

Exeter Examiner

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Policing costs could jump another 11 per cent

JOHN MINER

Examiner Reporter

South Huron municipal council has been advised it could be looking at paying as much as 11 per cent more for OPP policing in 2027.

Coming in at nearly four times the current rate of inflation, the increase would push policing costs for South Huron to more than \$2.3 million, up from \$2.1 million this year.

The money for the Ontario Provincial Police service comes from property taxes. The bill for 2026 was also an 11 per cent hike over the previous year.

In a letter to municipal councils that contract OPP services, Ontario solicitor general Michael Kerzner said no OPP-policed municipality will see its total amount owed increase by more than 11 per cent compared to 2026, excluding costs associated with any additional policing services a municipality has chosen to receive through a separate agreement with the OPP.

Kerzner said the cap is a time-limited measure for the 2027 OPP billing cycle, intended to provide municipalities with cost certainty to support local budget planning.

The OPP is currently preparing billing statements for 2027. Those statements are expected to be given to municipalities this fall, Kerzner said.

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(DAN ROLPH PHOTO)

DASHWOOD FIRE STATION TO OPEN IN THE SPRING

A new firehall that will serve Dashwood and the surrounding area is expected to open in April 2027. Local representatives and community members gathered at the new firehall's location on Centre Street South Sept. 14 to break ground on the new station.

Ground broken on long-awaited new Dashwood fire station

DAN ROLPH

Editor

Construction on a new fire station that will serve Dashwood and the surrounding area has officially begun, bringing the community one step closer to the end of a years-long effort to replace its aging firehall.

Local representatives, firefighters and members of the community gathered Sept. 14 at the former Dashwood baseball diamond on Centre Street South, where the new station is being constructed, to mark the occasion.

Council awarded the tender for the fire station's construction to AUBI/Agri-Urban Building Inc. for about

CONTINUED TO PAGE 5



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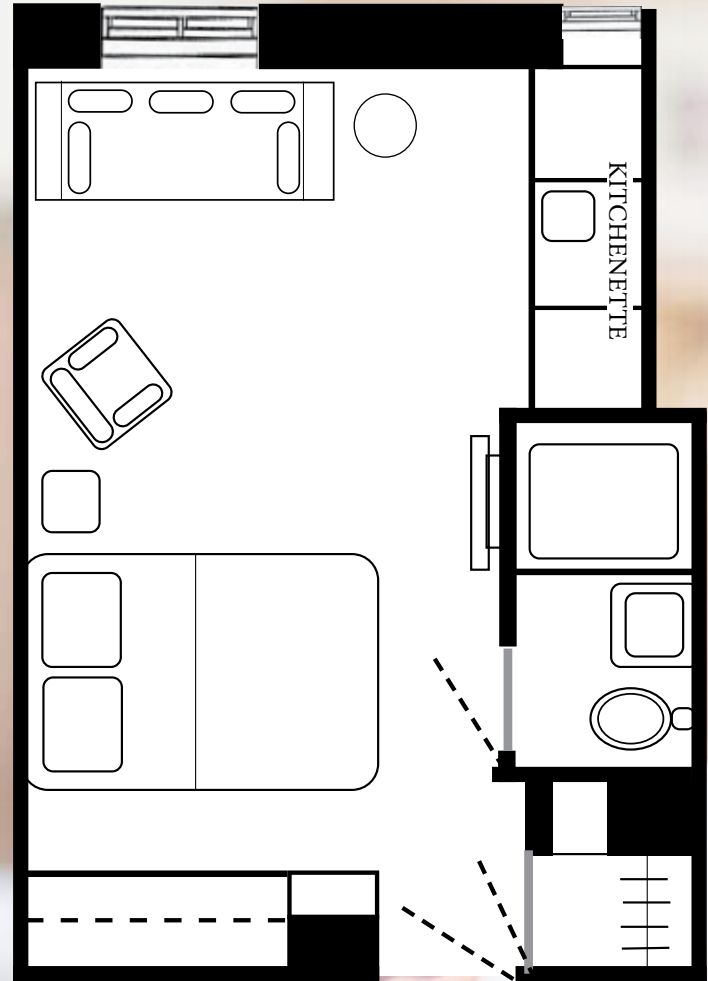
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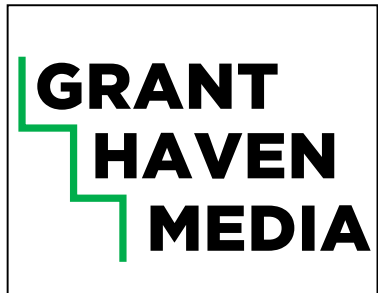
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Grant Haven journalists recognized nationally



