN ROLPH
Editor

The Exeter Hawks were back in action over the weekend, putting an end to a rough string of games and pulling off back-to-back wins.

The Hawks hosted the Port Stanley Sailors at the South Huron Recreation Centre Oct. 2 in what proved to be a lopsided affair.

The first frame was all Exeter with goals from Sam Consitt, Nate Schiedel and Henry Meulenstein in a period where the Hawks outshot the Sailors 21-5.

That momentum carried into the second when the Hawks scored two more goals before the Sailors got on the board with about six minutes left in the period. With the Hawks replying with a goal of their own, Exeter pushed into the third with a comfortable safety net.

Though the Sailors were first to score in the third, two more goals from Exeter got the Hawks over the finish line ahead 8-2.

The teams then had a rematch the following day on Oct. 3, where the Hawks continued their dominant streak in Port Stanley.

Exeter once again had a three-goal first period where they denied the Sailors an opportunity at scoring, but the teams had a seven-goal back-and-forth in a whirlwind of a second frame that left the game tied by the end of the pe-

riod. The third period was a different story as the Hawks closed the door on the Sailors while scoring four more goals, wrapping up the game 9-5 in Exeter's favour.

The Hawks will be back on home ice in Exeter Oct. 9 when they host their Highway 4 rivals the Lucan Irish.

Lucan Irish find their footing with second win of the season

The Lucan Irish were in Parkhill Oct. 3 as they played the North Middlesex Stars.

The Stars were first on the board with two goals, but a goal from Kevin Waters, assisted by Matthew Rutledge and Weston Gower, had the Irish behind by a single goal by the end of the period.

The second period saw Lucan's Owen Hey tie the game, but North Middlesex's Dailen Fousek pushed the Stars ahead with five minutes left in that period.

A hard-fought third period goal by Zander Pino, assisted by Waters and Rutledge, put the teams neck-and-neck once again.

But it was Lucan's Cole Abbey who came in with the tie-breaker with eight minutes left in the frame — a lead that the Irish held onto until the match's end, giving Lucan the 4-3 win.

Following their Oct. 9 game against the Exeter Hawks, the Lucan Irish will be at the East Elgin Community Complex on Oct. 10 to face off with the Aylmer Spitfires.



(MACKENZIE HODGINS PHOTOS)

Exeter's Titus Muhn receives a pass during the Oct. 2 matchup against the Port Stanley Sailors.



Justin Skirten of the Exeter Hawks waits for the faceoff when the Hawks hosted the Port Stanley Sailors in Exeter on Oct. 2.

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COLUMNS

Pandemonium reigns: Local headlines for Exeter's election 1934



BOB HEYWOOD

Examiner Columnist

The election in South Huron this month displays a healthy showing of community spirit and also of taxpayer concern. There is a three-way contest for mayor while the deputy mayor has been acclaimed, along with multiple candidates for the council seats in Exeter, Usborne and Stephen wards.

While perusing the Nov. 29, 1934, edition of the Times Advocate, I found a report of the largest slate of officers ever nominated in the history of our town, at least to that date. Four names were placed in nomination for the reeveship, 16 for four council seats and 10 nominees for four spots on the board of education. For the P.U.C two other names were added to a lengthy roster. The following Monday evening, interested ratepayers packed the hall to the doors. Clerk Joseph Senior occupied the chair and called upon the current council to take seats on the platform. The audience immediately began to express their dissatisfaction with the seemingly dismal performance of the town council over the past year. Several in the crowd became loud and boisterous as they argued with the speakers on stage. For the first hour and a half there was little but "bally-hoo and wrangling" and the meeting was getting nowhere. The arguing and cat calls became quite heated prompting loud cries of "order, order," and "sit down." The London Free Press was accused of providing their readers with an exaggerated account of the events coming close to describing it as a veritable "donnybrook." However, as far as the Times Advocate report read, no fisticuffs were employed.

Reeve W.D. Sanders was on the hot seat to defend the performance of council over the past

term. W.D. (this writer's great-great uncle) was no stranger to Exeter's political scene. He was at this point completing his fifth term in the reeve's chair. In those early years a new council was elected every 12 months. He contested virtually every election in the 20s and 30s. He had been part of the driving force to start the canning factory in 1906 and as a "sort of gentleman farmer," Sanders served as Justice of the Peace for a staggering 45 years. He was no stranger to political controversy. Like a good politician, he defended their 1934 performance, blaming the village's system of bookkeeping for distorting the bottom line. That prompted a Mr. Mawson, who was auditor for the books, to ask for five minutes "to explain what Reeve Sanders did not seem to understand." I suppose W.D. wished he had not attempted to pass the buck. There was considerable loud heckling when the auditor sat down and according to the T.A. report, "it was plain the audience was still somewhat at sea" concerning the finances.

In the same newspaper, in a long letter addressed to the "Ratepayers of Exeter," Reeve Sanders lamented his inability to earn the co-operation of his council members. He pointed out that despite the handicap of disunity that he had been working with, there was a long list of

noteworthy accomplishments. He touted that the advent of angle parking on Main Street had been a good improvement for the business sector. He solicited their support so he could have the opportunity to "bring a successful finish" to the several important projects he had started.

A newcomer to politics would be Sander's only rival for the reeve's chair. Although Birt Francis and David Rowcliffe had been nominated, neither of these veteran councillors qualified their nomination. Tom Pryde however, had risen to the occasion. Pryde had served on the library and cemetery boards and had proven himself as a hard-working man of business. Pryde received a large ovation as he mounted the platform at the noisy candidate's meeting. He had no notes or no report. Some 50 persons

had asked him to allow his name to stand for reeve and he mused that if their wives stuck by their husbands, he would at least get 100 votes. His supporters had become tired of the apparent inability of the reeve and council to work in harmony together. He quipped that the reeve and members of council were all his personal friends and whatever the outcome, no personal animosity would prevail. Both candidates voiced their strong opposition to establishing a "Beer Parlour" in Exeter and would do all in their power to stop its advance.

By the time the candidates meeting was over, there seemed to be a general consensus that the council of 1934 deserved to be removed due to their disfunction. By the time the ballots were counted on election night, Exeter's new council was totally composed of new members. Tom Pryde scored 571 votes to Sander's 276, a handsome majority of 295. Filling the council chairs were J.W. Hern, J.W. Morley (lawyer), G.F. Roulston (dentist), and Harp Rivers (merchant/butcher). For the board of education, Sandy Elliot, Mel Southcott, C.V. Pickard and Mrs. B.W.F (Roxie) Beavers gained their seats. Luther Penhale unseated Paul Coates to fill the vacancy of the Public Utilities Commission.

The displaced councillors included H. Bierling, J.H. Grieve, D. Rowcliffe and S. Ross. I could find no evidence that any of them served again. W.D. Sanders was out, but he had been there before, and he continued his marathon appointment as Justice of the Peace. Tom Pryde headed council for two years and started watching for opportunities to obtain either federal or provincial seats. W.D. rose from the ashes of defeat to serve three more years (1937-1939) as Exeter's reeve, finally being unseated by Benson Tuckey. Sanders ran one more time in 1943, but Tuckey was once again the winner. W.D. Sanders passed from this life to the next in 1952 at the age of 89, with a lot of political experience under his belt.

