

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

VOLUME 3 • ISSUE 25 MAY 8, 2026 FREE

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Woodstock man charged with murder

LEE GRIFFI
Editor

Woodstock Police have made an arrest following a lengthy suspicious death investigation in the city. Police responded to a call for service to conduct a welfare check at a residence on the west end of Dundas Street on March 12.

Officers located a 24-year-old deceased male, and in consultation with the Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario, the death was determined to be suspicious in nature.

“At the time, police said the circumstances surrounding the death are considered suspicious due to foul play, and investigators remain on the scene. At this time, there is no known risk to public safety,” said a press release.

“An intensive investigation by the Woodstock Police Service Criminal Investigations Branch, involving multiple units and partner agencies, led to the identification of a suspect. During the investigation, a second incident occurred involving the same suspect. No physical injuries were reported as a result of the second incident,” said Detective Constable North Davies.

Woodstock Police have now arrested a 20-year-old Woodstock resident, Romario Henry, and charged him with second-degree murder. The accused remains in custody at this time.

Police have confirmed that the accused and the victim were known to one another.

“The Woodstock Police Service would like to thank members of the public for their cooperation in this investigation, including the submission of video footage and the provision of information that assisted investigators,” he added.

Police say no further information will be released due to ongoing court proceedings and out of respect for the victim’s family.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

SPRING IS HERE
Trilliums and other wildflowers are a welcome sign the long-awaited spring of 2026 may finally have arrived. Dog-tooth violets and red trilliums, called wake robins by some, are the first arrivals, followed by distinctive white trilliums, which double as our provincial flower. These specimens were photographed late in April in a woodlot near Burgessville.

Woodstock youth arrested after alleged hate-motivated assault

LEE GRIFFI
Editor

A disturbing, alleged hate-motivated crime. A video of the incident and another of the arrest on social media. All of which inspired a community rally in support of the city’s Punjabi community.

Woodstock Police responded to a disturbance in the area of Turtle Island School on Knights Lane on April 22, just after 11:35 a.m.

“The investigation determined that a youth unprovokedly as-

saulted an elderly individual who was walking on a sidewalk. The youth targeted the victim based on their ethnicity, while yelling racially charged comments and obscenities. The victim did not suffer physical injuries,” said a police press release.

Following the incident, police say the suspect jumped a fence onto school property before exiting the school area.

As a result of the investigation, a young person has been charged with assault, uttering threats to cause death or bodily harm, and criminal harassment by threatening conduct. The accused was held in custody for a bail hearing. His name is protected under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

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Rally held by Punjabi community, attended by police and elected officials

CONTINUED FROM FRONT



(FACEBOOK PHOTO)

Police arrested a young offender from Woodstock who faces charges after allegedly assaulting a member of the Punjabi community. The incident led to a recent rally of support

“The Woodstock Police Service is aware that videos of this incident are circulating on social media. Investigators are asking anyone with relevant footage from surveillance cameras, dashcams, or cellphones to submit by scanning the QR Code or through the following link:

<https://woodstockpd.on.ca/evidence.com/axon/community-request/public/wp26006446>

Acts of hate have no place in our community. The Woodstock Police Service is committed to ensuring all members of the community feel safe and protected. We encourage anyone who has experienced or witnessed a hate-motivated incident to report it to police. Woodstock Police Service will pursue and hold those who commit hate crimes accountable,” added the release.

Woodstock’s Deputy Police Chief Jamie Taylor, Mayor Jerry Acchione, and Oxford MP Arpan Khanna attended the event. The event was not organized by a single group but rather reflected a collective effort by the local Punjabi community.

The message to gather was communicated by the Oxford Punjabi Cultural Association, the Gurudwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha Woodstock Committee (a Sikh place of worship in Woodstock), and local residents.

“I attended the community gathering on behalf of the Woodstock Police Service, along with PC Pritpal Thind, our Community Services and Media Relations Officer, to connect with residents and speak about community safety concerns following a video that circulated on social media,” explained WPS Deputy Chief Jamie Taylor.

He said he acknowledged the impact the video had and the concerns it raised.

“Following that acknowledgment, I, along with representatives from the Thames Valley District School Board, the mayor, and the MP, answered questions from residents regarding safety planning.”

He added his message to those in attendance was public safety is the force’s top priority, and there is no place for violence or hate

in the community.

“When incidents like this occur, we take them seriously. We conduct thorough investigations and hold individuals accountable for their actions. We also spoke about the role we all play in keeping our community safe. That includes ongoing conversations around prevention, awareness, and working together, whether through families, schools, or social media. We all have a role to play through education and positive role modelling.”

Police have also increased patrols in the area and are actively conducting Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessments.

“The meeting was well attended and provided an opportunity for open dialogue. We appreciate the community taking the time to come out, ask questions, and be part of both the conversation and the solution.”

Hate-related incidents are tracked both locally and nationally. According to Statistics Canada, police-reported hate crime offences totalled 4,882 incidents in 2024 across the country. Taylor explained it’s important to distinguish between a hate crime and a hate-motivated crime.

“A hate crime refers to specific offences outlined in the Criminal Code, such as willful promotion of hatred or mischief targeting religious property. These are distinct, chargeable offences where hate is a central legal element of the crime.”

He added a hate-motivated crime involves a traditional Criminal Code offence like assault or uttering threats, where the actions are motivated, in whole or in part, by bias, prejudice, or hate toward an identifiable group.

“Although the charge itself is not classified as a hate-specific offence, investigators consider motivation an important factor, and the courts may also weigh it during sentencing. In this case, the incident has been deemed hate-motivated, meaning the alleged actions were driven by bias or prejudice, even though the charges fall under general Criminal Code provisions.”

Woodstock Police release details of historic cash grab



(WPS PHOTO)

Police provided an update on Project Eldorado on Wednesday, saying they have confiscated over \$1 million in cash and a firearm following the execution of a second search warrant in the city.

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Editor's note – Woodstock Police released an update to an earlier story shortly before press time on Wednesday, May 6. The original story is posted below this update.

The Woodstock Police Service is providing an update to its previously reported Street Crime Unit (SCU) investigation under Project Delorean, which resulted in multiple arrests and the seizure of drugs seized on April 23.

Members of the SCU executed an additional search warrant on April 24 at a commercial location on Dundas Street in Woodstock.

"The execution of the warrant resulted in the seizure of a loaded handgun and \$1,024,720 in Canadian currency, marking the largest cash seizure in Woodstock Police Service history," said a press release.

As a result of the investigation, one of the four people previously arrested, a 28-year-old male from Woodstock, has been further charged with possession of proceeds of crime over \$5,000, unauthorized possession of a prohibited or restricted firearm, knowledge of unauthorized possession of a firearm, possession of a

loaded prohibited or restricted firearm, and careless storage of a firearm, weapon, prohibited device or ammunition.

The accused was held in custody for a bail hearing.

"This seizure represents a significant disruption to criminal activity in our community. Removing illegal firearms and a substantial amount of illicit proceeds reinforces the Woodstock Police Service's commitment to targeting organized crime and enhancing public safety," added the release.

Woodstock Police make multiple arrests following intense investigations

Firearms and drugs seized as three people face charges

The Woodstock Police Service Street Crime Unit (SCU) has announced the results of a Controlled Drugs and Substances Act investigation conducted under Project Eldorado, following observations of suspected drug trafficking activity in Woodstock.

Members of the SCU, with assistance from the Woodstock Police Service Emergency Response Unit (ERU) and Uniform Patrol, executed a warrant in the area of Ferguson Drive in the city on April 23.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 4

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Additional charges laid in connection with drug investigation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Three people, two 21-year-old males from Woodstock and a 19-year-old female from Strathroy, were arrested and jointly charged with:

- Possession of a Schedule I Substance for the purpose of trafficking - cocaine
- Unauthorized Possession of a Weapon (two counts)
- Possession of property obtained by crime over \$5,000
- Unauthorized possession of a prohibited or restricted firearm
- Knowledge of unauthorized possession of a firearm
- Possession of a loaded prohibited or restricted firearm
- Careless storage of a firearm, weapon, prohibited device, or ammunition

One of the 21-year-old males faces an additional charge of cocaine trafficking.

“The investigation and execution of the warrant resulted in the seizure of a loaded handgun, two conducted energy weapons, \$14,315 in Canadian currency, and cocaine with an estimated street value of \$3,500,” said a WPS press release.

In a separate investigation called Project Delorean, the SCU executed another warrant on the same day, with assistance from ERU and Uniform Patrol, in the Bay Street area.

Four Woodstock residents, two 28-year-old males, a 27-year-old male, and a 38-year-old male, all from Woodstock, were arrested and jointly charged with:

- Possession of a Schedule I Substance for the purpose of trafficking – cocaine
- Possession of proceeds of property obtained by crime over \$5,000
- Possession of a Schedule I Substance for the purpose of trafficking - other drugs

One of the 28-year-old males has also been charged with cocaine trafficking.

“The execution of the warrant resulted in the seizure of cocaine with an estimated street value of \$94,000, \$22,575 in Canadian currency, a significant quantity of handgun and shotgun ammunition, a quantity of other



(WPS PHOTOS)

Woodstock Police showed off the results of two drug trafficking investigations dubbed Project Eldorado (left) and Project Delorean (right). Weapons, drugs and cash were seized as seven people were arrested.

narcotics, and an armoured vest,” said the release.

All parties were held in custody for bail hearings and both investigations remain open.

“These investigations highlight the Woodstock Police Service’s continued focus on disrupting drug trafficking

networks and removing firearms from the community. Through targeted enforcement, we remain committed to enhancing public safety and reducing the risks associated with drugs and weapons in our community,” added police.

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Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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Correction

In the April 24 edition, the story on page 9 titled *Community Gathers at Commonplace Books' first Spring Poetry Salon* incorrectly spelled an author's name as Mary Anne Griffins. The correct spelling is **Mary Anne Griffiths**. We apologize for any inconvenience.

theecho.ca

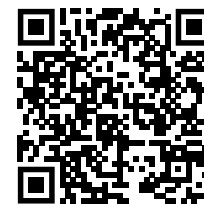
Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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Construction update

Oxford County undertakes projects year-round to improve roads, properties and infrastructure. For construction information, updates and detour maps, follow us on social media or visit us online at www.oxfordcounty.ca/construction

Woodstock — Oxford Road 2 (Dundas Street)

April - November 2026

Oxford Road 2 (Dundas Street) between Oxford Road 30 (11th Line) and Oxford Road 9 is closed to July 2026 for Phase 1 of reconstruction work in this area. Work then moves east down Dundas Street to Oxford Road 12 (Mill Street). Detour routes will be in place for each phase of construction.

From May 15 - 25, Dundas Street will be fully closed, including to local traffic, at the railway tracks west of Oxford Road 9 (Ingersoll Road). This is to allow scheduled work by Oxford County and Ontario Southland Railway.

Woodstock — Oxford Road 35 (Devonshire Avenue)

April - November 2026

Oxford Road 35 (Devonshire Avenue) is closed from just east of Wellington Street to just east of Knightsbridge Road this year as part of a multi-year reconstruction project. A detour route is in place for the duration of construction.

Woodstock — Oxford Road 59 (Vansittart Avenue) bridge

April - November 2026

Residents will see construction crews working on the underside of the Oxford Road 59 (Vansittart Avenue) bridge in Woodstock. Work includes girder coating, which protects the structural steel in the bridge from corrosion. Both lanes of traffic and the sidewalk on the east side of the bridge remain open. The sidewalk on the west side of the bridge is closed during construction.

Ingersoll — Oxford Road 9 (King Street)

April - December 2026

Oxford Road 9 (Hamilton Road/King Street West), from the intersection of Oxford Road 9/10 west to the town boundary, is closed to through traffic from April to December 2026.

Norwich Township — Oxford Road 59 (Stover Street S) bridge, Norwich

May - October 2026

Bridge rehabilitation work on the Oxford Road 59 (Stover Street South) bridge, located just south of Tidey Street, begins in May. Oxford Road 59 from Front Street to Carman Street will be closed as traffic will be unable to cross the bridge; however, businesses will remain open and accessible. Detour routes will be in place during construction, including a detour for pedestrians and cyclists.

Norwich Township — Oxford Road 19 (Otterville Road) bridge, Otterville

May - December 2026

Oxford Road 19 between Church Street and Bullock Street in Otterville will be reduced to a single lane with alternating traffic for bridge rehabilitation work. A detour route will be in place for Church Street along Maple Street and North Street West.

Norwich Township — Oxford Road 59 (Church Street) urbanization, Burgessville

May - December 2026

Road reconstruction work on Oxford Road 59 (Church Street) from 150 metres west of Deer Crescent to 150 metres east of Smiths Lane in the Village of Burgessville begins in May. This section of Oxford Road 59 will be closed to through traffic, with access limited to local residents, businesses and emergency services.