GRANT HAVEN STAFF
Staff Contribution

The Canadian Community Newsmedia Awards (CCNAwards) celebrate the best in community publishing from across the country. Therefore, it was a thrill earlier this week to see several of our journalists recognized for the valuable work they do in their communities. The 2026 competition included more than 650 entries in 29 different categories which

spanned the areas of editorial, photography, multimedia and general excellence from the 2025 calendar year. Our company’s original newspaper, the St. Marys Independent, recorded a trio of third place finishes within the General Excellence section for newspapers with circulation of 1,500 to 6,499 copies. The Independent, under the leadership of editor Galen Simmons, took the bronze for “Best All-Round Newspaper”, “Best Editorial Page”, and “Best Front Page”. In each of these General Excellence categories, the Nunatsiaq News (Nunavut) and Town and Country This Week (Athabasca, AB) took the first and second place spots, respectively. “I feel like the St. Marys paper truly has something for everyone,” said Grant Haven Media publisher Stewart Grant. “Spen-

cer Seymour consistently puts together one of the best sports sections in Canada; Wendy Lamond captures so many of those small-town feel-good stories that make St. Marys special; Nancy Abra provides excellent regional coverage of nearby Thorndale; Mary Smith provides unparalleled historical features from the Stonetown; Alona Vasylieva’s Ukrainian Corner is a weekly must-read; and this is just a sampling of what’s inside each issue.” Simmons also won third place for “Best Local Editorial” for his June 12, 2025 column entitled ‘Little St. Marys stands up to provincial giant’. Stratford editor Connor Luczka won first place for “Best National Editorial (print circulation up to 9999)” for his patriotic April 4, 2025 editorial ‘A eucatastrophic nation’. He also won

top honours in the category of “Best Local Civic Journalism (print circulation up to 9999)” for his May 16, 2025 article entitled ‘Do municipalities have legal authority to fight strong mayor powers? Not according to experts’. Tillsonburg editor Jeff Helsdon won first place for “Best Business Writing (print circulation up to 9999)” for ‘A look inside Shaw’s, Tillsonburg’s own ice cream plant’. Helsdon also won second place for “Best Historical Story” for his Oct. 9, 2025 article, ‘Reimagining Tillson’s journey to launch Dereham Forge’. Finally, the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette took third place nationally for “Best Agricultural Edition” with its 24-page March 27, 2025 special. Along with stories from editor Galen Simmons, the farm feature included articles by

Lee Griffi, Emily Stewart, Gary West, Julia Paul, Luke Edwards, Jeff Tribe, Diane Baltaz, Tim Rau, and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. “Looking back at the Gazette farm edition, it’s clear that it took a lot of editorial planning along with a strong cast of journalists with varied backgrounds,” said Grant. “The Best Little Pork Shoppe, Windrose Farm, the late Donald Hart, Silver Creek Nursery, Danzel Holsteins, and Golspie Dairy were among those to be featured in this award-winning edition.” Grant added that any of Grant Haven’s past articles and editions from recent years can be accessed by visiting the company’s website at granthaven.com, selecting the newspaper of choice from the drop-down menu, and viewing the PDFs from the Past Issues menu.

Restoring small-town journalism, one community at a time!

Exeter Examiner

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Exeter Examiner

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Exeter Examiner

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Exeter Examiner

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COMMUNITY

Ground broken on long-awaited new Dashwood fire station

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

\$4.1 million in June 2026. The bid was the lowest of 14 submitted for the project, with the most expensive bid coming in at about \$7 million.

The project's price tag came in about \$600,000 over what was initially earmarked for the station's construction. The municipality is paying for the new station with about \$2.17 million in debt financing. Additionally, about \$1.3 million is coming from the fire capital replacement reserve and \$665,000 is being pulled from the turbine reserve fund.