Political controversy and partisan skulduggery has always been "of the stuff" that sells newspapers. Fifty-six years before the

1934 council upset in Exeter the following notice placed in the Exeter Times:

"Notice – Twp of Usborne – Voter's list Court of Revision. Notice is hereby given that a court will be held pursuant to the Voter's List Finality Act, by His Honor the judge of the County Court of the County of Huron at the Town Hall, Elimville Ont Thursday the 27th of June, 1878 at 10:00 a.m. to hear and determine the several complaints of errors and omissions in the Voter's list of

the Municipality of Usborne for 1877. All persons having business at the court are required to attend at the same time and place."

The following week a letter appeared on the front page of the same paper under the heading of "Mean Tactics." Sir: "Being an eyewitness at the court of revision held at Elimville ... I was not a little surprised at the sneaking, unprincipled method to which the appellant resorted in order to obtain evidence for striking names off the voter's list. Having somewhat a knowledge of Grit rule and the various low subterfuges used by members of that political party, my astonishment became somewhat abated and it appears their legal pleader was pretty well up to the dodges. When he seemed deficient in the knowledge of a case, the appellant who sat close by his side (like a leech perched upon a tumor) supplied his wants by filling his left auricle with a charge of windy vibrations called sounds."

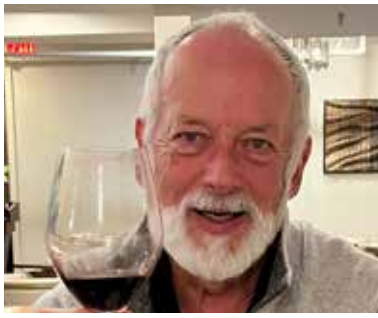
One might almost surmise that Rex Murphy wrote this verbiage for the Usborne taxpayer. Apparently, the party in power were doing their best to "remove from" or "add to" the voter's list enhancing their prospects at the polls. It was concerned mostly with the grown sons or daughters who may be working away from home and not present bodily within the community. The writer continued: "Such are some of the sinister methods adopted by the appellant to prop up the rotten fabric of gritism, whose foundation is washing away like a sand bank on the seashore." Five of the local Usborne cases were referred to a hearing in Goderich, a 40-mile trip, to attempt to be able to

vote in the election that year. The writer simply signed the letter "Kirkton, June 28, 1878," apparently unwilling to sign his name to his convictions. He did give a little indication of his politics in the final statement, "But I should be sorry to see any Conservative demean himself in the eyes of the public by making such mock appeals." These courts of revision were held in all the local townships for the same purpose.

The Exeter Times that year was as usual, extremely biased, favouring a Mr. Robert Porter for the Tory nomination. Porter was running against Thomas Greenway, the incumbent MP from Centralia, who had left the Tory caucus and served his last term as a Reform independent. This was treated as the unpardonable sin by the Times. Accusations were leveled calling Greenway a traitor and a chattel of Alexander Mackenzie's Liberals. One thousand people attended a meeting in Crediton to hear Porter and Greenway spar. Porter spoke for one and three quarter hours. The Exeter Times reported that his speech was the best ever heard in Crediton while Greenway's response was lame, impotent and falling flat and stale on the crowd. Greenway lost the nomination, and Porter lost the riding to M.C. Cameron the Liberal lawyer from Goderich who was dubbed a shyster by the Exeter Times. Perhaps in this upcoming election we should appreciate all the boredom and non-issues it has afforded us.

If that sounds a little crass, I must say that I join with all sensible ratepayers to thank each of the candidates in our South Huron municipal contest for their willingness to place their name on a ballot of any kind. And I leave you with the commendation uttered by my dear old Uncle W.D. Sanders, as the Reeve elect, January 1937: "Gentlemen, I congratulate you on your election to the honourable position of the governing body of the village of Exeter, and may our labours be crowned with harmony and good will." (Unlike the fiasco in 1934) I am sure if he was addressing the successful candidates in this election, W.D. would graciously start off with "Ladies and Gentlemen."

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Soothing your spirit – and wearing a monkey – in Grenada's rainforest



PAUL KNOWLES

Examiner Columnist

It's not a surprise that, when travellers visit Caribbean islands, they often have two thoughts in mind: the beach, and rum punches. And there is no doubt that most Caribbean islands have great beaches, and no lack of rum drinks.

But the best Caribbean destinations offer so much more, and it would be a shame to miss the wonders you will find if you dare to leave the beach resort and start to explore.

In my view, Grenada is definitely one of "the best Caribbean destinations." I have a special fondness for the "Windward Islands" – the nations that are in the eastern part of the Caribbean. And when I was in Grenada, earlier this summer, the beach played very little part in a menu of fantastic activities – although there is no doubt that the four-kilometer-long Grand Anse white sand beach is one of the best in the world.

But we turned our focus inland, and spent one of our days exploring Grenada's spectacular rainforest.

Grenada has 3,800 acres of protected rainforest. The diversity of plants is mind-boggling:

there are over 100 varieties of ferns, alone.

One of my favourite stops was at Annandale Waterfall and Forest Park. This being the rainforest, it wasn't too surprising that it was, in fact, raining. But this being a tropical island, it also wasn't too surprising that the rain was warm, and nobody seemed to care that we were getting wet. Because the plants and flowers were astonishing, and the waterfall is beautiful.

Annandale is a 30-foot waterfall on a stream that emerges from the rainforest, and plunges into a beautiful, emerald pool below... open for swimming if you so choose. It's one of nine waterfalls in Grenada, which is a volcanic island (there are hot springs you can visit), and so, rises sharply from the oceanfront to the heights of the rainforest.

Not to wax overly botanical, I wandered along paths bordered by dramatic heliconia, lush bougainvillea (the national flower of Grenada), "shampoo ginger", bird of paradise flower, torch ginger, and large, bright yellow flower called "buttercups" that bear no resemblance to any buttercup I have encountered in Canada. Plus dozens of plants I wouldn't even begin to try to identify. The rainforest is simply beautiful, and I noticed that all of us travel-writing colleagues almost immediately relaxed, and stopped to savour the visual delights around us – in spite of the rain.

Annandale Falls is just a small part of the large rainforest, which includes the Grand Etang National Park and Forest

Reserve. There, visitors will encounter a cornucopia of unique delights.

There is an extensive lake that is actually a volcanic crater. There are beautiful birds, Rainbow Eucalyptus trees with bark the colours of the rainbow, and rather shockingly large Giant Frangipani caterpillars.

But the highlights are the Mona monkeys.

As you enter the park, you encounter this posted warning: "Notice. The Mona monkeys within the Grand Etang National Park live in the wild and can be very unpredictable. If you choose to interact with them, you are doing so at your own risk. The management of the park assumes no liability for any injury sustained as a result of such interaction."