Zorra Township — Oxford Road 2 culvert replacements, Thamesford

April - May 2026

Oxford Road 2 between Oxford Road 119 (19th Line) and Oxford Road 6 will close to through traffic for culvert replacements from April to May 2026.

East Zorra-Tavistock — Oxford Road 29 bridge, Innerkip

May - November 2026

Oxford Road 29 between 18th Line Road and Elisabeth Street in Innerkip is closing for three weeks, then opening for eastbound traffic only to complete bridge rehabilitation work. A detour route will be in place for westbound traffic for the duration of construction.

East Zorra-Tavistock — Tavistock Well 4 construction

May - August 2026

Drilling and construction on Tavistock Well 4 on Hope Street West begins early May 2026. There are no expected impacts to traffic but residents may notice periods of noise and vibration during drilling.

Upcoming public information meetings

MAY 12 Blandford-Blenheim — Drumbo Wastewater Treatment Plant

A virtual (online) Public Consultation Centre is being held on May 12, 2026, from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. to provide an update on the Drumbo Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion. Visit the project study page to learn more or register: www.speakup.oxfordcounty.ca/drumbo-wwtp-expansion

JUNE 8 Zorra Township — Oxford Road 2 (Dundas Street) corridor improvements, Thamesford

Design improvements are being considered on Oxford Road 2 (Dundas Street) in Thamesford. Learn more at the Public Information Centre on June 8, 2026, from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the Thamesford District Recreation Centre (large hall). A formal presentation will be delivered at 5:15 p.m., followed by a question and answer period.



Construction schedules may change due to weather, site conditions, contractor availability and other factors.



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Middle Grand Chapter of Freshwater Conservation Canada wins Oxford Stewardship Award

STAFF

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

Oxford County Warden Marcus Ryan presented the 2025 Oxford Stewardship Award to the Middle Grand Chapter of Freshwater Conservation Canada last week. The award honours the group's contributions to land improvement and sustainability.

The Middle Grand Chapter, described in an Oxford County press release as a dedicated volunteer group, is united in its mission to restore and protect the health and biodiversity of cold-water tributaries along the Middle Grand River.

Over the past three years, the Middle Grand chapter has planted over 2,000 trees along a stretch of Horner's Creek in Oxford County between the 8th and 10th Concessions just outside of Bright. The group pursues a simple goal: healthier water. Cool, flowing water equals healthy water. By planting trees, they create a buffer around the stream, reduce runoff and sediment, and, as the trees mature, provide shade that helps keep water temperatures down.

With support from the Oxford Clean Water Program, the group furthered these efforts by organizing a community planting event at a farm property along Horner's Creek last spring, where 250 potted and bareroot trees were added. The chapter collaborated closely with the Grand River Conservation Authority, Enbridge, and local landowners, who provided access to their properties to assist with tree planting and the implementation of this project.

Three candidates were shortlisted as finalists for the award from a group of projects supported by the Clean Water Program. Funded by Oxford County and administered by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and the Grand River Conservation Authority, the program promotes improvements in water quality as well as woodland and wetland conservation.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Oxford Stewardship Award 1: (Left to right, Oxford County Warden Marcus Ryan, Middle Grand President Hajnal Kovacs, Middle Grand Project Director Scott Puillandre, Gord Ross, Director of Community Planning for Oxford County, Paul Michiels)

This year's finalists completed a range of land improvement projects to help protect the local environment.

Oxford County is honouring this year's Oxford Stewardship Award recipient with a \$500 gift certificate to purchase original artwork commissioned from an Oxford County artist of their choice, or an experience at a local destination featured through Tour Oxford. In addition to the prize, the Middle Grand Chapter has been added to the recognition wall at the Oxford County Administration Building, designed to honour all past and future recipients of the Oxford Stewardship Award.

Also nominated were R.M. Matheson Farms in Zorra Township and Jim and Minnie Koteles, also from Zorra.

Correction

In the March 27 edition, a minimum purchase of two suits was incorrectly included in the Zabian's Men's Wear advertisement. The suits starting at \$399 do not have any minimum purchase requirement. We apologize for any inconvenience.

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Canadian Independent Bookstore Day 2026

KYRAH SMITH

Echo Correspondent

Books and coffee went hand in hand on April 25 as communities across the country celebrated Canadian Independent Bookstore Day (CIBD), a day dedicated to recognizing the passionate professionals who help keep Canada's reading culture thriving.

While the event has been around for several years, it began to take shape in 2020. Originating in the United States before making its way north, CIBD is driven by the Canadian Independent Booksellers Association, an organization committed to supporting and advocating for indie bookstores nationwide.

Festivities included giveaways, most notably the coveted Golden Ticket, storewide sales, and author events.

"We're excited to be a part of the campaign this year," said Shannon McKechnie, owner of Ingersoll's Commonplace Books, adding that the event was a clear success. "We had people lined up this morning. Our Golden Ticket, which was a year's worth of audiobooks, was found within 15 minutes of opening."

Commonplace Books kept the celebration going throughout the weekend, hosting an author panel that featured several independently published writers. "I think indie bookstores have to support indie authors too," McKechnie noted, sharing that supporting indepen-

dent voices was one of the driving forces behind opening the shop.

There has also been a noticeable increase in the number of active readers, with many turning back to physical books over digital screens.

"What I love about physical books, and what I hear from customers all the time, is the return to a tactile experience," McKechnie said.

Research suggests that reading physical books can improve comprehension and retention. "I think many folks are looking to get away from their phones, and we're seeing a renewed interest in print books, vinyl, and other analog activities," she added.

Other local bookstores joined in the celebration, including the recently opened Hidden Gem Book Co. and Blue Ink in Woodstock, both of which hosted their own promotions and Golden Ticket giveaways.

"It's been crazy," said Darren Power, owner of Hidden Gem. "We just had our opening last weekend, and now we have this. It's great."

With multiple independent bookstores thriving in the area, the strong support from the community is clear. Canadian Independent Bookstore Day celebrated the important role these spaces play in fostering connection, creativity, and a shared love of reading.

To learn more about Canadian Independent Bookstore Day, visit <https://www.indiebookstores.ca/cibd/>.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

(From left to right), Claira Blakely, Owner Shannon McKechnie & Miranda Schonberger of Commonplace Books in Ingersoll on CIBD.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

Shahla Bahadori, owner of bookshop and café Blueink, celebrates the shop's first Canadian Independent Bookstore Day.

Canadian Fiddle Champion

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POLICE BRIEFS

Oxford Ontario Provincial Police briefs



(OPP PHOTO)

Oxford OPP are looking for two suspects and this Ford F150 following a Thamesford break-in.

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Zorra Township business suffers break and enter

A break-in targeting the theft of cigarettes occurred at a business in Thamesford.

Police responded to a report of a break and enter at a business on Highway 2 in the town on April 29, just after midnight.

Two unknown individuals broke the glass on the front door and stole numerous packages of cigarettes. The total has

not yet been reported. Still photographs from the CCTV footage have been provided of a vehicle as well as the two suspects.

“The two individuals are being described as adult males with medium builds. They were both wearing a hooded sweatshirt or jacket with their hood up. They are believed to have been wearing face coverings and gloves to obscure their identity,” said an OPP press release.

The suspect vehicle is being described as a light-coloured pick-up truck, believed to be a Ford F150, with a cover on the back.

Woodstock Police Service briefs

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Charges laid after victim set ablaze

The Woodstock Fire Department and Oxford County Paramedic Services responded to a residence on Finkle Street in Woodstock on April 20 for a report of a person suffering burn injuries. The injured individual was transported to hospital for treatment.

Police were able to determine that multiple individuals known to each other were gathered at the residence when an argument occurred. During the altercation, one individual threw a flammable substance onto another individual and ignited it, causing serious injuries.

After a five-day investigation, police arrested a 44-year-old city man and charged him with aggravated assault, arson causing bodily harm, and four counts of possession of fire, ammunition or explosive substances contrary to a prohibition order.

The accused was held in custody pending a bail hearing.

Bomb threat at Woodstock school

Police were notified of a bomb threat at Springbank Public School on Sprucedale Road just after 11 a.m. on April 29.

Officers thoroughly searched the premises, no suspicious items were located, and the report was determined to be unfounded. The incident resulted in an increased police presence in the area as officers ensured the safety of students and staff while conducting their investigation.

“The investigation into the source of the threat is ongoing, and police say further information will be provided if appropriate,” said police in a release.



(WPS PHOTO)

Pritpal Thind, the Woodstock Police Service Community Services and Media Relations Officer, recently attended the Sri Lankan Sun Festival in the city and was actively involved in the celebration. The festival, known as Aluth Avurudu, marks the traditional Sri Lankan New Year.

“The Woodstock Police Service thanks the Thames Valley District School Board for its cooperation and assistance during the investigation,” it added. The Woodstock Police Service would like to encourage anyone with information about any of these investigations to contact them at 519-537-2323 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

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Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. What term describes a period of temporary economic decline?
2. What planet in our solar system has a longer day than it does a year?
3. How many minutes in a professional football/soccer match?
4. What city is known as the eternal city?
5. What company is the largest self driving taxi fleet in the world?
6. What land mammal has the strongest bite force?
7. What is the largest internal organ in the human body?
8. How many Stanley Cups do the Montreal Canadiens have?
9. Who carved Pinocchio?
10. What is a microscopic bear called?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

Homegrown Home Improvement

Refresh with local pros



4 things to know about kitchen renovations

Kitchens are often described as the most popular room in a home, and that's not mere conjecture. A 2022 survey from House Digest asked participants to identify the room they consider most important in their homes, and roughly 41 percent chose the kitchen.

Residents tend to congregate in kitchens in the morning and then again in the evening when meals are prepared and, in homes without formal dining rooms, eaten. With so much time spent in the kitchen, it's no wonder that the 2022 U.S. Houzz & Home Study: Renovation Trends found kitchens to be the most popular interior room to upgrade. With so many people interested in kitchen renovations, the following are four things homeowners should know about these popular improvement projects.

1. Expect to spend some money. Most home improvement projects require a significant financial investment, but kitchen renovations are among the more expensive undertakings. The overall cost of a project will depend on a host of variables unique to each home, including homeowners' preferences, but HomeAdvisor estimated the average kitchen



remodel in 2023 cost between \$14,611 and \$41,432. Homeowners considering an upscale kitchen remodel may receive six figure estimates for such projects.

2. Expect a good return on investment. If sticker shock settles in when receiving an initial kitchen remodel estimate, perhaps it can help homeowners to know that such a project may provide a strong return on investment (ROI). According to Remodeling magazine's "2024 Cost vs. Value Report," a minor kitchen

remodel provides a 96 percent ROI. A major kitchen remodel mid-range (49 percent) and a major kitchen remodel upscale (38 percent) did not provide as notable a ROI.

3. Expect the project to take some time. Kitchens are large rooms with a lot of components, so renovating these spaces can take some time. Estimates vary depending on the size of the room, the scale of the remodel and the materials chosen, but Angi reports a kitchen

remodel for most homes takes six weeks to four months. That's a sizable window, and it reflects the likelihood that unforeseen issues like supply chain interruptions or the discovery of mold will arise at some point during the renovation. Though it's impossible to determine precisely how long a project will take before it begins, homeowners renovating their kitchens may want to plan for the project to take two months if not longer.

4. Expect to use your kitchen during the renovation. If the timeline of a renovation is scary, homeowners should know they will likely be able to use their kitchen even after the project begins. Though the room might not remain a popular gathering space once the work starts, Angi notes kitchens are typically out of commission for around six weeks during a renovation. That still requires some pre-planning in relation to meals, but it also suggests homeowners won't be without a kitchen for months on end.

Kitchen renovations are popular projects. Homeowners who know what to expect before such projects commence can make it through a renovation more smoothly.

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Tom Moore, H.I.S./ Co-Owner, Hear Right Canada

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TMMC VP Sadler speaks to the long view at WDCC mayor's breakfast

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

A RAV4 rolls off the assembly line at Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada's (TMMC) Woodstock plant every 58 seconds.

Extrapolated across 2025, that represented 233,930 vehicles, including 34,803 hybrids. On January 23 of this year, TMMC celebrated a 100 per cent transition to production of the sixth-generation RAV4 for the North American market at Woodstock after a \$1.1-billion reinvestment. The vehicles are the number one selling non-truck in North America, according to TMMC Vice-President of Administration Phil Sadler.

"We're happy to be busy," he smiled. "Busy is a good thing always."

Sadler was representing title sponsor TMMC at the annual Woodstock District Chamber of Commerce's Breakfast with the mayor on April 28.

The fact Sadler spoke first may have both recognized title sponsorship and enormous financial impact, a plant employing 8,500 directly with related spinoff benefits represents to Woodstock, Oxford County and the surrounding area not just every 58 seconds, but a full 365 days a year.

Production at Toyota's three plants

represents 44 per cent of all Canadian production, explained Sadler. The company will celebrate its 40th anniversary in Canada on May 6 and has come a long way since the initial production of 50,000 Corollas per year.