The new Dashwood fire station will replace the existing Roland Street station once it becomes operational. The existing Dashwood station was built in 1954, and staff noted several concerns as reasons for its replacement, including minimizing exposure to carcinogens for firefighters and a lack of space on the property for expansions to accommodate modern firefighting vehicles.

The Dashwood fire station is one of two stations operating in South Huron, with the other in Exeter. The municipality permanently closed the Huron Park station in 2021 after the discovery of hazardous substances such as asbestos inside. Huron Park firefighters were then moved to the two remaining stations in the municipality.

The new Dashwood fire station is expected to open in April 2027.



A rendering of the new fire station that is being built in Dashwood

(SOUTH HURON PHOTO)

Policing costs could jump another 11 per cent

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

"We value the important partnership between the province, municipalities and the OPP in keeping Ontario communities safe. We also recognize the importance of ensuring policing costs are sustainable and predictable for municipalities,

and we will continue working with our municipal partners on these shared priorities."

Coun. Ted Oke said it appears from Kerzner's letter that South Huron will be looking at an increase of about 11 per cent.

"That kind of increase on a \$2-million

budget is a big number. I think we should be voicing our concern in some way, shape or form," Oke said at the Sept. 8 council meeting.

Council has asked staff to prepare a report on policing costs, including a possible resolution to be voted on.

Last year, South Huron council con-

sidered dipping into a \$303,000 reserve fund to soften the property tax increase for policing.

In the end, the idea was rejected on advice from staff that the reserve should be preserved for future use, if possible, given the significant anticipated increases in the years to come.

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White Squirrel Watch



PHOTO BY VALORIE POOLEY
SPOTTED IN CREDITON, THIS LITTLE GUY WAS BORN THIS YEAR. HE IS SMALL AND ALWAYS SEEMS TO BE "LEARNING".



If you would like to submit a White Squirrel Sighting, contact us at info@exeterexaminer.com

Exeter Examiner Photo Quiz



Who are you looking at?
By Judy and Barry Johnson



You'll say "pretty bird" when you look at me! Check out my blue/green iridescent back, pristine white front, and dark flight feathers. I nest in a tree cavity or artificial box nest. With a wingspan of up to 35 centimetres, I am an expert acrobatic flyer. My diet of mosquitoes and other flying insects make me a wonderful pest control bird. Don't come close to my young or I will dive-bomb your head.

HINT: I am named for one of my possible nesting sites.

This week's answers are found on pg. 30

WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

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

This week's answers are found on pg. 30

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Firefighters recognized for years of service



Aaron Datars, centre, with his brother Sam and father Peter. Datars was recognized for 20 years of service with the South Huron fire department.

JOHN MINER

Examiner Reporter

Firefighting in South Huron runs in the family. Two volunteer firefighters were presented with years of service awards at the recent South Huron council — Aaron Datars for 20 years of service

and Doug Smith for 30 years. Joining Aaron Datars for the presentation were his father, Peter Datars, and his brother Sam, who also serve on the fire department. With fire department captain Doug Smith was his son, Will, also a member of the fire department. Mayor George Finch praised the vol-



Captain Doug Smith with his son Will. Smith was recognized for 30 years of service as a volunteer firefighter.

(SOUTH HURON PHOTOS)

unteer firefighters, noting they have selflessly placed themselves in harm's way countless times to protect all of us, our families, and even complete strangers. "While others are running away from danger, you are the ones running towards it," said Finch. "We are a better place because of your loyalty,

and of course we are eternally grateful that your family shares that same passion." South Huron fire chief Jeremy Becker said he wanted to especially thank the families of the volunteer firefighters. "It is a huge commitment. They've definitely been a part."

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Four-way race for two Exeter spots on council

JOHN MINER

Examiner Reporter

The priorities for candidates running for Exeter's two spots on South Huron council range from improving communications to investing in infrastructure and attracting family doctors.

Voters in the Exeter ward of South Huron will be able to pick from three first-time candidates and one veteran in the Oct. 26 municipal election.

The three candidates running for the first time are Daryl Demaray, Laura Goulding, and Antonio Munion. Aaron Neeb, the fourth candidate, has served on council since 2018.

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

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

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

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

Here is the e-mailed response from the candidates:

Daryl Demaray

(1) I'm running for council to serve our community, listen to all voices, make thoughtful decisions, and bring people together to build a strong future.