That notice certainly echoed in my head a few minutes and a short distance away, as a Mona monkey sat on top of my head. Because there are some gentlemen who have apparently trained the wild monkeys to prance about on visitors' heads, arms and shoulders in return for food.

Or perhaps – and I might actually lean toward this explanation – the monkeys have trained the gentlemen. It sure seemed like the monkeys were in charge, at any rate.

Our minibus driver stopped where these monkeys are likely to be found, and next thing we knew, we had become climbing posts for Mona monkeys. It was a ton of fun – and no tourists were hurt in the making of those photographs. Nor were any Mona monkeys.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Annandale Falls, one of nine waterfalls in the rainforest of Grenada.

Grand Etang National Park features several walking and hiking trails. The hikes through the rainforest range from relatively easy walks to a challenging trail that climbs up Mount Saint Catherine, the highest peak on the volcanic island.

Of course, as wonderful as the rainforest is, Grenada offers a lot more for visitors to enjoy (including, naturally, the beach). There is the unique and astonishing Underwater Sculpture Park (which I had the chance to re-visit, and which I will write about in a subsequent feature). The island is home to seven chocolate factories (and once you have had Grenadian chocolate, you may never go back), and – you knew we're get back to this – five rum distilleries,

which offer the most generous tasting experiences you are likely to encounter anywhere.

The tours of the chocolate factories are fascinating, and the tours of the rum distilleries are tasty, as well. Our visit took us to Belmont Estates for chocolate, and to Clarke's Court rum distillery.

But tempting as those options are (and yes, you should yield to temptation in this case), nothing will soothe and inspire your soul like spending time in Grenada's amazing rainforest.

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.



These flowers, called Buttercups, bear little resemblance to the small flowers of the same name in Canada.



The author, with a Mona monkey pal.

ABOUT TIME AND TIMES: Firsthand account — William's 1887 diary Part II



JUDY FINKBEINER JOHNSON

Examiner Columnist

WRITER'S NOTE: This column includes diary entries, which are in italics here. Spelling and abbreviations are reproduced as written in excellent penmanship in the original diary more than 125 years ago.

William D. Lee turned 21 in his diary written in 1887. From Belfast, Ireland, he emigrated to Brooklyn, New York five years before, leaving family and friends. William is the father of my husband Barry's aunt-by-marriage Betty Johnson.

Love and loss

Diary entry, Saturday, March 5, 1887: Went to a talk at the Y.M.C.A. on Electric Light. Beecher was struck with apoplexy. No hope.

Apoplexy: A stroke/cerebral hemorrhage. I know you are devastated by this William, a personal loss of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, famous orator and social activist for anti-slavery. He is the younger brother of the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Harriet Beecher Stowe. Both Beechers were well-acquainted with Abraham Lincoln.

March 7: Went to the Y.P. Prayer meeting. Went home with Miss A. and stayed an hour. Agreed to go out

Thursday evg. and her father suggested my going out with her Sat. evg.

William, you just got the stamp of approval from Mr. A. for courting his daughter! Do you know that he was a First Lieutenant in the Union Army, signing up for a three-year duty in 1861, the first year of the Civil War? To use an expression from your day, it behooves you to treat Miss A. very well indeed. Take care not to trifle with her emotions.

March 8: Beecher died at 9:30 a.m. Flags are half mast.

It was too hard for you to see him after his death when over 40,000 people viewed him lying in state in Brooklyn. Or see his funeral.

Life-Changing Decisions

March 23: Took my berth on the S.S. Egypt, National Line.

Decision taken: You are going to Belfast. This is one of the two most luxurious and biggest trans-Atlantic passenger ships. For \$50 to \$70 U.S. you will be one of 120 saloon/first-class passengers with a berth/cabin; up to 1,410 people travel in steerage/third-class. You will have access to the saloon, the main public area on the ship, for multi-course meals, areas for reading, lectures, and conversations with influential people.

March 26: Bought a new suit at Brooks Bros, paid \$23, very nice one it is. Went with Miss A. to church. Coming home went in and we sat on the sofa and drank lemonade.

William, I won't call you a dude

like your first love interest Belle did when you dropped her after learning she was several years older than you, but it seems she was apt about your passion for fashion. That suit is over \$1,100 Canadian in today's dollars. Metaphorically and literally, you are getting closer to Miss A., sitting beside her on the sofa now.

April 10: Easter Sunday. Flowers and new bonnets everywhere. Attended five services.

April 26: Went to Barnum's Circus alone. It was very good.

April 27: We walked over the bridge (between Brooklyn and New York). It was immense, took her hand in mine, told me she would miss me. Gave her my photo.

You have called Miss A. immense before in your diary. That 1880s' expression means splendid, first-rate.

May 4: Went up to Lou's house. We were on the stoop for a long time. I told her I loved her; just then her papa came along. She is to let me know Friday evening.

May 6: Went to prayer meeting with Lou. I was rather nervous. Her answer was "Yes". She loves me. How glad I was.

Finally, you two are on a first name basis.

Trans-Atlantic crossing

June 1: A red letter day. Sailed on the S.S. Egypt of the National Line for the Atlantic crossing from New York to Liverpool. Drove to the pier

in a carriage. I bade my darling Lou good-bye.

June 2: Sick all day. We have a prize company on board.

June 4: We ran into a storm. The sea was high and the ship rolled very much. I was sick nearly all day. Without note except for one birth in the steerage an illegitimate child.

June 5: Read Lou's letters and looked at her photos and constantly thought of her. One of the passengers died this a.m.

June 6: Burial at sea at 11 o'clock. Saw two sails no steamers yet.

June 7: There was a heavy swell on, and the ship rolled fearfully. Am enjoying the voyage now. Total receipts from concert \$110 in aid of the orphans. The programs were sold by auction. The highest brought \$5. I told my story under the head of a monologue.

June 10: All are glad because our voyage will soon be over. Played shuffleboard. Passed very close a large ship in full sail. It was a grand sight.

June 11: The finest day of the voyage it is simply magnificent. Sighted the Irish coast early this morning. We proceeded to Liverpool. Saw many steamers and fishing smacks.

There were fleets of smacks, traditional fishing boats in that era, often with ochre-coloured cotton sails, and a well in the bottom of the ship for transporting the live catch.

June 14: Reached home to-day after an absence of over five years and found them all well.

It's a huge change for you William, from the busy, interesting, life you had built in Brooklyn. I see your entries changing from attending lectures, concerts, plays, and meeting new people with different world views to working at your father's bakery and attending football matches — what we call soccer here in Canada. Your penmanship is less precise; the excitement I read when you were in Brooklyn is dimmed. While you enjoy times with your family and friends, you miss Lou terribly. And, I believe, your former life! The word "but" is now in most of your entries. You attended a lecture, but it wasn't very good. You went to several church services on Sunday but the sermons you heard were only middling. You are making the best of it, "but" I hope you find your way back to the New World.