"We've grown just a titch since then."

It is a mark of pride the company has not laid off a permanent employee in 40 years and also remains a strong supporter of its host communities. During his address, Sadler referred to a cumulative \$15 million Toyota team contribution to the United Way in Waterloo Region and Oxford County, including roughly \$750,000 this past year. Since 1995, there has been an additional \$40 million in contributions to other organizations.

Speaking to the reported trade imbalance between this country and its southern neighbour, Sadler pointed out roughly the same number of vehicles, around 1.1 million, cross the border in each direction.

"I think that's an aspect not many understand about our industry."

Recognition of the Woodstock TMMC plant's broad impact underlines concern around current trade discussions with the United States, mitigated by Toyota's massive reinvestment into Woodstock-based RAV4 hybrid production.

"Toyota has always taken the long view," he said. "We build what we sell



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada Vice-President Phil Sadler spoke 'leadoff' at the Woodstock District Chamber of Commerce's Breakfast With The Mayor Tuesday, April 28th inside the city's expanded Southgate Centre.

and stay committed to the communities we live in."

TMMC President Tim Hollander's January 23 remarks in a media release on the company website around the first sixth-generation RAV4 off the line in Woodstock also spoke to the long-term commitment to Canada and the communities where it operates as part of a sig-

nificant demonstration of Toyota's confidence in "our people, our plants and our manufacturing ecosystem."

"He's been a tremendous advocate for us here in Canada," Sadler concluded, calling the president 'very invested in the success of the Canadian operation. "No stranger to challenge, and the leader we need right now."

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30 years of theatre fun for youth with Dramarama

EMILY STEWART
Echo Correspondent

Dramarama, a theatre camp for children between six and 13 years old, is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

"It's amazing, especially because I was a camper here myself when I was nine, so to see it still happening is awesome, and my own kids are now coming to this camp, which is super cool, and there's a lot of nostalgia in this building," said Becky Issenman, artistic director of Dramarama.

Dramarama is part of Thistle Theatre's programming and was created by retired school teacher Bernice Finch in 1996 to provide theatre opportunities to youth. The camp has lots of group activities, outside time, and opportunities to learn all of the steps to put the play together.

"What makes this camp amazing is that in two weeks, the campers get to create, write, direct, and create the costumes and basically be able to put on a play themselves," Issenman said.

There are lots of roles to be filled to put a Dramarama production together, even for those who prefer to work behind-the-scenes.

"If you've ever been part of theatre, you know that the backstage crew really holds things together, so even if we have campers who don't love to be in the spotlight, we've had them working in the tech booth

on sound and lights and things," Issenman said.

The trap door on the stage is working again, so Issenman is hoping it will be incorporated into a Dramarama production. Otherwise, the production possibilities are endless, and the campers always come up with new ideas.

"There are little things the kids will bring up that the leaders and I wonder if we could do. We've had a chandelier fall from the top of the stage, so I don't know what we'll end up doing, but I'm sure that the kids will think of something fun and creative to do for this year," Issenman said.

The 45-minute play is presented on the final Friday of the camp at the Embro Town Hall in the afternoons, and Issenman said everyone is welcome.

"We welcome our family members and theatre fans to come out," she said. "We have a great theatre for you to come and see, and we offer popcorn and that kind of thing, and it's just by donation only, so even if you're just curious what our campers put on, I definitely encourage people to come out and see the show as well."

Dramarama costs \$375 per camper per two-week session. It's waitlist only for session one, from July 6 to 17, and registration is open for session two, from July 20 to 30. To register for the camp online, visit <https://thistle-theatre.com/dramarama>.

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CASS badminton coach Stadnisky's hairstyle safe - for this year

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

Woodstock College Avenue Knights senior badminton coach Julia Stadnisky's hairstyle is safe.

"Until next year," interjected Knights' mixed doubles competitor Owen Procenko.

There was some understanding of a link between his own cheetah print 'do' and radical change for Stadnisky, should he and partner Payton Jones finish in the top two at Western Ontario Secondary Schools Athletic Association (WOSSAA) competition on April 21 at London Saunders, thereby qualifying for provincials.

As Thames Valley Regional Athletics (TVRA) Southeast champions, Procenko and Jones entered the WOSSAA draw seeded second, facing and downing 15th seed London St. Thomas Aquinas in their opening match, 21-8, 21-19.

"If (high seeding) definitely made it a lot easier for us," said Procenko.

Their second and third matches would, however, demonstrate the elevated level of competition at regionals, a 21-11, 21-11 loss to London Central, followed by a tournament-ending 21-12, 13-21, 21-15 defeat to London Montcalm.

"Close games," said Procenko. "I think we were in our heads the last set."

Although not the finish they had hoped for, the experience was certainly positive for the Grade 11 competitors. Having been provided an enhanced understanding of the level of opposition, Procenko looks forward to additional preparation time at the Woodstock Badminton Club, along with planning a new hairstyle for next year's competition.

Woodstock CI Red Devil mixed tandems Lily Melanson and Greydon Brewer and Eliot and Dezmond McCarthy also competed in the mixed doubles division, the former opening against London Banting (21-5, 21-8) and Listowel (21-15, 23-25, 21-14) and the latter London CCH (21-8, 21-12) and St. Marys respectively.

Three Woodstock-based teams competed in girls' doubles, TVRA Southeast champions Olivia Elias and Amanpreet Banwait, unfortunately, were unable to attend due to a conflict with Ontario Volleyball Association provincials. Woodstock St. Mary's Warriors Oriana Belmonte and Ella Arthur won their middle match of three, coming back

to down Stratford 16-21, 21-11, 21-17, opening against London Central 2 (21-12, 21-6) and concluding with St. Thomas Parkside's Kade Kewley and Anesa Lumani (21-17, 21-16).

"They (Belmonte and Arthur) gave a good effort and never gave up," said Warriors coach Josie Abela. "I'm proud of them for getting to WOSSAA."

WCI's Emma Holme and Ivy Caskanette faced Arva Medway (21-8, 21-16) and Listowel (21-18, 21-15) in their draw, while Red Devils teammates Eden Fraser and Lilli Taylor were up against London Central (21-9, 21-17) and Mitchell (23-21, 17-21, 21-16).

Ingersoll DCI's Hannah Law rebounded from a tough opening loss to London Clarke Road, downing Stratford St. Mike's 21-19, 21-16 before exiting with a 21-11, 21-13 loss to SDCI. Huron Park's Navtej Bedi faced two strong opponents, dropping a 21-15, 21-12 decision to SDA before falling 21-17, 21-14 to London Regina Mundi.

Junior WOSSAA

Ingersoll DCI's Hannah Madanant led Oxford-based badminton competitors on April 28 at London Saunders, opening with back-to-back victories before running into the eventual champion.

Entering the draw as TVRA Southeast champion, Madanant defeated MTS 2 21-8, 21-4 before downing St. Marys 21-8, 21-14. In her third match, she faced the eventual undefeated champion from Arva Medway, dropping a tight 21-19 first-set decision followed by a 21-9 score in the second. Madanant would then exit the draw via a narrow 21-15, 21-16 decision to St. Thomas Aquinas, unofficially finishing the competitive girls' singles division tied for fifth with London Banting.

Huron Park's Liam Fallowfield competed in boys singles, opening with a 21-9, 21-7 loss to London South before exiting with a 21-15, 21-13 decision to St. Marys. Huskies teammates Charles Thomson and Fyfer MacDonald opened boys doubles competition with a tough three-set loss (21-17, 14-21, 21-16) to London Oakridge 2, falling to Stratford 2 in their second match. Woodstock CI's Owen Vandesar and Aiden Silos picked up a gutsy win in their second match, 21-11, 10-21, 21-19 over Listowel 2, around opening and closing losses to Oakridge 1 (21-17, 21-8) and Oakridge 2 (23-21, 19-21, 21-19) respectively.

Woodstock CI girls' doubles competi-



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

College Avenue Knights girls' doubles competitor Maci Hampson stretches for a shot.

tors Avery Molinaro and Jillian Trepanier dropped their opening match to MTS 21-15, 21-12 before falling to St. Marys 23-21, 17-21, 21-19 in a tight, three-set encounter. Ingersoll's Abby Jones and Brielle Graham faced London Lucas (21-4, 21-9) and Stratford (21-15, 21-18) in their two matches.

TVRA Southeast mixed doubles champions Aabil Ali and Kat Pye opened their draw with a 21-11, 21-17 win over HCC before falling 21-19, 21-15 to London South, and subsequently, 21-17, 15-21, 21-19 in a tight three-set match to Lucas 2.

Ali and Pye had a great season and credited Knights junior coach Amanda Jackson, winning both the TVRA East and Southeast tournaments without losing a game.

"Kat and Aahil had a great start at WOSSAA and then two tricky matches," she added. "South showed us where we needed to improve, and Lucas only squeaked by them in the third set."

WCI's Jack Hagen-Johnson and Claire Gyimesi opened against London Banting (21-16, 21-18), finishing up against Exeter South Huron. Their efforts were part of a 14-member combined Woodstock CI senior-junior contingent, the largest in the TVRA Southeast division.

"I'll call that a victory," summed up coach Jeff Melanson.

TVRA SOUTHEAST JUNIOR BADMINTON RESULTS

BOYS SINGLES

1. CHARLIE GUNN (PCI)
2. LIAM FALLOWFIELD (HPSS)
3. QUINN WILSON (SJHS)
4. LOGAN LAHEY (PCI)

GIRLS SINGLES

1. HANNAH MADANANT (IDCI)
2. MADINA DANKWA (PCI)
3. SOFIE BUBB-CLARKE (EESS)
4. LOUISA BEGEMANN (EESS)

BOYS DOUBLES

1. HUDSON MCQUIGGAN/LAYNE STIRLING (CECI)
2. ETHAN MARR/NOAH MARR (CECI)
3. CHARLES THOMSON AND FYFER MACDONALD (HPSS)
4. ASHTON WALZAK/ADAM DYKSTRA (CECI) - NOT ATTENDING WOSSAA

5. OWEN VANDERSAR AND AIDEN SILOS (WCI) - WILL ADVANCE TO WOSSAA AS THE 4TH SEED

GIRLS DOUBLES

1. CHLOE FROESE / KALLI ZACHARIAS (EESS)
2. HADLEY BOTZANG / SOPHIA GAVEY (EESS)
3. AVERY MOLINARO AND JILLIAN TREPANIER (WCI)
4. ELLIE DOYLE/CLAIRE CROW (PCI) - NOT ATTENDING WOSSAA

5. ABBY JONES AND BRIELLE GRAHAM (IDCI) - WILL ADVANCE TO WOSSAA AS THE 4TH SEED

MIXED DOUBLES

1. AABIL ALI AND KAT PYE (CASS)
2. LIAM DLOUHY/GRACE AMOS (PCI)
3. MADISON DEADMAN/TY SWICK (GHS)
4. JACK HAGEN-JOHNSON AND CLAIRE GYIMESI (WCI)

Huskies' Hamilton in scoring position anywhere on the rugby pitch

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

Ema-Leigh Hamilton's fourth try of the day was unofficially a 78-yard thing of free-flowing beauty.

But the Woodstock Huron Park Huskies girls rugby fullback took the long way home, covering an estimated 125 yards to get to the try line, performing a one-woman full reverse of the field twice before eventually crossing and touching the ball down.

"I was like, you made that so much harder than you had to," laughed coach Brandon Thomas following a 30-10 Thames Valley Regional Athletics (TVRA) Veronica Harrigan Division win over the Woodstock CI Red Devils on April 22 at London's City Wide East Field. "But it was fun to watch."

Hamilton is her team's equivalent of a baseball power hitter, in scoring position at any time, despite patrolling the Huskies back line defensively. A grade 11 400-metre track and field competitor, she displayed both that event's speed and endurance in at least two lengthy 'home runs' out of her scoring total, backing up an earlier try of about the same distance on a kickoff return. Describing it as 'much more optimal' to run into space, Hamilton keeps her head up, looking for room, even if it means adding a few yards along her route towards the in-goal area. And while Hamilton does look for a clearer avenue, she doesn't mind the contact inherent to the game.

"I'm exhilarated," said Hamilton. "I want to win, so it's a lot of aggression, but healthy aggression."

Reagan White and Anahi Hehar had the other Huron Park tries, with Brooke Halward and Mia Hawkins replying for the Red Devils.

The Huskies had opened their regular season with a 35-5 loss the previous Thursday against St. Thomas Parkside, in St. Thomas, under chilly, rainy conditions in which the offence struggled to get going. By contrast, Huron Park's first win came on a beautiful spring day, the Huskies building enough of a lead to get their first-year players onto the field.

Apart from Hamilton's long ball threat, Huron Park's offence flows through Grade 12 fly half Kaya Worthington, looking to get the most out of her final high school season. The effective quarterback, Worthington, receives the ball from the scrum, looking for both open space and subtle signals before making her first pass, down to which way defenders are turning their hips.