(2) I believe we must manage change responsibly, protect taxpayer dollars, support local businesses, maintain infrastructure, and plan for our future.

(3) My work and community experience have taught me to communicate, work as a team, listen, ask questions, take responsibility, and follow through.

Laura Goulding

(1) I have chosen to run in order to build strong, resilient and connected communities within South Huron. This includes our business community, our residential community, our vulnerable demographics and the physical environment that it all happens within. While the individual issues change year over year, ensuring there is strong voices representing the best interests of all is important. I have been able to work with our business community and

I am an active volunteer in South Huron. I want my unique experience to benefit the individuals within South Huron through my strong, recognized voice within the community.

(2) I want to focus on communication. While this may sound simple it has been an area of opportunity within South Huron. While Municipal staff has successfully increased their communication through social media I want to work to find/rediscover ways to reach more residents. I am an administrator for a social media group called, Out about and around Exeter. This group is a virtual town square of information that includes businesses, events and community concerns. This type of communication is important as it highlights our business successes, dynamic events and activities and provides an opportunity for respectful discourse. As a councillor I will grow my commitment to communication. I will listen and bring forward vetted concerns to council that can be well addressed through municipal government.

(3) I have thrown my hat in the ring after many years of community work, volunteerism and advocacy. I have worked in radio locally and was the Exeter BIA Manager during Covid. This spurred innovations that include our white squirrel statue downtown, the Jack-o'-lantern Jamboree and neon white squirrels in business windows, farmers markets and our community garden. I am involved in charities and not-for-profit groups that I truly believe improve our community. These include the South Huron Optimist Club, the South Huron Community Fund, Sunset Community Foundation as well as the Exeter Rodeo Volunteer Committee. I give my time and energy because I believe that we can all make a difference in our community by being involved and vested in our unified success and well considered growth.

Antonio Munion

(1) The moment that pushed me to put my name forward wasn't dramatic — it was gradual. Through my work with Antonio's Handyman Services (AHS) of Exeter, I've been inside homes, businesses, and community spaces across South Huron. I've listened to people talk about health care challenges, aging infrastructure, and the need for stronger support for

families and seniors. Over time, it became clear that I could contribute more than just hands-on service. I could bring a practical, grounded voice to Council — one that reflects the real experiences of residents. That's what motivated me to run: a desire to help strengthen the community I chose to call home.

(2) Too many residents are without a family doctor, and our emergency services are under pressure because of it. This affects everyone — families, seniors, newcomers, and long-time residents. While municipalities don't directly run health care, they do play a major role in attracting physicians, supporting local clinics, and creating conditions that make our community appealing for medical professionals. I want South Huron to be proactive, not reactive, in addressing this issue. Alongside health care, I will focus on maintaining safe, welcoming public spaces and supporting community groups and events. These are the things that keep small towns vibrant, connected, and proud.

(3) As the owner of AHS of Exeter, I manage budgets, timelines, problem-solving, and communication every single day. I work directly with residents from all backgrounds, giving me a clear understanding of the challenges people face — whether it's aging homes, accessibility issues, or gaps in local services. My work requires accountability, transparency, and listening — the same qualities residents expect from their Council. I also bring experience coordinating projects, navigating regulations, and working with subcontractors and local businesses, which gives me insight into how municipal decisions impact the local economy. Most importantly, I bring a neighbour-focused perspective. I'm not approaching this from a political angle — I'm approaching it as someone who lives here, works here, and wants to help strengthen South Huron for everyone.

Aaron Neeb

(1) I am running for re-election because I want to ensure that South Huron remains a thriving community. I am a father with two young children, and I want them to grow up in a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable community. After eight years of serving Exeter as Ward 2 Councillor, I believe that my governance experience has benefited and will continue to benefit

Exeter residents as we grow and improve our community. Decisions made today affect future generations, and I am extremely conscious of ensuring investment is spread equitably across generations. As the youngest member of council over the past eight years, I believe that my perspective, voice, and experience are important to the long-term sustainability of the Municipality and Exeter.