December 31: This has been perhaps the most eventful year in my life and as I look back upon the way I have come I feel thankful for all God's goodness to me. I hope to have advanced a year's journey nearer glory.

I have two more of your diaries, William. Here is what I know: You will have more Atlantic crossings; you will return to the New World; you and Lou will marry and have children; you will become a minister and eventually move to Ontario, living in Toronto and other cities. Barry and I plan to visit the Brantford cemetery to pay our respects to a couple whose life journey's story we celebrate — courage, love of family and lifelong learning.



Rev. William D. Lee, 41 years old in 1906, Toronto.



Lou Amerman's father Albert in 1861, 24 years old. Union Army Civil War.

(PHOTOS COURTESY OF BARRY JOHNSON)

MENTORING MATTERS: Service clubs help young people thrive



AMY WILHELM
Examiner Columnist

As we wrap up Big Brothers Big Sisters Month, I want to take a moment to recognize and thank the many local service clubs that play such an important role in supporting Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Huron.

Each year during Big Brothers

Big Sisters Month, we reach out to service clubs across our communities to ask for financial support. With more than 30 service clubs within our service area, their collective support makes a tremendous difference in our ability to deliver our programs and create meaningful experiences for local children and youth. They help to “Make Life Bigger” for a younger person.

We know there are many organizations in our communities seeking support, and our local service clubs continue to go above and beyond. For Big Brothers Big Sisters, that support takes many forms. It helps fund our mentoring programs,

cover pool rentals for agency events, send children to camp, provide special experiences for our Littles, such as the opportunity to turn on the community Christmas lights, help us move items for The Little Shop and even lend a hand by running the bar for our Quarter Auction. These are just a few examples of the many ways our service clubs support us throughout the year.

Our service area stretches across Ailsa Craig, Bayfield, Brucefield, Centralia, Clinton, Crediton, Dashwood, Egmondville, Exeter, Grand Bend, Granton, Hensall, Holmesville, Huron Park, Lucan, Parkhill, Seaforth, Vanastra, Zurich and

the surrounding areas. We are fortunate to have service clubs throughout these communities that believe in supporting local organizations and making a difference close to home.

Of course, financial contributions are only one part of what makes our community so special. Just like Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Huron, our local service clubs rely on the helping hands of dedicated volunteers. These volunteers give their time, energy and talents because they believe in making their communities stronger. When we say that “it takes a village,” we truly mean it.

The work we do at Big Brothers

Big Sisters would not be possible without the support of our volunteers, donors, community partners and, especially, the service clubs that continue to stand behind us year after year. To every service club that has supported Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Huron — whether through a donation, volunteer hours, helping hands or a special experience for a child — thank you. Your generosity reaches much further than you may realize. Together, we are helping create opportunities, build connections and ignite the power and potential within young people in our communities.

GREYMATTER: How Do We Measure Happiness?



ANNETTE GERDES
Examiner Contributor

How happy are you?

It sounds like a simple question, but happiness is actually pretty difficult to measure. There isn’t a blood test, a scale or a number on a chart that can tell us how happy someone is.

Researchers often look at things such as life satisfaction, relationships, positive emo-

tions, sense of purpose and overall well-being. But even those can be difficult to measure because happiness means something different to everyone.

After spending many years in nursing and now working as a General Manager in a retirement home, I have had the privilege of being around a lot of people with very different ideas about what makes them happy.

And I’ve noticed something interesting: what makes us happy seems to change as we get older.

When we’re younger, happiness might be connected to excitement, accomplishments, money, vacations, careers or having the newest things. We often think, “I’ll be happy when...”

When the kids are older. When I get that promotion. When I buy that house. When I retire.

Then we get older and realize that life doesn’t necessarily become perfect just because we reached the thing we thought would make us happy.

Instead, the things that bring happiness may become much simpler.

I see it every day. A resident’s face lighting up when a family member walks through the door. Two friends laughing over coffee. Someone hearing an old favorite song. A resident proudly showing me something they made. A good meal, a sunny afternoon or simply having someone to talk to.

These moments may seem small, but they aren’t small to the person experiencing them.

I’ve also learned that being happy doesn’t mean being happy all the time. We can worry about our health and still laugh. We can miss someone terribly and still enjoy a wonderful memory. We can have a bad day and still find one good moment.

Maybe happiness isn’t about eliminating the difficult parts of life. Maybe it’s about noticing the good parts when they happen.

So, how do we measure our own happiness?

Perhaps instead of asking, “Am I happy?”, we could ask:

Do I have people I care about?

Do I have something to look forward to?

Do I feel useful or needed?

Do I still laugh?

Do I notice the little things

that bring me joy?

And perhaps the biggest question is: Am I paying attention to the moments when I am happy?

I think that may be one of the things we learn as we age. When we’re young, we often spend our time chasing happiness. As we get older, perhaps we become better at recognizing it.

This month, try asking yourself a different question:

“What made me happy today?”

It doesn’t have to be something big. It could be a phone call, a cup of coffee, a favourite song, a visit, a laugh or simply a beautiful day.

Happiness may be difficult to measure, but perhaps it’s easier to find when we slow down long enough to notice it.

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Authorized by Paul Klopp

Some botanical lore for Halloween



JASON RAMSAY-BROWN

Examiner Columnist

Carving scary faces into pumpkins seems a bizarre tradition, one made no less strange when you consider its origins. According to Irish myth, during a night of heavy drinking, a petty thief known as “Stingy Jack” managed to trick Satan into transforming himself into a coin. Jack quickly snatched up the coin and dropped it into his pocket where it settled next to a silver crucifix, rendering the Devil helpless. Forced to strike a deal for his release, Satan promised never to claim Jack’s soul. A sinner like Jack would not be welcomed into Heaven either so, when his last day finally arrived, Jack found himself forced to roam the Earth for all eternity, his way lit by a burning ember housed inside a hollowed-out rutabaga. Jack’s ghost soon came to be called “Jack of the lantern” (Jack-o’-lantern) and superstitious folks across the British Isles took to placing carved turnips, beets, and even potatoes in their windows to ward off such wander-

ing spirits.

Here in North America, pumpkins quickly took the place of turnips and such, and the practice became reserved only for Halloween, the night that folklore suggests the veil between the worlds of the living and the dead is at its thinnest. But crafting wards from gourds is not the only terrifying tradition related to plants that immigrants brought with them to this country.

Another (now long-forgotten) Halloween tradition asserted that anyone foolish enough to walk beneath the branches of a European hawthorn tree (*Crataegus monogyna*) on All Hallow’s Eve was sure to summon Satan himself. The exact origins of this story are unclear, but very likely it stems from the medieval belief that hawthorn wood was a favoured material for building magic wands and flying brooms.