"Noticing the little things and how to play with them," said Worthington, who also enjoys the democratic nature of rugby, in its range of positions, welcoming an equally diverse range of physical and athletic abilities.

"It's nice there's a position for everybody, nice for everyone to be included and everyone to find their strength."

Halward's seven-yard second half try was based on just that, strength and determination. Touching her foot to the ball following a penalty on the Hus-

kies' seven-yard line, she powered forward through the heart of the Huron Park defence to add her team's second major.

"We talked about it," said Halward of what was, in essence, a simple approach. "We did what we needed to do and executed."

The Huskies are a very put-together team credited Halward, the Red Devils, by comparison, a younger squad with a lot of rookies, who benefited from their first outing.

"It was a good experience for us, what we needed."

"We lost, but we learned a lot today," agreed scrummy Georgia Kudzia, 'really proud' of how the Red Devil rookies had performed. "We know what we have to do in practice."

WCI coach Candice Folkema expected the Huskies to be better organized, but like Kudzia, was impressed with her team's effort.

"Despite that and having many rookies in the starting 15, the girls never gave up and worked together to get two tries over the line."

Technically, the outing represented a rivalry game, said Worthington, pleased to see it had been beneficial for both sides.

"Great sportsmanship all around."

For Thomas, who also coaches with the University of Western Mustangs, Ontario Blues at the regional level and the U18 London Club squad, having fun and getting to know the game has always been more important than victories or losses, even against a so-called rival.

"Developing process and getting better," he concluded.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Huron Park fullback Ema-Leigh Hamilton (right) looks upfield while trying to shrug off WCI tackler Georgia Kudzia.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Huron Park ballcarrier Ana Gonzalez Cruz is brought down by a trio of Red Devils including Emily Aarts and Leona McMahon.

TVRA GIRLS RUGBY

THURSDAY, APRIL 30

TILLSONBURG GLENDALE

20

HURON PARK

12

MONDAY, APRIL 27

ST. THOMAS PARKSIDE

25

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Ontario 

Blue Bombers emerge from Tillsonburg Gemini tournament with 'cup' half full

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

The Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers girls soccer team's collective Gemini Cup soccer tournament experience remained half full, even if their opponents' nets had not been similarly filled up.

"Our team is very uplifting," said Charlotte Dewit following a 1-0 loss to host Tillsonburg in their third and final Gemini Cup tournament outing, May 1 at the Tillsonburg Minor Soccer Park.

"We're all just there for each other, no

matter what the score," added Alayna Egan.

On paper, it hadn't been the most productive of road trips southward down Highway 19.

First, there were the conditions: a chilly, grey, single-digit temperature day with the occasional flake of snow, about what Blue Bombers veterans have come to expect for the Gemini Cup.

"The weather is never happy," said Dewit.

"It always varies," added Alyssa Power.

And then there was the competitive, at times physical play, IDCI's Meleena Prikken among those taking a shared tumble to the soccer park turf.

"It's pretty hard," said the Bombers defender, who continuously got back up again to continue competing just as hard as the ground she landed on.

Beyond that, there were three consecutive losses, an official 1-0 opener to St.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Ingersoll DCI Blue Bomber Meleena Prikken (right) hits the deck hard during a battle for possession with Sophia Monsere during Gemini Cup action.

Thomas Parkside on penalty kicks and back-to-back 1-0 shutouts to Woodstock CI and the Gemini.

However, as Olivia Paterson pointed out, Ingersoll had lost 5-1 to WCI in regular Thames Valley Regional Athletics season play, and additionally, 4-1 to Parkside.

"We definitely played a lot better than the regular season."

Spirits remained high as the referee's final whistle blew, the Bombers battling to the end of what Paterson summed up as a positive experience.

"We always have fun here."

The Blue Bombers have had a challenging season thus far admitted coach Maggie Carter, in terms of wins and losses. However, also putting that in perspective, it has been their first back in the TVRA Tier I division since the girls soccer program re-started, post COVID.

"The girls have consistently demonstrated what it means to be great leaders and teammates," credited Carter. "They always praise each other up and ensure

they hit the pitch with a positive attitude.

"I am proud of their effort and demeanour this season."

A short TVRA Southeast girls regular season was scheduled to resume on May 4 and conclude the following Monday. Tier I quarterfinals involving Woodstock CI and IDCI are set for May 12; semis on Thursday, May 14; and the final on May 19. Tier II semi-finals involving Woodstock College Avenue, Huron Park, St. Mary's and Glendale are scheduled for Wednesday, May 13. The respective finals will be played on May 19.

On the boys' side, WCI, which lost in the Gemini Cup A final to London CCH on penalty kicks, stood atop the TVRA Southeast standings as of May 3, the Red Devils 3-0 record two points up on Woodstock St. Mary's 2-0-1 and three on the IDCI Blue Bombers at 2-1-0. Lord Dorchester leads a four-team Tier II pool also featuring Huron Park in second, Tillsonburg and College Avenue.

The boys' soccer playoffs follow a similar format to their female counterparts.

TVRA SOUTHEAST BOYS SOCCER	
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29	
HURON PARK	4
TILLSONBURG	3
LORD DORCHESTER	4
COLLEGE AVENUE	3
TUESDAY, APRIL 28	
ST. MARY'S	2
PARKSIDE	0
WCI	2
ST. THOMAS ST. JOE'S	1
MONDAY, APRIL 27	
IDCI	5
EAST ELGIN	1
TILLSONBURG	5
COLLEGE AVENUE	2
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22	
ST. MARY'S	0
ST. JOE'S	0
IDCI	6
PARKSIDE	3
WCI	1
EAST ELGIN	0
TUESDAY, APRIL 21	
HURON PARK	4
COLLEGE AVENUE	1
MONDAY, APRIL 20	
WCI	3
IDCI	2
ST. MARY'S	4
EAST ELGIN	2
THURSDAY, APRIL 16	
ST. MARY'S	4
IDCI	2
WCI	3
PARKSIDE	1

TVRA SOUTHEAST GIRLS SOCCER	
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29	
HURON PARK	2
TILLSONBURG	1
ST. MARY'S	1
COLLEGE AVENUE	0
TUESDAY, APRIL 28	
ST. THOMAS ST. JOE'S	2
WCI	0
MONDAY, APRIL 27	
HURON PARK	4
ST. MARY'S	0
TILLSONBURG	5
COLLEGE AVENUE	1
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22	
WCI	1
AYLMER EAST ELGIN	1
TUESDAY, APRIL 21	
HURON PARK	4
COLLEGE AVENUE	0
TILLSONBURG	2
ST. MARY'S	0
MONDAY, APRIL 20	
WCI	5
IDCI	1
THURSDAY, APRIL 16	
PARKSIDE	4
IDCI	0
WCI	4
PARKSIDE	0



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Blue Bomber Alyssa Power (front) breaks onto a loose ball between a pair of Tillsonburg opponents, including Kaia Spanjers (left) and Sophia Monsere, watched by Bombers teammate Cameron Adkins (rear).

Local choir hold spring concert

The Woodstock Choralaires filled Knox Presbyterian Church with warmth, harmony, and nostalgia on April 25 as the beloved community choir presented its spring concert, Thank You for the Music. The performance drew an enthusiastic audience who gathered to celebrate the power of choral music and the enduring spirit of community artistry.

Under the direction of Dr. Lorinda van Wyk, the ensemble delivered a vibrant program that honoured musical storytelling across generations. From uplifting contemporary selections to reflective choral classics, the repertoire highlighted the choir's versatility and its com-

mitment to accessible, heartfelt performance.

The choir's closing number brought the audience to its feet, ending the concert on a note of unity and shared appreciation. The event also reflected the Choralaires' long-standing role as a cultural cornerstone in Woodstock.

Volunteers, supporters, and community members contributed to the welcoming environment, reinforcing the ensemble's mission to bring people together through the joy of singing. As the final notes faded, attendees lingered in the aisles, exchanging warm conversations and expressing gratitude for an afternoon of music that uplifted and inspired.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



The choir filled the room with a joy for music that everyone felt.



Under the direction of Dr. Lorinda van Wyk, the afternoon unfolded with beautiful choral music.

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JEFF LILICO. PHOTO: DARIANE SANCHE.

Woodstock retirement home hosts health fair

Cedarview Retirement Living was buzzing with activity on April 25, as residents, families, and community partners gathered for the 2026 Spring into a New You! Health and Wellness Fair. The three hour event transformed the space at 511 Finkle Street into a lively hub of learning, connection, and hands on wellness experiences designed to inspire healthier living this spring.

Attendees explored a wide range of wellness resources, from nutrition and fitness to mental health and community support services. Organizers said the goal was to create an accessible, uplifting event that encouraged people of all ages to refresh their routines and discover new ways to support their well being.

“Woodstock is a community that thrives when we support one another,” organizers shared. “This fair gave people practical tools, trusted information, and a welcom-

ing space to explore what wellness can look like in their everyday lives.”

Throughout the afternoon, guests participated in free health screenings, including blood pressure checks and wellness assessments, while local fitness instructors led energetic demonstrations that drew enthusiastic crowds. Nutrition experts offered simple, seasonal meal ideas during mini workshops, and mental health organizations guided stress management, mindfulness, and community support programs.

Families enjoyed creative, movement based activities designed to promote healthy habits for all ages, while local vendors showcased wellness products, services, and healthy living solutions. Raffles, giveaways, and prize draws added an extra layer of excitement, with many attendees leaving with both new knowledge and new goodies. (RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Joseph enjoyed a thoughtful discussion with Melissa King of Century 21's VIP Perks Access during the event.



A lively Zumba class was on display, giving attendees a look at the energetic workout.



A rhythmic drumming demonstration became a memorable highlight, drawing interest from attendees of all ages.

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Acchione holds forth annual Woodstock District Chamber breakfast

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

'Grandpa JJ' is often also ready for a nap after spending time with his two-and-a-half-year-old granddaughter at one of Woodstock's many public parks.

"It's exhausting, but some of the best memories of the past year have been in the moment with her," smiled Mayor Jerry Acchione - aka Grandpa JJ, an evolution from the original 'Uncle JJ' (Jerry John) courtesy of his nieces and nephews - following his 2026 Woodstock District Chamber of Commerce's (WDCC) Breakfast With The Mayor State of the City Address on Tuesday, April 28th, inside the city's expanded Southgate Centre.

"It's a personal connection that reminds me of why I do what I do on a daily basis for all the families and the decades to come."

WDCC General Manager Mike Crabbe looks forward to an event that brings together the business community, council, and city staff, reflecting on past successes while looking towards the city's future. Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada was represented as the title sponsor and Reis Informatica as meal sponsor, but along with the heavy hitters, so too were what Crabbe refers to as SME, small and medium enterprises that collectively lie close to the heart of the city's financial foundation.

"These are our friends, these are our neighbours, and they're investing their livelihood into growing businesses which in turn, create opportunity and allow our community to grow."

Beyond breaking the news that Finger Eleven will be part of Cowapalooza 2026, Acchione's far-reaching address touched on the mayor's task force on social well-being, council's adherence to nine foundational points laid out at formation, and metrics on industrial growth. Also, in recognition of the event host and the role businesses, large and

small, play in both founding and growing a community, he spoke to Woodstock's future growth and those driving it.

"I love looking out and recognizing so many business leaders who are active members of the chamber of commerce," he said later. "I'm thankful we have this collaboration on so many levels in the city of Woodstock."

Business is a crucial aspect of any community, said Acchione, in terms of broadening a stable tax base and providing employment, importantly, the kind of good-paying jobs Woodstock offers.

"When business grows, jobs grow. When jobs grow, families put down roots. And when families put down roots, communities grow, a process fuelling opportunity, creating jobs and attracting investment."

He added growth is not abstract; it's about people choosing to build their lives here and businesses choosing to invest here.

There are 53,000 people in Woodstock, a population projected to grow at a rate of 1.6 per cent annually. By the year 2061, there could be a population of 90,000.