(2) My top priority is continuing to responsibly invest and reinvest in municipal infrastructure, and ensuring that council advocates to the provincial and federal governments for funding to keep tax rates and user fees reasonable. As South Huron grows, we must update aging infrastructure and invest in new infrastructure to accommodate this growth, without pushing important decisions down the road that will further increase the financial burden on taxpayers. I also believe council should invest in new recreational amenities, such as an Exeter dog park, and pursue funding for a gymnasium and walking track. Continued investments in community economic development — through measures like the South Huron Medical Recruitment and Retention Committee, the South Huron Community Fund, and recreational programming — are vitally important to ensure the health of our residents and children, as well as the sustainability of our community.

(3) As a Ward 2 Councillor since 2018, I have served on multiple committees and attended numerous delegations to the Province. I have had the privilege of serving as both a member and Chair of the Committee of Adjustment throughout my eight years on council. I have also served on the Fire Services Committee (2022–2025), the Mayor's Community Recovery Task Force (2020–2022), the South Huron Recreation Task Force

(2021–2022), the Heritage Advisory Committee (2023–2026), and as a council representative for the Exeter BIA (2018–2022). My experience on these committees has given me knowledge of procedure, the role of municipalities in delivering services in Ontario, and our obligation to all residents in our municipality. As an incumbent, I believe that my skills, knowledge, and composure will be an asset in addressing any challenges our community faces.

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Forging ahead: Scott McKay, metalwork artist



(FRANK NEUFELD PHOTO)

Scott McKay is a local artist who has created many iconic publicly viewable metal sculptures.

JUDY FINKBEINER JOHNSON

Examiner Correspondent

If you live or visit Grand Bend or have spent any time in St. Thomas, you have been fortunate to see the metalwork sculptures of an exceptionally talented artist.

Driving down the Grand Bend strip towards the main beach near the traffic circle, there is a large metal fish named Stewie the Sturgeon. No ordinary fish, he came into the world at the suggestion and guidance of Teresa Marie Phillips, founder and curator of Paint Ontario. Stewie came from the imagination and creativity of acclaimed metal artist Scott McKay, welcoming visitors to Paint Ontario in 2021 before he was installed in his present location.

McKay grew up in an artistic family where both of his parents painted. He admits that he “sucked at art in school” when he was young.

His journey to metal sculpture took a path not heavily travelled. Like the road roundabouts where several of his major art installations are located, there were options for different directions. He didn’t choose a straight-line shortest distance to this life passion.

McKay grew up in the country outside Waterloo. In the early 1990s he received a degree in geography. He not only shared that interest with his father, but also a classroom at Laurier University with his dad who was a professor teaching geography there.

By around 1997, McKay was working as a construction millwright building feed mills in the Huron County area.

“Lots of work was done in Hensall,” he said. “My skills of working with metal developed over this time — welding, cutting, and learning to rig steel — getting it into position and moving it about. Those skills would play a strong role in my artwork later.”

The spark that ignited his artistic creativity was seeing a metal bird sculpture

that his sister purchased.

“I liked what I saw and thought I could do that with my own skill set.”

He began working in factory millwright jobs which made it possible for him to rent a shop in a fixed location where he could create metal art using prefabricated, “found” materials like machinery parts, agricultural equipment, and salvage from the factories.

It wasn’t long before the artist wanted more control over the source material for his art. The next direction took him to the Haliburton School of Art and Design where he completed the artist blacksmithing program in 2006. He was intrigued by new possibilities for his metal sculptures by controlling flames and hot metals. This is when he began using Corten steel, also known as weathering steel, for projects.

Unlike other metals where rust forms over cycles of wet and dry and degrades the base, Corten steel is a mixture of alloys that enables formation of a protective patina of varied rust colours within a few months. Its strength and changing palette over time appeal to McKay.

In the beginning, Scott established a blacksmith shop in Glencoe and later west of London called Strong Arm Forge in Iona Station.

“It was certainly hard at first, getting in front of people, trying various trade, art and home shows,” he said. “I was still working in the mining sector on a fly-in fly-out basis, two weeks on and off working at three different diamond mines — Ekati diamond mine in Northwest Territories, Tahera diamond mine in Nunavut and Victor diamond mine in Northern Ontario.”

With steely determination, McKay kept his focus on creating large public art pieces, submitting over 30 various applications before his first project, being selected to sculpt artwork for Thunder Bay’s new EMS building. He said it took almost a metric tonne of stainless steel to create the piece, which he



(SCOTT MCKAY PHOTO)

Stewie the Sturgeon on his pedestal in Grand Bend.

formed into the peak wave on an electrocardiogram.