Few botanical families can claim as deep a connection to occult tradition as Solanaceae — the nightshades. Potent substances (alkaloids) found in many nightshades are known to cause hallucinations and delirium, likely the reason they’re rumoured to have been stirred into many a pot of “witches brew.” Jimsonweed (*Datura stramonium*), sometimes called devil’s trumpet or Hell’s bells, was said to enable shapeshifting, flight, and the creation of zombies. Black henbane (*Hy-*

oscyamus niger) was also believed to grant the ability to fly, a gift from the dark spirits of the world. Belladonna (*Atropa belladonna*), which translates literally to “beautiful lady,” was considered the foundation of many so-called love potions — drinks meant to entirely eliminate a person’s free will and force them to submit to the desires of another.

A plant doesn’t need to be poisonous to earn a sinister reputation. The so-called enchanter’s nightshades (including *Circaea lutetiana* and our local variety, *Circaea canadensis*, neither of which is in the Solanaceae family) are forever linked with Circe, the sorceress described in Homer’s *The Odyssey* who was said to have transformed Odysseus’ crew into pigs. Queen Anne’s Lace (*Daucus carota*) has a lesser-known name, “devil’s plague,” given to it by Scottish

farmers who were distressed over the invasive nature of the plant. Along similar lines, the invasive nature of orange hawkweed (*Pilosella aurantiaca*) was enough to brand it “devil’s paintbrush” and was believed to be a curse cast on farmers by Satan himself, designed to drive them into bankruptcy.

While many of these occult traditions involve plants that early settlers either brought with them from overseas or discovered close cousins of here in Ontario, equally sinis-

ter reputations formed around many of our own native plants. Water hemlock (*Cicuta maculata*) quickly became associated with the underworld due to its extreme toxicity. The gnarled roots of the “sinister sister of the forest,” black cohosh (*Actaea racemosa*), were once believed to serve a variety of strange purposes in dark rituals. The creepy appearance of white baneberry fruit (*Actaea pachypoda*), whose berries look like a bunch of unblinking doll’s eyes sprouting along blood-red stalks, was more than enough reason to suspect the plant of foulness — the fact it also caused heart failure when eaten merely sealed the deal. The incredibly unique ghost plant (*Monotropa uniflora*), a parasitic plant able to grow in complete darkness, was also called the corpse plant and was believed to indicate the presence of restless spirits haunting the area. Witchgrass (*Panicum capillare*) earned its common name simply because its seed-heads were thought to resemble a witches’ broom.

Even the seemingly innocent blackberry is not exempt from demonic influence. Centuries ago, consuming these delicious fruits between Michaelmas (Sept. 29) and the start of the following spring was considered a firm no-no. Tradition held that when Archangel Michael defeated Satan, the Devil-to-be fell from the heavens and



(JASON RAMSAY-BROWN PHOTO)

Halloween is a time filled with traditions dating back centuries, such as the creation of Jack-o’-lanterns.

landed on a thorny blackberry bush. Wallowing in the rage of his defeat, Satan spat on the bush and cursed its fruit.

So, this Halloween, just remember: some of those flowers and vines that bring you such joy in the daylight just may serve darker forces when the moon rises. And if all this talk of demons and witchcraft makes you feel even the slightest bit of unease, might I recommend a pinch of mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) on your pillow, long used to repel devils and demons. Or perhaps I can interest you in a charm made from St. John’s-wort that was collected at midnight on Midsummer Eve (June 23), long believed to protect people against dark magic. Then, in the sanctuary of the morning’s light, plant an elderberry (*Sambucus* genus) outside your bedroom window, as it is said no witch or warlock can pass beyond its branches.



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SOUTH HURON COUNCIL BRIEFS

JOHN MINER

Examiner Reporter

Council asks for limits on OPP costs

South Huron council is asking the province to limit the annual bill for OPP policing costs to a level aligned with municipal revenue growth and affordability. The municipality has been advised that the charges for OPP coverage could go up by as much as 11 per cent for 2027. If South Huron's bill increases the full amount, it would boost policing costs to \$2.37 million. OPP costs currently account for about 15 per cent of the property tax levy. Noting that the levy increased by 11 per cent the previous year as well, Coun. Ted Oke said the OPP costs are starting to get unmanageable.

Election compliance committee members named

As required by provincial legislation, South Huron has named three members to an election compliance audit committee. The job of the committee is to evaluate complaints by a voter that election finance rules have been broken. If they agree, the committee appoints an auditor to investigate the complaint. Members appointed to the committee are Kathy Palmer, Tom Prout and Terri Rau.

Conservation authority transition plans kept under wraps

Don't expect to hear how decisions are being made by committees handling the transition from local conservation authorities to the new regional ones. Brian Petrie, chair of the Upper Thames Riv-

er Conservation Authority has advised that members appointed to the transition committees are required by the province to sign non-disclosure agreements, keeping all discussions, meeting materials, presentations and related records strictly confidential. The restrictions will make it difficult for boards and municipalities to have any meaningful oversight, Petrie said in a report to board members.

Standardized code of conduct proposed by ministry

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is proposing new regulations it says will strengthen accountability and public confidence in local government. In a letter to municipal councils, Minister Robert Flack said the proposed regulations would establish a standardized code of conduct for council members

and certain local boards. There will also be a standardized

municipal integrity commissioner inquiry process and education and training requirements for members of councils.

Contract awarded for forcemain twinning

The contract for forcemain twinning for the Snider Crescent Sewage Pumping Station has been awarded to the low bidder, Birnam Excavating Ltd. Birnam's bid was for \$960,051. Eight companies bid on the contract with the highest bid submitted coming in at \$1,693,857. The Snider Crescent Pumping Station forcemain twinning is part of the London Road South Trunk Sanitary Sewer project. Provincial funding will cover 73 per cent of the cost.

Alzheimer Society Huron Perth offers online education sessions and Grand Bend education series

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

Would you like to learn more about brain health and living with dementia in Huron and Perth? Explore these important topics through Alzheimer Society Huron Perth's free and accessible online Education Hour programs.

The society's Dementia Basics series returned Oct. 5, with both afternoon and evening options available. Each one-hour session addresses common questions about brain health and cognitive change. Topics include Dementia Overview, 10 Early Signs of Dementia, Types of Dementia, Mild Cognitive Impairment, Communication Tips, and more. Register today at www.bit.ly/ASHPEducationHour.

The annual Fall Dementia Education Night is also returning on Thursday, Nov. 5 at 7 p.m. Dr. Heather Keller, professor and Schlegel Research Chair at the University of Waterloo, will discuss Diet and Brain Health: How We Should Eat as We Age. This free event offers valuable insights into the ever-expanding topic of aging and brain health. Reserve your spot today at www.bit.ly/Dementia-Night2026.

The society is also bringing its in-person education program to Grand Bend Area Community Health Centre this fall. On Mondays at 1 p.m., starting Nov. 23, the society will meet for three weeks to cover important topics: Dementia Overview, Mild Cognitive Impairment, and Brain Changes. To register for the in-person Grand Bend

sessions, contact Kate at kmason@gb-chc.com.