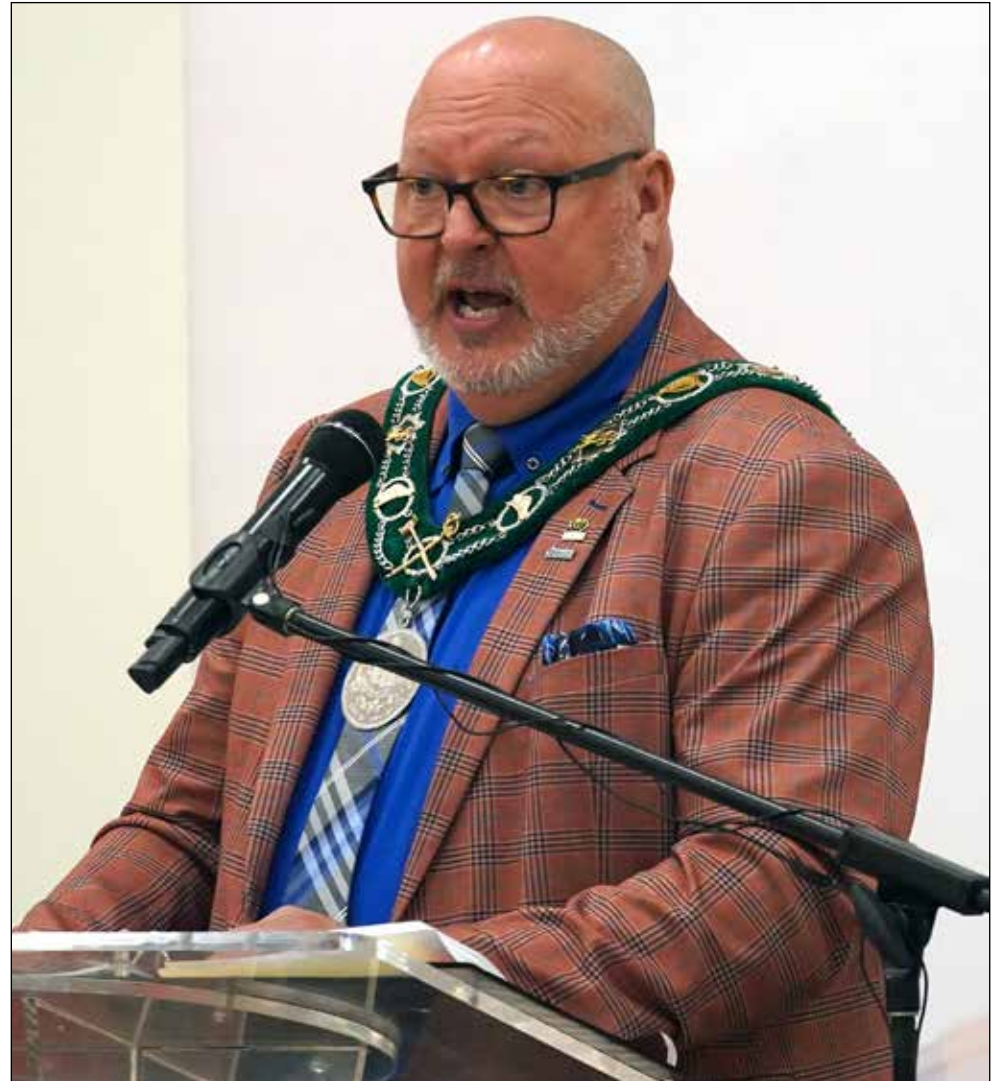
"That kind of growth brings opportunity, but it also brings serious responsibility. The choices we make today will shape the quality of life for ourselves and those who call Woodstock home for the decades ahead."

Growth is about infrastructure, said Acchione, but also about people, creating a stronger, connected community.

"While retaining values that connect us as the friendly city."

Post-address questions from the crowd included ongoing concerns around homelessness and continuity, given 2026 is an election year. White deferring to answer the latter definitively, Acchione did concede he hoped this mayor's breakfast wouldn't be his last.

He also fielded a query on the proposed North Woodstock Complex, a projected \$85-million facility with two ice pads, a pool and multi-use space located behind



City of Woodstock Mayor Jerry Acchione.

(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

the baseball diamonds along Devonshire Ave.

"The need definitely exists, and Woodstock is planning on beginning to dedicate funding toward that goal. However, its timeline is predicated on provincial and federal funding, along with a significant price tag."

He was also asked about balancing growth within the constraints of the city being surrounded by prime agricultural land.

"We're at our boundaries," Acchione confirmed, emphasizing a priority on growing within those boundaries in the short term, infilling, medium and high-density development, and doing better

with what the city currently has. A proposed 22-story high-rise was mentioned as part of that equation.

"Twenty-two stories in the City of Woodstock - that's double what we have."

Growth is inevitable, and as Acchione pointed out, it can provide mutual benefit for the city and adjoining municipalities.

"But we have to do it together," he emphasized, citing a very purposeful approach and noting that while the province does dictate the broader framework, the last thing wanted is direct provincial involvement. "I would rather talk to our neighbours and work together."



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Comicon returns to the Friendly City

The Woodstock Retro Comicon lit up the Woodstock Fairgrounds on Sunday, May 3, as thousands of fans poured into the Mutual/Market Buildings and the Oxford Auditorium for a full scale celebration of comics, cosplay, gaming, and retro fandom.

Fans flocked to meet an impressive lineup of special guests representing the worlds of comics, cosplay, film, and on-line entertainment. The Brampton Batman drew a constant crowd with his iconic presence, while Rob Daniels, Candy Cosplay, Madame Ravencroft, Holly Wolf, Angelic Luka, and Doctor Stevil each brought their own unique energy to the show floor.

Comic creators Pasquale Marco Veltri and Joseph Arena engaged fans with sketches and signings, and the cast and

crew of A Long Ride Home offered behind the scenes stories from their independent film. Veteran creator Ron Kasman rounded out the guest lineup with panels and signings that appealed to long time comic enthusiasts.

The event's activity zones remained busy throughout the day. The retro gaming area transported visitors back to the golden age of arcades, while the Pokémon Tournament attracted a competitive crowd eager to test their skills. The cosplay contest became a highlight of the afternoon, showcasing an impressive range of costumes — from meticulously crafted armour builds to imaginative handmade designs.

Vendors and artists reported exceptional turnout as attendees browsed aisles filled with comics, collectibles, vintage memorabilia, original art, prints, and handcraft-

ed items. Many vendors noted that this year's inaugural Comicon brought some of the most enthusiastic and engaged crowds they had ever seen in Woodstock.

Plans for future events are already underway as Woodstock continues to grow its reputation as a regional hub for pop culture gatherings. (RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Isla and Miles were wrapped up in Sparky's big hugs as Dad leaned in to share the moment.



August Kyss delivered a moment filled with sugar, spice, and plenty of charm. She is a Canadian actress, producer, writer, and host who has rapidly emerged as a distinctive voice in independent horror and action cinema



Antoine looked like a superhero-in-training while hanging out with Brampton Batman.



The team at JX3 Media Productions was recognized for their enthusiasm for film, video, and imaginative projects.

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May is Mental Health Month



REBECCA KITCHEN

Echo Contributor

Taking care of your mental health doesn't always have to be complicated. Often, it starts with the small, consistent things we do every day.

Natural ways to support your mental well-being:

- Intentional breathing exercises and getting outside for walks and fresh air and sunlight exposure to support mood and energy
- Staying hydrated and nourishing your body with whole foods and limiting caffeine when feeling overwhelmed or anxious
- Prioritizing good sleep hygiene
- Epsom salt baths to relax the body and nervous system
- Journalling to process thoughts and emotions, and colouring or creative outlets to calm the mind
- Talking to someone you trust or reaching out when you're struggling

If your mental health is being impacted by grief, trauma, abuse, abandonment, or ongoing stress, it's important to gently identify what may be at the root. Understanding

the focus of your struggles can help guide you toward the type of support that will be most effective for you.

Prioritizing your mental health doesn't just benefit you; it has a ripple effect on the people around you. It's important to recognize that there is a difference between being genuinely well and being "toxically positive," where difficult emotions are ignored or suppressed. True, grounded positivity comes from doing the internal work and understanding your own patterns.

For example, many chronic "people pleasers" develop this tendency from childhood, where love or attention may have felt conditional on what they could do for others. Over time, this can lead to burnout, resentment, and a sense that your own needs don't matter.

When you begin to prioritize your

own mental health, whether through therapy, body-based treatments, or other supportive practices, you start to shift those patterns. You learn that your worth isn't tied to over-giving, suppressing your own needs or hiding your own stresses in life, and you begin to create healthier, more balanced relationships with deeper connections and understanding of each other.

As you regulate your nervous system and reconnect with your own needs, the people around you will often feel that shift, your energy becomes lighter, calmer, and more authentic. Some relationships may naturally fall away, especially those rooted in imbalance, while others deepen in a more reciprocal and fulfilling way.

This kind of healing is powerful, especially within families, as working through your own experi-

ences can positively influence your relationships with your children or even your own parents. In doing the work for yourself, you're also creating space for healthier connections around you. Sometimes, when we are stuck in an anxious state, we create behaviours that are easily triggered, and we can shut down. The people closest to us feel this tension, and by eliminating the triggers and working through to heal from them, you will sleep better, your body will heal faster from everyday illness or injury and your nervous system and your relationships will thank you.

Mental health care isn't one-size-fits-all. It's about finding what helps you feel regulated, supported, and connected. If you're struggling, please don't carry it alone—support is available, both professionally and within your community.

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ROUTE TO THE PAST

HISTORY

Woodstock's Klondike Joe Boyle, Saviour of Romania

SCOTT GILLIES

Echo Contributor

Born in Toronto in the year 1867, Joseph Whiteside Boyle moved with his parents Charles and Martha Bain Boyle, to Woodstock where his father became a renowned horse breeder and winner of the Queen's Plate.

As a young man, Joe went on a business trip to New York City, only to be lured away to sea. Unbeknownst to his family, Joe spent three years on the high seas sailing around the globe and living a life of adventure. One story is told that he rescued a fellow crewman who had fallen overboard from a shark attack -- by attacking the shark himself with a knife!

Another time, as the ship was in danger of sinking, he goaded the crew into manning the bilge pumps until safe landing could be achieved. Not bad for a young man of 20.

Upon his return to dry land, Joe became a promoter in the rough and tumble world of bare-knuckle fist fighting. Boyle and his protegee, Australian-born Frank 'Paddy' Slavin, "The Sydney Cornstalk", formed a partnership which saw them journey across America, Canada and England. Their dreams of vying for the world championship however fell as flat as Slavin's continual knockouts.

Undaunted, Joe was one of the thousands who caught gold fever due to the discovery of the world's most precious commodity in the Yukon Territory. By staging boxing matches and musical shows for the weary prospectors, they were able to raise just enough funds to cover travel expenses and a grub stake for their initial claim.

While thousands of prospectors were slogging tons of material and supplies up and over the Chilkoot Pass, Boyle and a small team of buddies found another way through the mountains; a way which would become the route of the Whitehorse and Yukon Railway.

Unwilling to stake a small claim and spend countless hours panning for a few nuggets of gold, Joe found financial backing to construct not one, but four huge mechanical dredges which used water pressure to blast away the soil and permafrost, and massive steel buckets to break into the rock. As a result, Joe Boyle became the most successful miner in the North – the King of the Klondike. At the same time, he monopolized the timber rights to become a large producer of lumber to build the town of Dawson, and construct

docks and warehouses along the river.

During the long winter months, Joe found ways to ease the boredom of the men by introducing hockey and constructing a large indoor rink. He even sponsored the local team in an effort to compete for the Stanley Cup!

When the First World War was declared, Joe paid for the outfitting of a detachment of 50 men to form Boyle's Battery of machine gunners and paid for their transport to the Western Front.

Too old to enlist in active service, Boyle nevertheless made his way to England and by using his own political and business influence was made an honorary colonel in the Canadian Army.

Always a take-charge sort of man, Boyle took no direction from the British or Canadian authorities but nevertheless ended up in Russia and put in charge of helping the Russians overcome the disastrous challenges with their railway system. Within a matter of days, he was able to untangle the mess of machines which had bogged down the movement of men, arms and materiel along the Eastern Front. For this he was appointed railway commissar and received the first of three different Russian military medals.

While dealing with this mess in Romania, he became close confidantes to King Ferdinand and his wife, Queen Marie. This relationship would last the rest of his life, and because of that he would become known on first-named basis with King George V of England, the Russian Dowager Empress the Tsar's mother and his sisters the Grand Duchess Olga and Duchess Zenia. Queen Marie had sent him on a rescue mission to save them all. For this he was awarded a sizeable estate and the title of Duke of Jassy in the Kingdom of Romania.

But there had been several other times that Joe Boyle from Woodstock had demonstrated moxy and grit, diplomacy and fortitude to save millions of Romanians from starvation, and by retrieving and repatriating the Romanian currency and official archives which had been sent to Moscow during the early days of the Great War "for safe keeping".

In the years following Joe's death in 1923, more information has been forthcoming. It has been found that he was working behind the scenes for the British government by setting up a spy network to counteract the Bolsheviks during their fledgling days following the 1917 Revolution. There are also tales told of his dalliances with Queen Marie.



Portrait of Joseph Boyle.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

When Joe passed away in England, he was hastily buried in a simple country churchyard. Sixty years later members of the Royal Canadian Legion and the Oxford Historical Society coordinated efforts to repatriate his remains to his hometown of Woodstock where he has laid since 1983. On May 21st, at 2:00pm, the Historical Society and the Romanian Consul-General of Canada will hold a commemorative event in the Woodstock Presbyterian Cemetery to honour the life and times of Joseph Whiteside Boyle. Everyone is welcome to attend.