“I fabricated it in Glencoe and drove it to Thunder Bay,” he said. “I was thrilled to have the piece installed.”

From there, McKay continued with competitions for public art while balancing a buildup of private commissions.

For many, McKay’s iconic 2017 sculptures in St. Thomas, the Railway City, are what comes to mind. The sheer size, scope, and energy of these works demand attention from the viewer. The train sculpture on the roundabout on the north side of town was assembled on site and involved a crane and a flatbed to get it into place.

McKay said the piece in St. Thomas took 1,000 to fabricate, as well as an additional 200 hours for the design process. Those efforts resulted in a piece that stretches 18 metres in length and stands more than six metres tall.

“Around the same time, I was doing a lot of work for the Elevated Park on the 1929 Railway Bridge in St. Thomas installing six of my pieces there,” he added.

In 2021, McKay created and installed several sculptures for another roundabout in St. Thomas and then moved to the Bancroft area to build a house over the winter. His wife, Mary-Ellen, was finishing up her career as a police dispatcher for the City of London and followed shortly after with her retirement.

It wasn’t long before he began having wrist issues that weren’t resolved with three surgeries, resulting in no more big commissions being planned — except for one project close to his heart.

He had proposed a large horse sculpture made with found pieces to various organizations, but it was never accepted.

McKay said he is happy about that.

“The end game for my metal sculpture is working on that one piece for our own yard,” he said. “I would have liked to have kept most of the pieces I have created. Every one is a part of me and my

experience to that point.”

McKay said he is considering exploring small, cast sculpture in a lost-wax style. The style involves an exacting sequence of steps including creating the sculpture in clay and building a rubber mould around it that is filled with liquid wax. The wax is dipped to form a hard ceramic shell that is put into a kiln where the wax melts and a hollow mould remains to be filled, cast with molten metal.

Today, McKay and Mary-Ellen live in the bush, where they fish, hunt and grow vegetables. Their household also includes a border collie mix and four husky mixes. Music remains central to their lives: McKay plays banjo and hopes to return to the bagpipes as his hands permit, while Mary-Ellen plays harp and is a member of a local bell choir.

As McKay forges a new artistic future, admirers of his sculptures will eagerly be watching to see how his unique experiences and perspectives guide what comes next.



(SCOTT MCKAY PHOTO)

One of Scott McKay’s largest pieces as it was being installed in St. Thomas.

United Way campaigns in full swing

WENDY LAMOND

Examiner Correspondent

United Way has kicked off their 2026 campaign in South Huron and Perth-Huron.

Why is this campaign so important? The United Way campaign focuses raising funds for social services in the community along with housing projects and mental health programs. They are a strong advocate for helping with affordable housing, living wages and social assistance.

David Mackechnie, manager of community development for the local United Way, oversees awareness-raising efforts for southern Huron County and St. Marys and area. This is a newer position that was created to have someone in place to help identify social issues and find solutions whenever possible.

Mackechnie, who has been volunteering for various organizations for a good

part of his life, said he strongly believes in making a difference and knew the role was right up his alley.

Mackechnie divides his time between the Exeter and St. Marys area. Each community has their own challenges, so what may work for one neighbourhood may differ for the other.

South Huron has a Connection Centre, which is a United Way initiative, that offers support for trauma care, substance abuse and mental health counselling. It also offers needs like showers, laundry and food all thanks to the support of the Exeter Pentecostal Tabernacle. United Way helped over 1,700 people in South Huron last year. It funds 14 partner organizations and programs in the area. Some of these include Artemis Huron, Huron Homelessness Strategy, Huron County Food Bank, Urgent Needs Fund and many more. Exeter also has an excellent youth program for those up to 25 years old.

St. Marys, through community outreach worker Jade Orquin, has helped

over 631 residents connect with stability supports. The town also has had huge success with the Local Community Food Centre's Equal Access Nourish Market. Last year alone, United Way helped 2,840 people in St. Marys and area. There are 12 local partner organizations and programs funded through United Way including the community outreach worker, Shelterlink Youth Services, YMCA of Three Rivers newcomer support services, family services, the Emily Murphy Centre and more. There are many options available thanks to these programs.