For more information and registration links, visit the Education Hour banner

on Alzheimer Society Huron Perth's website: www.alzheimer.ca/huron-perth. Contact the office at 1-800-561-5012 or email jeanettes@alzhp.ca

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Ausable Bayfield Conservation recognizes trail groups in watershed with Decades Award



(ABCA PHOTO)

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) has presented its latest ABCA 80th Anniversary Decade Award. An announcement and presentation ceremony was held on Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2026, at Bayfield River Valley Trail Association's Varna Nature Trail. Shown in photo, from left to right, are ABCA acting general manager Nathan Schoelner, Ross Atkinson of Lambton Shores Nature Trails (LSNT), South Huron Trail Mobile volunteer driver Norm Eckel, Tracey Puchala of Friends of North Middlesex Trails, Trail Mobile volunteer driver Jim Hayter, Kelly Vader of Bayfield River Valley Trail Association (BRVTA), George Finch of Friends of South Huron Trail, Roger Lewington of BRVTA, ABCA board chair Ray Chartrand, Mary Lou Tasko of LSNT, Ed Hunter of LSNT, and Dave Frayne of Friends of South Huron Trail.

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) has recognized the work of local community groups building, enhancing and maintaining trails.

ABCA presented a Decade Award to recognize local trail groups for their dedicated efforts to provide the public with opportunities to experience the great outdoors. ABCA is presenting Decade Awards in honour of the conservation authority's 80th anniversary (1946-2026). The most recent award (the seventh of nine to be presented in 2026) recognizes work in the decade of the 2000s and onward.

Recognized were: Bayfield River Valley Trail Association; Lambton Shores Nature Trails; Friends of South Huron Trail; and Friends of North Middlesex Trails.

Nathan Schoelner is acting general manager at ABCA. He thanked the trail groups for their hard work which benefits the entire community.

"We're fortunate to have access to nature trails across the whole watershed," he said. "These are places where people can connect with the environment and with each other. These trails are a reflection of community spirit in the watershed and are supported and maintained by dedicated volunteers."

The preservation and maintenance of trails in Ausable Bayfield watersheds is

possible thanks to a strong local partnership between ABCA and trail groups along with donors and landowners.

Ray Chartrand is chair of the ABCA board of directors.

"I would like to thank all the volunteers with these trail groups and everyone who supports these trails with donations," he said. "These valuable community assets are available for public use because of the community, because of the volunteers, and because of the generous donors."

ABCA previously honoured, with Decades Awards, the following recipients:

- 1940s – Member municipalities, for vision in forming Ontario's first conservation authority and for continued partnership in the decades that have fol-

lowed.

- 1950s – Ontario Parks – For establishing and stewarding Pinery Provincial Park.

- 1960s – Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (formerly Department of Lands and Forests) for a lasting local legacy of reforestation.

- 1970s – Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation – For work in the community since ABCF was formed in 1974.

- 1980s – Local community service groups, recognizing decades of strong partnerships in our watershed communities.

- 1990s – Innovators for soil.

ABCA will continue to honour recipients during the ABCA 80th anniversary year (2026).

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BACK IN TIME

30 Years Ago

October 16, 1996 - Lucan resident Mike Anderson was recently recognized by the Ontario Heritage Foundation by receiving its Community Heritage Recognition Achievement award.

He played a key role in establishing the Lucan Museum in April 1995.

People in the community know Jackie Wells as a tireless volunteer and now the Victorian Order of Nurses is acknowledging her work with an Award of Distinction.

55 Years Ago

October 14, 1971 - For the third time in four years, the Dashwood Tigers won the Ontario Baseball Association Intermediate "B" championship. They defeated the Kendall Eagles 2-1 Sunday afternoon. The winning run came in the bottom of the ninth when John Hayter

doubled and raced home as Pete Ravelle lined a hit down the left field line.

Mrs. Don Lewis of Exeter was the lucky winner of \$500 in Friday's Kin-Fest bingo at the arena.

65 Years Ago

October 14, 1961 - Exeter Lions Club fed nearly 400 at their Table-Rite beef dinner in the Legion Hall Thursday night. Judy Snelgrove was crowned Miss Table-Rite Queen by Lion Fred Darling.

The executives of the Kongskilde Manufacturing Company of Denmark arrived here Tuesday to supervise establishment of their Canadian assembly plant and distribution centre in Exeter.

70 Years Ago

October 15, 1956 - Mrs. Harold Knight was installed as president of the Hensall Kinette club when Charter Night was

held at the Commercial Hotel in Hensall Tuesday night.

Mrs. Almer Passmore, winner of the Times-Advocate trophy as the champion cook of the Exeter Fall Fair, will make her TV debut over CKNX in a cherry and chiffon cake.

80 Years Ago

October 16, 1946 - Gross receipts were over \$4,000 at the ninth annual Lions Club frolic held in the arena, Wednesday and Thursday nights.

The highlight of the week was the banquet Tuesday evening in James Street United Church celebrating the 75th anniversary of the founding of the 100F in Exeter. Past DDGM Garnet Hicks presided.

Walter Sovereign, editor and publisher of the Lucan Sun, died Tuesday in his 82nd year.

Over 18,000 persons attended opening

day of the International Plowing Match at the former RCAF station at Port Albert. RCAF veteran Larry Snider of Exeter landed his own plane on a runway, hopped out, and preceded to take part in the Veteran's tractor class for Huron county.

105 Years Ago

October 15, 1921 - The Kirkton Fall Fair was held Monday. Attendance was not as large owing to the rain but showing in all classes was very good.

Messrs. Francis and Williams, machine dealers last week secured the contract of installing their lighting system in the new Brinsley church.

130 Years Ago

October 8, 1896 - Buyers have quit buying apples, the foreign market being overstocked.

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United Way launches Meat and Moolah 50/50 raffle

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

United Way Perth-Huron (UWPH) invites people to support important programs that address pressing local needs while having a chance to win meat packages and a cash grand prize through its new Meat and Moolah 50/50 raffle.

“Meat & Moolah is a fun way for people to support UWPH and their community while celebrating the amazing producers from throughout the region,” said Ryan Erb, CEO of UWPH. “Every ticket purchased helps us strengthen local programs and services that support vulnerable people facing challenges from housing instability and homelessness to barriers accessing supports in the community they call home.”

The 14-week online-only fundraiser brings together meat producers from across the region with a series of draws leading up to the grand prize draw on Nov. 30:

- Oct. 19 at 10 a.m. — A “Pitmaster” box from Green’s Meat Market (value \$140)
- Nov. 2 at 10 a.m. — A specially curated box of meat from JC Cattle Co (value \$260)
- Nov. 16 at 10 a.m. — A premium beef family bundle and Wagyu ground beef bulk bundle combo from Van Osch Farms Premium Beef (value \$700)
- Nov. 30 at 10 a.m. — Fifty per cent of gross ticket sales plus a “Smoker” prize pack from 5 Chicks and a Farmer (meat value \$800)

Tickets are available until 10 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 30. Prices are \$5 for one ticket, \$10 for 10 tickets, \$20 for 50 tickets and \$50 for 200 tickets.