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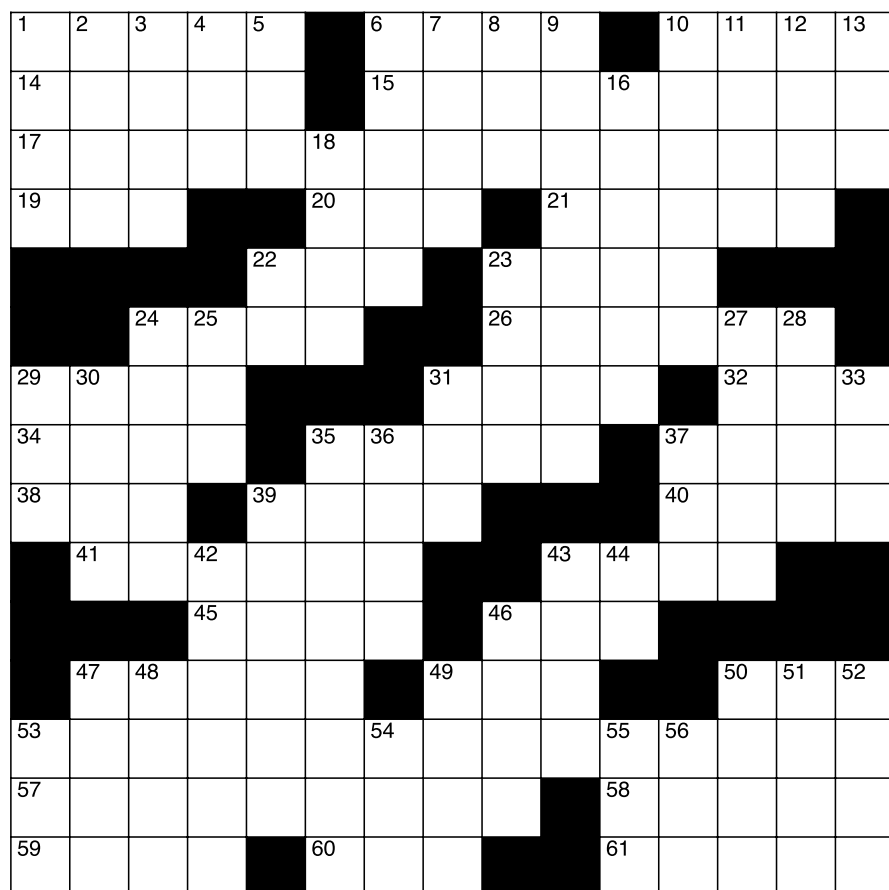
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- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Notable casino destination | 35. "Partner" to groans |
| 6. Current units | 37. Jewish calendar month |
| 10. Roman military unit | 38. Where wrestlers work |
| 14. American lizard | 39. Egotistical |
| 15. Fates | 40. Potted plants |
| 17. The Yankees have lots of these | 41. Containers |
| 19. Unhappy | 43. Large, flightless birds |
| 20. Mimic | 45. Part of a book |
| 21. Remove from the record | 46. American spies |
| 22. Where cargo ships dock (abbr.) | 47. Pancakes made of buckwheat flour |
| 23. A way to fight | 49. Swiss river |
| 24. Turfs | 50. Disfigure |
| 26. Contract | 53. Have surgery |
| 29. Country along the Arabian peninsula | 57. Formal withdrawal |
| 31. Tree species | 58. Early English council |
| 32. Pituitary gland secretion (abbr.) | 59. Area units |
| 34. Perfect | 60. 2,000 lbs. |
| | 61. Siskel and __ |

CLUES DOWN

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Animal jaws | 29. Resistance unit |
| 2. Small water buffalo | 30. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea |
| 3. An appliance has one | 31. Cast out |
| 4. Every | 33. 60-minute periods |
| 5. Largest English dictionary (abbr.) | 35. Most worn |
| 6. Very skilled | 36. European river |
| 7. No more than what is specified | 37. Atomic mass unit |
| 8. Tire measurement | 39. Items of food |
| 9. Towers | 42. Body parts |
| 10. Forward | 43. Ireland |
| 11. Jacob __, American journalist | 44. Partner to Pa |
| 12. Vale | 46. Sammy __, songwriter |
| 13. Former CIA | 47. Dutch settler |
| 16. Middle Eastern nation | 48. Full-grown pike fish |
| 18. Exhausts | 49. Sun or solar disk |
| 22. South Dakota | 50. Minute arachnid |
| 23. The complete duration of something | 51. From a distance |
| 24. Kids love him | 52. A monthly expense |
| 25. Singular | 53. Young women's association |
| 27. Cod genus | 54. Brazilian state |
| 28. Mild yellow Dutch cheese | 55. Air freight provider |
| | 56. Pointed end of a pen |

Solution found on page 35

United Way searching for a new boss

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

"After 23 years as our Executive Director, and a total of 35 years as an Executive Director in the not-for-profit/charitable sector in Oxford County, Kelly Gilson will be retiring at the end of September."

Those were the words of United Way Oxford's President Erica Unger as the organization announced Gilson's upcoming retirement.

"She will be greatly missed at the helm of our United Way as she has been an inspirational leader, a tireless champion for those who are marginalized, a strong community ambassador and deeply committed to building community awareness on social challenges and advocating for systems change," added Unger.

Gilson explained her years at United Way Oxford have been a labour of love.

"The work has been energizing and the impact so rewarding. I have had the pleasure of collaborating with some of the best humans ever - staff, volunteers, donors and community partners who are all committed to helping others and building a better Oxford County for everyone."

She added she will be forever grateful for the opportunity to serve, and it has been a privilege to have been part of a village that cares deeply for those who need a helping hand.

"I hope that when people look back on my career with United Way, they remember me as an authentic, passionate leader who cared deeply for people and the community and inspired others to collaborate to create positive social change. I did my best to use my outward-focused, common-sense approach and determination, along with my voice, to advocate on behalf of others and for what I believed was best. For me, United Way has been a labour of love, and I hope that showed," said Gilson.

Most of her memories involve the amazing people - staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners - who joined in the organization's efforts to ensure everyone in the community had hope, opportunities, and the support they needed to thrive.

"There have been so many incredible initiatives that I've had the pleasure of being involved in - our own as well as numerous collaborative undertakings - that have become foundational social service programs. It's magical to see what can happen when the stars align...it's also a direct reflection of the hard work and relationship-building that paved the way for that alignment. While the wonderful memories are endless, I have to say that the Tillsonburg and Ingersoll Light Houses hold a special place in my heart, as those two transitional homes represent the very best that can happen when an organization leads with its values, prioritizes the people it serves, and the community



Kelly Gilson.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

embraces the effort."

She added the United Way Oxford has been a huge part of her life both professionally and personally and admitted it won't be easy to stay away.

"But my time as the ED will soon be over, and the future will be in the hands of the new executive director. I am incredibly proud of all that was accomplished during my time at United Way Oxford, and I will always be a champion and a donor. I can't wait to see what comes next for United Way Oxford!"

Gilson added the United Way is responsible, accountable, and transparent, and committee members make wise investments in Oxford County.

"This is due to a talented staff and volunteer team, and it will continue long after I've retired. There is strong Board leadership, and they have been working on a sound succession plan to ensure a smooth transition, which they will announce shortly."

During her tenure, United Way Oxford raised over \$28,500,000 in revenues to benefit citizens

"Kelly has been an inspiring leader for our United Way, along with a respected leader across our community and an active participant within the United Way Movement provincially and nationally. We have benefited greatly from her passion, commitment, vision and integrity along with her ability to mobilize volunteers and corporate partners for good. She has built a strong and impactful organization from which we can continue to build upon as we address current and emerging social needs," said Unger.

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Woodstock Votes

PUBLIC NOTICE

2026 Municipal and School Board Election

Positions Available and Filing a Nomination

If you are planning to run for office in the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election, you must file a Nomination Paper with the City Clerk for the position you are seeking.

Nomination Period:

The nomination period opens on Friday, May 1, 2026, and closes on Friday, August 21, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

Positions Open for Nomination

Municipal Office Positions

- Mayor – 1 position
- Deputy Mayor-County Councillor – 1 position
- City-County Councillor – 1 position
- City Councillor – 4 positions

School Board Trustee Positions

- Thames Valley District School Board – 2 positions
- London District Catholic School Board – 1 position

- Conseil scolaire catholique Providence – 1 position
- Conseil scolaire Viamonde – 1 position

How to File a Nomination

All City of Woodstock residents seeking nomination for any municipal office, Thames Valley District School Board, London District Catholic School Board, or Conseil scolaire Viamonde must file in person at the City Clerk's Office during regular office hours, beginning May 1 and ending at 2:00 p.m. on August 21, 2026.

The Clerk of the City of Sarnia is responsible for conducting the election for the Conseil scolaire catholique Providence; however, nominations will be accepted in person by the Clerk of the City of Woodstock and then forwarded to the Clerk of the City of Sarnia.

Nominations must be filed on the prescribed form and be accompanied by the prescribed fee (\$200

for Mayor and \$100 for all other offices).

Appointments to file nominations are strongly recommended and can be booked by emailing election@cityofwoodstock.ca or by calling 519 539 1291.

Nomination forms and information

Nomination forms and more information are available at the City Clerk's Office at 500 Dundas Street, Woodstock, or online at www.cityofwoodstock.ca/election.

This notice is issued in accordance with Section 32 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.

Jeff Bunn
Manager of Legislative Services / Deputy City Clerk
2026 Municipal and School Board Election
Returning Officer
City of Woodstock

AVIS PUBLIC

Élections municipales et scolaires de 2026

Dépôt d'une candidature et les postes disponibles

Si vous envisagez de vous présenter aux élections municipales et scolaires de 2026, vous devez déposer une déclaration de candidature auprès du greffier municipal pour le poste auquel vous souhaitez être candidat.

Période de dépôt des candidatures:

La période de dépôt des candidatures débute le vendredi 1er mai 2026 et prend fin le vendredi 21 août 2026 à 14 h.

Postes ouverts aux candidatures

Postes au sein de l'administration municipale

- Maire – 1 poste
- Maire adjoint-conseiller de comté – 1 poste
- Conseiller municipal-comté – 1 poste
- Conseiller municipal – 4 postes

Postes de conseillers scolaires

- Conseil scolaire du district de Thames Valley – 2 postes
- Conseil scolaire catholique de London – 1 poste
- Conseil scolaire catholique Providence – 1 poste

- Conseil scolaire Viamonde – 1 poste

Comment déposer une candidature

Tous les résidents de la ville de Woodstock qui souhaitent poser leur candidature à un poste municipal, au Conseil scolaire de district de Thames Valley, au Conseil scolaire catholique de London, ou au Conseil scolaire Viamonde doivent déposer leur déclaration de candidature en personne au bureau du greffier municipal, durant les heures normales d'ouverture, du 1er mai au 21 août 2026 à 14 h.

Le greffier de la ville de Sarnia est responsable de la tenue de l'élection pour le Conseil scolaire catholique Providence ; toutefois, les candidatures seront acceptées en personne par le greffier de la ville de Woodstock, puis transmises au greffier de la ville de Sarnia.

Les déclarations de candidature doivent être déposées au moyen du formulaire prescrit et accompagnées des droits exigés (\$200 pour le poste de maire et \$100 pour tous les autres postes - veuillez noter que les paiements par carte de crédit

ne sont pas acceptés).

Il est fortement recommandé de prendre rendez-vous pour déposer une candidature. Les rendez-vous peuvent être pris en envoyant un courriel à election@cityofwoodstock.ca ou en composant le 519-539-1291.

Formulaires de candidature et informations

Les formulaires de candidature et des renseignements supplémentaires sont disponibles au bureau du greffier municipal, situé au 500, rue Dundas, Woodstock, ou en ligne à www.cityofwoodstock.ca/election.

Le présent avis est publié conformément à l'article 32 de la Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales.

Jeff Bunn
Responsable des services législatifs / Greffier municipal adjoint
Directeur du scrutin pour les élections municipales et scolaires de 2026
Ville de Woodstock

South Gate disco party

Woodstock's South Gate Centre was transformed into a disco era celebration on Friday, May 1, as community members of all ages came together for Friday Night Fever, an evening filled with music, dancing, and nostalgic fun.

The event, hosted inside the center's main hall, drew a lively crowd who embraced the spirit of the 1970s with themed outfits and energetic dance moves. Guests arrived to find the venue glowing with colorful lights, shimmering décor, and a playlist that instantly set the tone for a night of retro excitement.

The South Gate team curated a seamless blend of classic disco hits, crowd favourites, and upbeat tracks that kept the dance floor full, from start to finish. Participants enjoyed refreshments, mingling, and themed

activities, adding to the fun. Many guests embraced the opportunity to dress in vintage attire, showcasing everything from bell bottoms and sequins to platform shoes and bold patterns.