One program that is available in both areas is the 211 community helpline. It is a free and confidential service that connects the caller to whatever social or community support they need.

Mackechnie said he is looking to cultivate new initiatives for fundraising for long-term needs when it comes to housing for both communities. Homelessness is one of the biggest issues in many places, and United Way is com-

mitted to finding solutions. Some ideas include motorcycle rallies, bond campaigns and transitional housing.

United Way is always looking for volunteers that share a vision of helping to create community connections and to help those who are struggling. Since 1887, United Way has looked at the biggest needs in every community. They have raised millions of dollars throughout the years. Though many things have changed over the years, the job of United Way has not. Through mail campaigns, donors and businesses, relationships are built and challenges are met that help those who need it most.

Mackechnie spends two days a week in each community and keeps one day open for where he needs to be. Right now, St. Marys has 10 volunteers, but Mackechnie said he would like to see about five more come on board.

For more information on United Way, email Mackechnie at dmackechnie@perthhuron.unitedway.ca.

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Community spirit shines at Kirkton Fall Fair



It was a weekend of classic fall fun from Sept. 11-13 as the Kirkton Fall Fair returned to the Kirkton-Woodham Community Centre. Hosted by the Kirkton Agricultural Society, the fair has been a community staple since its introduction in 1869. This year's event featured a packed slate including fireworks, a parade, exhibits, pig races, pony rides, a demolition derby and more. This year's fair featured the 4H Dairy Club achievement day, as well as the open dairy show.



This year's mullet competition drew crowds as entrants were judged on length, colour and effort.



The annual pig races returned this year where crowds cheered on as pigs navigated courses.



(MACKENZIE HODGINS PHOTOS)

Levi and Malissa Landon were at the Kirkton Fall Fair enjoying the corn pit.



Switzer Sweet Corn and Pumpkins was getting in the mood for autumn as they participated in the parade.



The Kirkton Horticultural Society was well represented during the parade.

Becoming part of a dairy farming team: An inside look at Kirkton Vet Clinic's dairy veterinary services

EMILY STEWART

Examiner Reporter

Dr. Robyn Elgie, a dairy veterinarian with the Kirkton Vet Clinic, said the practice is unique compared to other veterinary care.

A dairy veterinarian will travel to see their clients regularly, usually every two weeks, to check for pregnancy, milking parlor protocols, medical treatment as needed and disease-prevention initiatives like vaccine protocols.

"You get to know the clients that you work with really well because you see them all the time and you definitely become part of their team on the farm and their advising committee that they have and they get information from," said Dr. Elgie.

The Kirkton Vet Clinic will also have emergencies every day, so there must be a block of time in her schedule left open and free from pre-booked appointments for her to travel as far as an hour and a half one way.

In addition to Kirkton and surrounding areas, Dr. Elgie travels as far as Parkhill and Sarnia to treat the cattle at farms in those areas, as there is limited access to veterinary treatment there.

"That didn't always used to be the case. ... Every small town had a clinic that did both large and small, but just the way that the livestock industries have gone and there's less livestock farms in those areas than there used to be, it just didn't support large animal (veterinary care) out there," she said.

The Kirkton Vet Clinic is a large vet-

erinary clinic that can accommodate out-of-town clients.

"Nowadays, farmers are really good and we spend a lot of time teaching them on how to do a lot of treatment and techniques on their own or at least in the interim until we get there, and educating them on detecting things early on in the process so that if it does take a bit of time to get intervention there to help, then we haven't lost time by just not checking the animal soon enough," said Dr. Elgie.

Dairy veterinary practices, such as disease prevention, are an important role in agri-food production and for large animal care.

"Every large animal veterinarian that's in that agricultural space cares pretty strongly about food safety and producing the best quality food that we can, so that's one aspect of it is making sure we are preventing disease as much as possible — so helping farmers have access to vaccines and to use them appropriately so they can get the most out of them, but also on the other side of just the care for the animals," Dr. Elgie said.

The personal connection between the dairy vet and their patients is what drove Dr. Elgie to the speciality, and she also enjoys the drives out to the farms.

"It can be long days and lots of driving, but your office is the countryside and living in Ontario, we get to see a lot of beautiful scenery," she said.

More information about the Kirkton Vet Clinic can be found online by visiting kirktonvetclinic.com.