Winners of meat prizes will be asked to arrange pickup directly with the participating producer or re-



tailer.

Proceeds go to support UWPH’s work funding local programs and services that help build stronger communities across the region.

For the complete rules of play and a link to purchase tickets, visit the UWPH website.

OBITUARY

LINDENFIELD: Beverly of Exeter



Bev passed away peacefully at Blue Water Rest Home, Zurich on Tuesday, September 29, 2026 at the age of 90. Beloved husband of the late Marjorie (Keller) Lindenfield (1962) and Norma (Hill) Lindenfield. Father to Jeff and Annie Lindenfield, and John and Leanne Lindenfield. Grandpa to Jason

(Taylor), Tina; and Kurtis (Jamesa). Brother to Eddie (Marlene Barker). Bev will be remembered by the Keller and Hill families, along with his nieces and nephews. Predeceased by his parents Lloyd “Jake” and Verdun (Wells) Lindenfield.

Bev had a deep love for the outdoors, and his passion for hunting and fishing was evident throughout his younger years. Later in life he became a pilot, and flying became his passion for many years. He and his wife Norma were avid travelers, enjoying numerous vacations and cruises that they loved to reminisce about in the years to come. Bev truly lived life to the fullest.

A private family graveside service will be held at the Exeter Cemetery. A celebration of life will be held in the Risi Room at Blue Water Rest Home, 37792 Zurich-Hensall Road, Zurich on Tuesday, October 27th from 1-3 PM.

Donations to the South Huron Hospital Foundation or the Canadian Cancer Society would be appreciated by the family. Condolences may be forwarded online through www.haskettfh.com.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

- 17 October First Saturday Meat Draw of the Season Featuring Geoff Masse Band 4:00 - 7:00 pm Upstairs
- 24 October Saturday Meat Draw featuring Nuclear Vibes 4:00 - 7:00 pm Downstairs
- 31 October Saturday Meat Draw and Halloween Party Featuring Bronson Line Band 4:00 - 7:00 pm Upstairs
- 07 November Sports Day (Details to follow)

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Riddles

How many months have 28 days?
All of them.

I have many teeth, but I can't bite. What am I?
A comb.

There's only one word in the dictionary that's spelled wrong. What is it?
The word "wrong"

What has a thumb and four fingers, but is not a hand?
A glove.

What kind of band never makes music?
A rubber band.

What can fill a room but takes up no space?
Light.

What two things can you never eat for breakfast?
Lunch and dinner.

What kind of lion never roars?
A dandelion.
What has a thousand needles but cannot sew?
A porcupine.

How do you catch a school of fish?
With a bookworm.

What is a tree's favorite drink?
Root beer.

What is the wealthiest nut?
A cash-ew.

Sudoku

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

Solutions on pg.34

Pet of the Week 🐾 🐾 🐾

Enjoy the fall season safely with your furry family members!

Leaf piles may be fun to play in, but they can hide risks for pets, including ticks, mould, and sharp debris. Keep play areas clean and check your pet after outdoor adventures.



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APOLLO

Our Pet of the Week is Apollo. This nearly eight-year-old cat is described by his owner as a "chill guy" until it's time to play or eat. He is often either cuddling, hunting, or screaming until he is fed. Sometimes, he'll even have "conversations" with his owner.



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

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OCTOBER

RECURRING OCTOBER PROGRAM EVENTS 2026

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

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

MON. & THURS. 11:15 AM - Gentle Exercise starting Mon. & Thurs. Seated and standing exercises for Seniors. Community Room GBACHC. You must contact cmaxfield@gbchc.com to see if there is space.

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

TUES & THUR. FRI. 9.00AM - Exercise Port Franks Community Centre Line Dancing 8:30-9 am Medium Low impact aerobic exercises from 9-10 cmaxfield@gbchc.com

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

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

THURSDAYS 9:30-12 AM - Early On program free program for adults with children birth to 6 years. Adult Day Wing, GBACHC. inside Adult Day at GBACHC. Contact earlyonchildcare.ca or 519-786-6161 x 9226. Wed. 10-11:00 am "Walk & Talk Hensall Arena" Contact Grace at gbonnett@gbchc.com . Fun social walking program with coffee and chatting to finish

FRI. OCT. 9, AND 16TH 8:30 AM 0 Vinyasa Yoga and Chair Yoga GBACHC in Community room. Vinyasa at 8:30am, Chair at 9:45 am. Contact cmaxfield@gbchc.com .

OCT. 13TH 1:30-3:30PM - Persistent Pain 6 week program. Join our PT and Social Work Team as they teach you exercise and coping strategies to deal with your pain

THURS. OCT. 15TH 1:30 -3:30PM - Alzheimer's caregiver support group. Support group program with trained facilitator Randy Chapman. 1-800-561-5012. Adult Day wing at GBACHC.

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

THUR. - OCTOBER 8 - 5:30-7PM Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Huron Fall Quarter Auction. - Thursday, October 8 at the South Huron Recreation Centre in Exeter. Doors open at 5:30 PM; the auction begins at 7:00 PM

OCT. 16 & 17TH - Fall Free Store - Huron Shores United Church, 25 Main St., Grand Bend. Fri., Oct. 16 – 5-7:30 pm; Sat., Oct. 17 – 9am-2pm. Everyone is welcome to come, browse and take away what you can use, Free of charge. For more info 226-456-8134.

SUN., OCT. 18, 2026 - 2 TO 4 PM - London Orchid Society Meeting Topic: Deb Boersma from Windsor, An Orchid Expedition on the Rio Negro, Brazil - Location: Richards Memorial Church 360 Edgeworth Avenue London, ON N5W 5C4 - The London Orchid Society meets the third Sunday of each month. Join us October 18, 2026 at 2:00pm for Deb Boersma from Windsor, ON. Her presentation is An Orchid Expedition on the Rio Negro, Brazil deep into the Amazon Rainforest. *Everyone is welcome to attend the meeting for more information at www.londonorchidsociety.com; contact Daryl at 519-666-2927.*

SAT. OCTOBER 24 -11AM TO 12:30PM Crediton & District Optimist Club's Spooktacular Halloween Bash. - Oct. 24 – 11am to 12:30pm. Crediton Community Centre. Don your costume and join us for dancing, crafts and snacks. Kids age 12 and under welcome. Parental accompaniment required.

SUN. OCT. 25 - 2PM. - Naomi Bristow 'The Singin' Cow-girl'. Crediton Zion United Church, 6 Victoria Ave W, Crediton Call Ruth 519-234-6035 or Joan 519-237-3806

NOVEMBER

SUN. NOV. 1ST AT 2:00 P.M. - Sir Elton's Greatest - Starring Ed Greene - Award Winning Tribute Artist & Musician - Exeter - Hensall United Church. Available at: Exeter- Hensall United Church 42 James St. Exeter - (519) 235-0860 - Custom Covers 415 Main Street S. Exeter - (519) 235-2444 - MacLeans Home Hardware - 110 Main St. N. Exeter - (519) 235-0800 - MacLeans Home Hardware Building Centre Grand Bend - (519) 238-8282 *For further information or to order tickets contact: exeterunitedchurch@gmail.com*

FRI. NOVEMBER 6 - 6:30PM - Trivia Night - at the Exeter Legion, 316 William St., presented by Cultural Collective in support of the South Huron District High School Music Department's April 2027 Atlantic Band Festival Trip. Doors open at 6:30pm. Trivia starts at 7:30pm. Teams up to 8.