The highlight of the night came as the crowd united on the dance floor for several iconic group numbers, filling the room with synchronized movement and shared excitement. The energy remained high until the final song, with many attendees expressing how much they appreciated having a community event that encouraged connection, activity, and pure enjoyment.

Plans for future themed nights and social gatherings are already underway as the center continues to expand its lineup of engaging community events. (RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



The dance floor filled quickly, and everyone was eager to dance to the timeless rhythms of the '70s.



Marcie and Kathy took a moment to relive the good old times.



Contribute to your local community newspaper! Send articles, sports or event recaps, and photos to info@theecho.ca



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STAGES 

The Addams Family

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Lyrics by Tim Rice

Director: Dallas Neufeld
Music Director: Sarah Baigent
Choreographer: Maegen Hansen
Producer: Alicia Sauvé and Karen Klein-Locke
Stage Manager: Chloé McGregor

MAY 22 - 31, 2026
www.theatrewoodstock.com

The Addams Family is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized performance materials are supplied by Theatrical Rights Worldwide 1180 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 640, New York, NY 10036. www.theatricalrights.com

Long-term Navy Club members honoured

The Oxford County Naval Veterans Association (OCNVA) hosted a special recognition ceremony on Sunday, April 26, where several long serving members were honoured for their exceptional contributions to both the Navy Club and the broader Woodstock community.

The event took place at the Woodstock Navy Club on James Street, shortly after the organization's general meeting. Oxford MP Arpan Khanna visited the club to present official certificates acknowledging the recipients' dedication, volunteerism, and longstanding service. The recognition aligned with MP Khanna's ongoing practice of highlighting "community champions" across Oxford County through local visits and parliamentary acknowledgements.

Those honoured were Bryan Bucholtz, Danny Dukes, Peter Keith, Bill Arthurs, Wayne Murphy, Colleen Cant, Dick Henshall, Rick Dentremont and Janis Henderson-Devries.

Each honoree was acknowledged for going above and beyond in their support of the club, its membership, and the community at large. Their contributions ranged from volunteer leadership and event support to long term service that strengthened the club's role as a gathering place for veterans and residents.

Khanna has frequently used community visits and House of Commons shoutouts to spotlight individuals and organizations making a positive impact in Oxford County. Recent recognitions have included local volunteers, small business milestones, and achievements in athletics and professional fields.

The Navy Club of Canada has also earned recognition, receiving the Donna Burleigh Accessibility Achievement Award in early 2025 for major facility upgrades that enhanced its ability to serve veterans, families, and community groups.



Standing together for a commemorative photo were MP Arpan Khanna with Wayne, Dick, Denis, Bill, Colleen, Bryan, and Janis.

Sunday's ceremony highlighted the Navy Club's ongoing role as a cornerstone of community engagement in Woodstock. The recognition underscored the value of volunteerism within the organization and celebrated the individuals who have helped sustain its programs,

events, and outreach efforts.

Club representative Cant noted Khanna had approached the Navy Club with the intention of recognizing members who had demonstrated exceptional commitment.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Colleen Cant held the commemorative medallion that had been presented to each honoree during the recognition ceremony.

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TAVISTOCK MEN'S CLUB
FISH FRY
Wednesday June 3, 2026
SERVING 4:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.
TAVISTOCK MEN'S CLUB HALL
PICKEREL DINE-IN OR TAKE OUT
ADULTS \$30 CHILDREN (AGES 6-12) \$15

Tickets available at Men's Club Hall,
78 Woodstock St., N
Every Wednesday (starting May 13) 4-7 pm,
Saturday 11-2 pm
or from Club members or call 519-655-3573
or email: info@tavistockmensclub.ca
or online: tavistockmensclub.ca
Sauerkraut also for sale.



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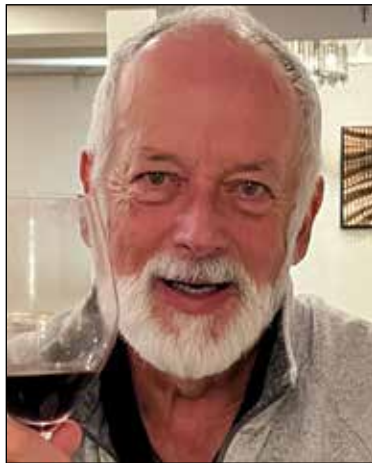
Keep your dollars in Canada to strengthen communities and support local businesses, including your local newspaper.

Happy Mother's Day!
from
**CRAFTY CORNER
TEA ROOM**

 **537 DUNDAS STREET, WOODSTOCK**
OPEN WEDNESDAY - SUNDAY 11 AM - 4 PM

Great art in Paris – not in the Louvre



PAUL KNOWLES

Echo Contributor

There is no question that the Louvre, in Paris, France, is one of the world's greatest repositories of art. Although, this iconic destination managed to get into the news a couple of times in recent months, more for the art pieces they were losing than for the art they have.

I have visited the Louvre, and done the ridiculous tourist jog past hundreds of pieces of priceless art to gaze over the heads of hundreds of other tourists all gawping at a small painting called the Mona Lisa. So this time in Paris, although we strolled around the grounds of the Louvre, we gave the interior a miss, and opted to visit two other art galleries, also situated along the Seine River.

We were not sorry in the least that we made that choice.

Our initial stop, on our very first afternoon in Paris, was the Musée d'Orsay. The museum holds the largest collection

of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art anywhere in the world... and yes, much more than in the Louvre.

If you don't happen to be an art expert, here's a quick Knowles' notes: Impressionism was an art movement that began in Paris in the late 1800s and continued for several decades. Key figures included Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissarro and Paul Cézanne. Post-Impressionism was an artistic movement in direct and almost immediate response to Impressionism. It, too, had its roots in France, and included such well-known artists as Vincent Van Gogh and Paul Gauguin.

While the Impressionists painted natural scenes with a whimsical, misty perspective, the Post-Impressionists moved slightly more toward the abstract. In my less-than-expert opinion. Let's be clear about that.

There is a Canadian connection here, in that the members of the Group of Seven were profoundly influenced by both of these movements.

So... the work of these famous artists, most but not all French, was what we wanted to see when we entered the elegant former railway station that is now the Musée d'Orsay. Our wishes were granted, a hundred-fold.

If you love art, or you simply want to experience great art to see if you like it, this is the place to be.

We strolled through the galleries, replete with works by all of the artists mentioned above, and

many, many more.

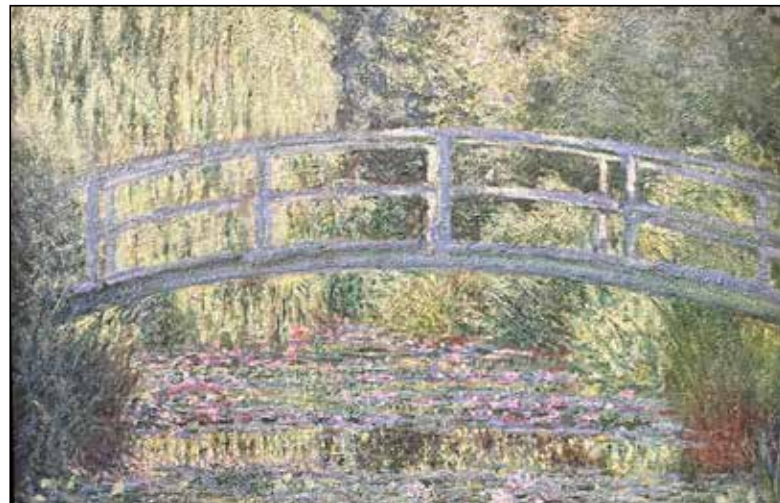
And not only did we see paintings by these talented creators, we saw many of their very best pieces – like “Water Lily Pond”, and “Blue Water Lilies”, by Claude Monet, and “Dance at the Moulin de la Galette” by Renoir.

The museum is a relatively new attraction in Paris, considering the millennia-long history of this “City of Light”. Conversion from its original purpose as a railway station to an outstanding art gallery was completed only by 1986, when the works of art (2,000 or so paintings and about 600 sculptures) were installed.

Today there are over 3,000 works at the museum, and they are seen by more than three million visitors each year. (That sounds like a lot, but the Louvre sees three times that many – and has instigated higher pricing and other measures to actually discourage visitors!)

The Musée d'Orsay is located on the Left Bank of the Seine, about a 15-minute walk from the Louvre, which is on the Right Bank. It's a lovely stroll, as it is to the Orangerie, also on the Right Bank but only a 10-minute walk from the Musée d'Orsay.

The Orangerie is also home to significant Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art, and other important pieces, as well. The building itself (like the Musée d'Orsay) was never intended to be an art gallery – it was built in 1852 by Napoleon III, as winter storage for the citrus trees that were placed in the Tuileries Gardens in the warmer months. Thus the name, “Orangerie”.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

“Water Lily Pond”, one of several great paintings by Claude Monet, in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

The gardens, by the way, stretch from the Orangerie to the grounds of the Louvre; in my opinion, one of the most pleasant walks anywhere.

Horticulture gave way to art in 1921, when the Orangerie was designated as a place where then-living artists could display their work. The good news is, Claude Monet was very much alive and productive at that time and, in the end, two amazing, oval rooms were created to house Monet's extensive murals known as “Nymphéas” or, yet again, “Water Lilies.”

Visiting those rooms is a unique experience, even for the most veteran art connoisseur. You are literally surrounded by the art, drawn into the tranquility of Monet's water gardens.

In 1966, the era represented by the Orangerie collection was expanded by several decades, as the Jean Walter and Paul Guil-

laume Collection of modern art was donated to the museum, and is now displayed on the lower floor. That gives visitors the opportunity to get up close and personal with paintings by famous artists like Pablo Picasso and Chaïm Soutine. (Full disclosure: Soutine's rather tortured “Portrait of a Man” has become one of my favourite pieces of art. I don't know what this says about my personal taste).

There is no question: Paris is the place to go to see great art. But if works by Monet or Van Gogh are your favourites, skip the Louvre, and spend your time at these other two amazing galleries.

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



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The exterior of the Musée d'Orsay, with its unique rhinoceros sculpture by Henri Alfred Jacquemart.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

Renoir's iconic Dance at the Moulin de la Galette.

WCI holds charity concert in support of Sakura House

Woodstock Collegiate Institute successfully hosted its tenth annual Concert for the Cure on April 24.

The evening was in support of VON Sakura House Hospice through musical performance and community engagement. Admission was free, and tax-receptable donations were accepted throughout the evening. All

funds collected

This year's program featured a diverse roster of performers, including current WCI music students, alumni returning from post-secondary music programs, and special guests affiliated with the school's Music and Music Theatre departments. The evening showcased a wide range of musical styles,

from contemporary arrangements to classical selections, highlighting the depth and versatility of WCI's arts community.

Event organizers reported strong attendance and positive engagement from families, staff, and community members. Volunteers coordinated front-of-house operations, managed donation intake, and supported

technical requirements to ensure a seamless production.

Representatives from Sakura House noted that community-led initiatives such as Concert for the Cure play a vital role in sustaining hospice services, which rely heavily on local fundraising to support patient care, family resources, and operational needs.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Performing Season of Love from Rent were Semester Two Music Theater Class.



Performing Different from Honk! The Musical was Nolan Caldwell.



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COMING EVENTS

MAY 23 / 10 AM - 4 PM

THE LONDON ORCHID SOCIETY WILL BE HOLDING AN ORCHID PLANT SALE

Siloam United Church, 1240 Fanshawe Park Rd. E., London

Admission is \$5.00. Contact Daryl 519-666-2927 or www.londonorchidsociety.com.

MAY

MAY 8 | 7 PM

HOPE BLOOMS

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

Join the Ingersoll Choral Society as they present "Hope Blooms", a spring benefit concert in support of the Ingersoll & District Interchurch. Uplifting choral selections to brighten your spring day! A free will offering will be received for Ingersoll & District Inter-Church.

MAY 9 | 10 AM - 2 PM

THE NORWICH LAWN BOWLING CLUB INVITES YOU TO COME AND TRY LAWN BOWLING

20 Stover Street South, Norwich

It's the perfect blend of strategy, socializing, and friendly competition. Free instruction. We have the lawn bowls, the "how to", and refreshments. Regular jitneys are Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:45 and first year membership is only \$70! You can find us on Facebook, and our website, norwichlawnbowling.ca, or you can contact me, Sandra Bertrand, at 519-535-0542. See you on the greens!

MAY 4 - 9

ROTARY BOOK FAIR

Tillsonburg Mall

The Tillsonburg Rotary Club is holding its fall book fair at the Tillsonburg Mall from Monday May 4th to Saturday May 9th. Give your used books, CD's and puzzles a new home! Help the environment by bringing your own bags to take home your purchases.

MAY 7 - 9

THE IDCI PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT PRESENTS "WELCOME TO THE BLACK PARADE: A MID-2000S MIXTAPE OF EVERYTHING ALT, EMO, AND PUNK"

IDCI Gym

A theatrical punk rock cabaret. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for students and are available at idci.tvdsb.ca

MAY 11 | 7 PM

RESEARCHING AT THE UNITED CHURCH ARCHIVES

WITH CHRISTOPHER HOGENDOORN

Zoom meeting held by the Oxford County Branch of Ontario Ancestors

An in-depth look at the United Church of Canada (UCC) Archives, with a focus on how genealogists can locate, interpret, and access church records. Please visit our website at <https://oxford.ogs.on.ca> and click on the link to register. This is a free event and all are welcome to attend.

MAY 12 & 26 | 1 PM

SACRED HEART PARISH EUCHRE

Henderson Hall 133 John Street Ingersoll

We invite everyone to join us for a Euchre afternoon. Refreshments provided.

MAY 13 | 1:30 PM

YOUR VOICE FOR NATURE

Ingersoll Centre for Seniors, 250 Ingersoll St S, Ingersoll ON

Brian Craig will examine the ways you can influence and ensure the conservation of nature in The long Point Biosphere Region which is essential for the quality of life on our planet. To confirm attendance email libwiz@hotmail.com

MAY 19 | DOORS OPEN 5 PM, LIVE AUCTION STARTS 6 PM

TILLSONBURG HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY'S ANNUAL GARDEN AUCTION & SALE

Lion's Auditorium, TCC, 45 Hardy Ave., Tillsonburg

Everyone welcome! Open to the public. \$2, \$5, \$10 sale tables with annuals, perennials, vegetables, containers & decor. Prize table draws (cash only). Bake sale with pies and tarts, cookies and bread, sandwiches & more! 42 Bottle wine raffle sponsored by Century 21. Live auction includes trees, shrubs, annuals, perennials, garden decor, & tools.

MAY 22 | STARTS 4 PM

SPECIAL OLYMPICS INGERSOLL BBQ

Giant Tiger parking lot, Ingersoll

Live music by the Plank Liners.

MAY 27 | 6:30 PM

OXFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER

Chartwell Oxford Gardens, 423 Devonshire Ave. Woodstock

"A Celebration of Oxford County's Past". Guest speaker Liz Dommasch, Oxford County Archivist. Free Admission, Donations Welcome! For more information, please email us at info@oxhs.ca

MAY 30 | 10 AM - 2 PM

FRIENDS OF THE WOODSTOCK PUBLIC LIBRARY BOOK SALE

Woodstock Public Library

Email: fofwpl@gmail.com. Website: <https://www.instagram.com/friendswoodstocklibrary/?hl=en>

MAY 31 | 1 - 3 PM

WOODSTOCK WALK FOR DOG GUIDES

Jakeman's Maple Farm, 454414 Trillium Line, Beachville, ON

Join a powerful movement to provide life-changing dog guides. For more information, contact Lion Jennifer at jharrington743@gmail.com

JUNE

JUNE 6 | REGISTRATION: 10 AM,

WALK STARTS 11 AM

WALK FOR LUPUS

Southside Park in Woodstock

Raffle prizes, 50/50 draws and refreshments! We are walking to raise awareness about Lupus and to raise funds for research and to find a cure for Lupus. Donations also help to provide resources for those living with Lupus.

JUNE 7 | 8 AM - 1 PM

KIDS DU

Southside Park, Woodstock

KidS Du is back for its 9th season. This event is a non-competitive run-bike-run for kids aged 3 to 13 with a focus on participation and having FUN! All courses are geared to the various age groups as set by Triathlon Ontario. KidS Du is held in Southside Park, Woodstock. Register before May 19 to guarantee a tshirt. For information and online registration visit woodstocktriathlonclub.ca

JULY

JULY 6-10 | 9 AM - 12:30 PM

BASKETBALL POWER CAMP

Huron Park Baptist Church, 199 Berwick St, Woodstock, ON N4S 7L6

Ages 5 to 14. Please call 519-421-4722 for more information.

ONGOING CLASSES, CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

EVERY OTHER FRIDAY | 1 - 4 PM

SPRING INTO THE INGERSOLL COUNTRY MUSIC JAMBOREE

Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St. S. Ingersoll

Join us, walk ins welcome. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Perform, listen, dance & enjoy! May 15 & 29, June 5 & 19.

3RD TUE. OF MONTH | 6:30 - 8:30 PM

CAREGIVER CONNECTION

Revel Realty Woodstock, 111 Huron Street (Virtual/hybrid options available)

Are you worried about your child or youth? Parents and Caregivers for Mental Health (PCMH) is here to listen, support, and walk alongside you on this journey. Our free Caregiver Connection peer support groups offer parents and caregivers a community of support. Can't make it in person? Join one of our virtual or hybrid groups! Visit family.cmho.org or email oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca for more information.

EVERY FRIDAY | 1 PM

TILLSONBURG DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB

Tillsonbur Senior Centre, 45 Hardy Ave, Tillsonburg

Don't have a partner? Come anyway and we will match you up with someone. For more information, visit their Facebook page: TburgBridge.

2ND TUES. OF MONTH (SEPT. TO MAY) | 2 - 4 PM

4TH TUES. OF MONTH (SEPT. TO MAY) | 7 - 9 PM

OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY

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

If you have never belonged to a stamp club, now's the time. Meet new friends, grow your knowledge and collection. Contact: Don Eaton dhfe@silomail.com. Website: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>

LAST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH | 10 AM - 12 PM

MONTHLY VON BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC

Ingersoll Pharmasave, 19 King St. E., Ingersoll

Last Tuesday of every Month.

3RD WED. OF MONTH

COLOURING THROUGH GRIEF

Caring Hearts Support Network: St. David's United Church, 190 Springbank Ave., Woodstock ON

One time fee of \$15. Registration is required.

Call 519-536-3370. Check out website

www.caringheartssupportnetwork.com

3RD WED. OF MONTH | 6:30 - 8:30 PM

PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

21 Wellington St., Woodstock

(Virtual options available)

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

VON OXFORD SUPPORTIVE CARE PROGRAMS

Navigating any form of grief can feel overwhelming; however, with the right support, guidance, and education, individuals can discover a pathway to healing.

VON Oxford Supportive Care Programs offer assistance for grief stemming from various circumstances, such as the death of someone, caregiving, serious illness diagnoses, and life transitions. Through education, connection, and compassion, our programs create a safe space for individuals to explore their emotions and learn effective coping mechanisms during the grieving process

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

4TH WED. OF MONTH | 1 - 2:30 PM

GRIEF SUPPORT FOR MAID RELATED LOSS

Thamesford Library, 165 Dundas St., Thamesford

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

Happy Mother's Day!

Crispy's FISH & CHIPS

Thank You Mom!

MOTHER'S DAY SPECIAL

Treat Your Mom to a Delicious Fish & Chips Dinner!

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COMING EVENTS

OXFORD COUNTY DIABETES EDUCATION PROGRAM

Are you looking for support with your Diabetes? Our Team of Registered Nurses, Registered Dietitians and a Social Worker is here to support YOUR goals. We can help with medication adjustments, lifestyle and diet changes, stress management, weight reduction strategies and more. Appointments are available at Alexandra Hospital Ingersoll and Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital and by phone. **SELF REFERRALS ARE WELCOME.** Please call 519-485-9611 to book an appointment. Let's work together!

THE OPTIMIST CLUB OF OXFORD COUNTY

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

THE LIONS CLUB OF WOODSTOCK

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

OXFORD COUNTY BRANCH OF ONTARIO ANCESTORS

Are you looking to start a summer pastime? Are you interested in your family history? Oxford Branch has an extensive collection of family history and genealogical resources that can help you.

Come visit our Resource Centre at 82 Light Street, Courthouse Square, Woodstock. We are open Tuesdays to Thursdays 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Volunteers are ready to help you get started or help you research for missing information. You can also connect with us on the web at

<https://oxford.ogs.on.ca>. We are dedicated to supporting and promoting genealogical research in Oxford County. Hope to see you through the summer!

BEACHVILLE LEGION EVENTS: 434852 ZorraLine, Beachville

**WEDNESDAYS | 7-8 PM
GENTLE CHAIR YOGA**

**WEDNESDAYS | 7:30 PM
HUMP DAY DARTS**

**THURSDAYS | 7 PM
EUCHRE**

**THURSDAYS | 7 - 8 PM
LINE DANCING**

Intro to West Coast Swing Dancing 8:15-9:15 pm. No partner required.

**FRIDAYS | 8 PM (CLOSED MAY 15)
DARTS**

**MAY 8 | 5:30 PM
ROAST BEEF DINNER**

**MAY 9 | 1 - 4 PM
THAMES VALLEY BLUEGRASS AND OLD TIME
COUNTRY PICKERS**

Open Mic (acoustic only). Come enjoy the music!

**MAY 10 | 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM
MOTHERS DAY BRUNCH**

MAY 13 | 4:40 - 6 PM

OX ON THE RUN MOBILE LIBRARY

MAY 22 | 5:30 PM

ROAST PORK DINNER

**ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 55 EVENTS:
642 Dundas St, Woodstock, ON**

**THURSDAYS | 1:30 PM
SHUFFLEBOARD**

**TUESDAYS - THURSDAYS | ENDING IN THE EVENING
DART LEAGUE**



SERVICE NOTICE: TOWN HALL ELEVATOR

Elevator Out of Service

Starts: Monday, May 25

Duration: Approx. 7 weeks

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(Except Civil Marriage Ceremonies)**

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Riddles

Why did the monster's mother knit him three socks?

She heard he grew another foot.

Why did the cookie cry?

Because his mother was a wafer so long.

What did the mama volcano say to the baby volcano?

Don't erupt while I'm talking.

Why did mom's gift arrive the day after Mother's Day?

It was choco-LATE!

What did the baby Egyptian say when he got lost?

I want my mummy!

What did the mother broom say to the baby broom?

It's time to go to sweep!

Why did the kids give their mom a blanket for Mother's Day?

Because they thought she was the coolest mom!

What did the mommy cat say when her kittens brought her warm milk on Mother's Day?

This is purrrrfect!

Sudoku

by PeterS 2026

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

Solution found on page 31

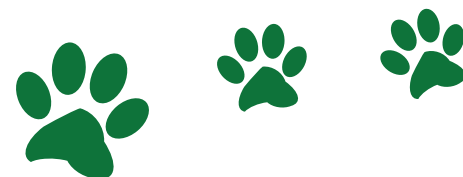
Basic

Featured Pet



EMILY

This is Emily. She is very loving and friendly to everyone. And if elected mayor she promises free treats for all cats in the city!



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

Word Search

MOTHER'S DAY

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

- MOTHER
- LOVE
- CARING
- FLOWERS
- FAMILY
- HUGS
- KINDNESS
- THANKS
- CARDS
- BREAKFAST
- APPRECIATION
- HOME
- SMILES
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CELEBRATION OF LIFE

RONALD VAN MARRUM



It is with heavy hearts that we announce the sudden passing of Ronald "Ron" Van Marrum, known to many as "Lonewolf," on Sunday, April 26, 2026, at the age of 71.

Ron will be deeply missed by his loving partner, Annette VanSchepen. Cherished father of Derek (Kelly-Ann), Lee (Tiffany), and Sabrina. Proud and devoted grandfather of Kayle, Arran, Heyden,

Tyler, Dusk, Draven, Hunter, Dexter, and Dani, and great-grandfather of Nolan and Sky. He is survived by his sister Tina, and fondly remembered by his ex-wife Fonnice DeJager, as well as many extended family members, friends, and all those whose lives he touched. Ron was predeceased by his parents, Louw and Angenita Van Marrum, and his sister Margaret.

A deeply spiritual man, Ron was a respected Elder within his community. As a medicine man and counsellor, he devoted much of his life to helping others, especially youth, offering guidance, healing, and quiet strength to those in need. His gifts were not only in his teachings, but in the compassion and understanding he carried with him.

Ron was also a dedicated and hardworking man, spending many years in construction to provide for his family. Above all, he was a family man—loyal, caring, and always willing to do whatever he could for those he loved.

Though he had a big heart, Ron was a private person who often walked his path quietly, earning him the name "Lonewolf." Through his leadership and spiritual work, he touched many lives in ways that will not be forgotten.

Though his passing was sudden, and his absence is deeply felt, his spirit and teachings will continue to live on in all who knew him.

A Celebration of Life will take place at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 55, 642 Dundas St, Woodstock, ON N4S 1E3, on Sunday, May 31, 2026 between 1 - 4 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Ron's memory may be made to Welkin Oxford. Personal condolences may be shared at www.smithleroy.com

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*This day will be remembered, and quietly kept.
No words are needed, we will never forget.*

*Lovingly remembered by children,
Margaret, Elizabeth (Ron) and
grandchildren, Spencer and Madison.*

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QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Recession
2. Venus
3. 90 mins
4. Rome
5. Waymo
6. Hippopotamus
7. Liver
8. 24
9. Geppetto
10. Tarigrade or water bear

SUDOKU SOLUTION

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

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

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