NOVEMBER 7 AND 8 - 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM - 16th Annual Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Huron Christmas Shopping Event. Saturday, November 7th & Sunday, November 8th from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. South Huron Recreation Centre, Exeter. Description: Shop over 60 local vendors and merchants and visit with Santa.

SAT. NOVEMBER 14 10AM - 3PM - MacGillivray Central School Annual Christmas Craft Market. Ailsa Craig Community Centre (Ailsa Craig, ON. A festive local holiday market featuring handmade crafts, seasonal decor, local small-business vendors, and baked goods to support the school community.

HARVEST DINNER & AUCTION. OCTOBER 24

Precious Blood Parish, Exeter's Harvest Dinner & Auction. Live Entertainment by 'Off the Record'. Sat., Oct. 24. Doors open at 5 pm. Dinner served 5:30-7pm. South Huron Rec Centre, Exeter. Pineridge BBQ Chicken Dinner with pie for dessert. Live Entertainment. Cash Bar. Door Prizes. Silent Auction. Live Auction. All proceeds to the Precious Blood Parish Warm Hearts. Strong Foundations Campaign.

For more info, please contact: Janet Maes 519-235-3006; Caroline Klaver 226-374-9145 or email: mamaklaver@gmail.com.

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

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Sunday, Oct 18, 2026

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for
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“Who had a
Russian plague
on their bingo
card for
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Ask the
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Joel Hackett is a certified Arborist residing in the St. Marys area. Currently,
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Dear Arborist,
My large fruit tree is cracked, I
have heard of some people bolting
the tree,
not sure how that is done, and if it
hurts the tree. What do you think?
Thanks,
Kim

Dear Kim,
When trying to save a cracked tree,

bolting is definitely an option to
consider.
The process involves drilling a hole
directly through the tree. A bolt or
threaded rod is then inserted into
the hole with large washers and
nuts on the
end to secure the compromised
limb or leader. The damage and risk to the
tree is minimal and results can last
many years.





South Huron Hub

October 8, 2026

South Huron Votes 2026 – Voting opens soon!

The next Ontario municipal and school board election will be held on October 26, 2026. If you are a resident, owner or tenant of property in Ontario, a Canadian citizen and 18 years of age you can vote in Ontario's municipal and school board elections. It is the responsibility of every elector to make sure your information is up-to-date and accurate. The Election will be conducted using telephone/internet voting method. There will be no paper ballot. A Voter Information Letter will be mailed to you directly in the month of October providing you with a Personal Identification Number (PIN). This will allow you to vote anytime from 9:00 a.m. on October 13 until 8:00 p.m. on October 26, 2026 from any telephone or any device connected to the internet. For more information regarding the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election, check out the Municipal Election page on southhuron.ca, contact the Clerk at vote@southhuron.ca, or drop into the Clerk's Department at town hall (322 Main Street South, Exeter).

Fall Hydrant Flushing

In our continuing commitment to supply our customers with safe, reliable drinking water, flushing of hydrants will take place over the next few months.

Hydrant flushing will be conducted throughout the Municipality starting in September for eight weeks, Monday to Friday between 7am and 3:30pm. During this time period you may notice fluctuations in water pressure and some discolouration or cloudy appearance of your water. Please check your cold water for discolouration prior to using water for cooking, laundry or a dishwasher. If water is discoloured, discontinue use and run a cold water tap for a few minutes until the water clears. If you have any questions or concerns, please call 519-235-0310 ext.230

Community Improvement Plan

South Huron's Community Improvement Plan is now accepting 2026 grant applications! A variety of municipal grants are available for eligible projects that support commercial building improvements to accessibility, energy efficiency, façades and more!

Applications are evaluated on a first-come, first-serve basis and annual funding is limited. For more information, visit the Community Improvement Plan page at SouthHuron.ca

If you're considering a project this year, contact cip@southhuron.ca to discuss your project's eligibility for funding.

October Blood Donor Clinic

The next area blood donor clinic is being held at South Huron Recreation Centre, on Wednesday, October 21st from 1pm to 7pm. Book your appointment at blood.ca or call 1-888-236-6283

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

Important Dates

Monday, October 13th

Voting Period begins
9:00 AM (EST)*

Monday, October 19th

Regular Council Meeting
6:00 PM (EST)*

*South Huron Council meetings are open for in-person attendance and continue to be livestreamed. See our website Agendas and Minutes page or the Municipal Youtube Channel at meeting time to access the livestream video link. A recording of the meeting will be available on the Municipal Youtube Channel following the meeting.

Thanksgiving, Monday, October 12th

The Municipal Office and Landfill Site will be closed Monday, October 12th for Thanksgiving Day. There will be no disruption to garbage and recycling collection.

For urgent municipal matters outside regular business hours please call 519-235-0310 x 7

On-street Parking Reminder

As winter approaches residents are reminded that overnight parking on municipal streets is not permitted between the hours of 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. as per the Municipality's Parking By-Law to allow for snow removal to occur. Further, on-street parking during a snow event is not permitted. If a vehicle is left parked on the street during a snow event, the owner may be ticketed, and the vehicle may be towed at the owner's expense.

Residents are also reminded that parking in a way that blocks a fire hydrant is prohibited. Let's keep each other safe by enabling quick access to hydrants by our fire fighters!

2026 Fall Leaf/Brush Collection - October 19 - November 12, 2026

The Municipality of South Huron will be starting fall leaf bag collection on Monday, October 19, 2026, until Thursday, November 12, 2026, for all South Huron residents.

Please ensure that bags weigh no more than 23kg (50lbs). Please note that staff will not pick up overweight bags, bags that are not biodegradable paper bags, or bags that contain other waste such as garbage or animal feces.

There will be two pickup areas and each will have dedicated pickup days every week:

• Exeter

Pickup will be on Mondays

One day brush pickup - October 26

• Villages (Dashwood, Oakwood, Shipka, Crediton, Huron Park, Centralia)

Pickup will be on Thursdays

One day brush pickup - October 29

As a reminder, once the collection period has ended, staff will no longer collect any items that are set curbside. You may take your leaf and debris to the South Huron Landfill free of charge at any time.

Please refer to the South Huron website for Landfill operating hours.

South Huron Recreation Programs

- All Sorts of Sports
- Kids In Motion
- Shuffleboard
- Dashwood Coffee, Cards & Checkmates
- Parents Night Out Program
- Tiny Tots Playtime

Some programs may require pre-registration, contact Community Services or see the Community Events Calendar at SouthHuron.ca for information.

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