(DR. ROBYN ELGIE PHOTO)

Dr. Robyn Elgie is a dairy veterinarian with the Kirkton Vet Clinic. She travels to dairy farms in the area and as far as Sarnia to provide care to cattle.



OCTOBER EVENTS

Friday Oct 2 - **Graham Bedard** - Live Music 5pm-8pm

Friday Oct 2 - **El Chilaquil Mexican Food Truck**

October 3 - **Danceland** - Live Music 2pm-5pm

Friday Oct 9 - **Rae Melvin** - Live Music 5pm-8pm

Sunday Oct 11 - **Dave Menard** - Live Music 2pm-5pm

Saturday Oct 17 - **Annette Grotentraast** - Live Music 3pm-6pm

Friday Oct 23 - **Drag Bingo w/ TroyBoy Entertainment** - 7:45pm-Late

Saturday Oct 24 - **Jason Mercer** - Live Music 2pm-5pm

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Annual turtle hatchling release draws crowds to Morrison Dam



About 1,000 gathered at the edges of Morrison Lake at the Morrison Dam Conservation Area Sept. 3 as the 11th annual Turtle Hatchling Release returned. Organized by the Huron Stewardship Council and Ausable Bayfield Conservation, the annual event serves as an opportunity to learn about the importance of turtles in the ecosystem as well as how residents can play a role in protecting turtle habitats. Pictured is Kylie Wardell of the Huron Stewardship Council as she shows a turtle hatchling to attendees.



(MACKENZIE HODGINS PHOTOS)

Huron Stewardship Council volunteer Wesley Small was one of the many volunteers helping to make the day a success.



Municipality of South Huron Notice of Election – October 26, 2026 Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (s.40)

Electors in the Municipality of South Huron will be voting by internet and/or telephone, in the 2026 Municipal Election. A Voter Information Letter will be mailed to you directly in the month of October, providing you with a Personal Identification Number (PIN). This will allow you to vote any time starting at 9:00 a.m. on October 13 until 8:00 p.m. on October 26, from any telephone or any device connected to the internet. A Voter Help Desk will be available at the municipal office, with telephone and internet access, during the voting period. The Voter Help Desk is available **8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday, 1-877-204-0747 / 519-235-0310** or by email vote@southhuron.ca. The Voter Help Desk will be attending various locations within the Municipality – check the Election page on www.southhuron.ca and *Municipal Social Media* for location updates.

Municipal Elections for the Offices of:

Mayor (1 to be elected)

Maureen Cole
George Finch
Ted Oke

Councillor Ward 1, Stephen (2 to be elected)

Dianne Faubert
Emily Girodat
Wendy McLeod-Haggitt
Marissa Vaughan

Councillor Ward 2, Exeter (2 to be elected)

Daryl Demaray
Laura Susan Goulding
Antonio Munion
Aaron Curtis Neeb

Councillor Ward 3, Usborne (1 to be elected)

Darren Boyle
Paul Passmore

The following municipal office was acclaimed: Deputy Mayor, Jim Dietrich

The following school board trustees were acclaimed:

English Public, Marnie Van Esbroeck
English Separate, Graham Keys
French Public, Rachid Barrima
French Separate, Michael Salvatore

For more information, visit the municipal website: www.southhuron.ca or contact the election team at vote@southhuron.ca or 519-235-0310

Alex Wolfe, Clerk
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Exeter block party promotes inclusiveness and community



(MACKENZIE HODGINS PHOTOS)

The community was invited to spend an evening together on Sept. 16 during the Hey Neighbour! Exeter Block Party at the South Huron municipal office parking lot. Organized as a Welcoming Week event in Huron County, the family-friendly street party featured yard games, lawn bowling, music and more. Huron County recognizes Welcoming Week each year, organizing events aimed at bringing the community together and offering opportunities for newcomers meet their neighbours and create new connections. Lina Ali was getting creative as she painted Angela Cabrera's face.



Huron County Library Exeter branch manager Tanis VanderMolen and Neal Shakyaver of the Cultural Collective were in attendance with information about various programs and groups in the community.



South Huron fire chief Jeremy Becker and deputy chief Mike Herbert were speaking with attendees about fire safety and the importance of having functioning smoke alarms.

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At Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Huron, our mission is to enable life-changing mentoring relationships that ignites the power and potential within young people. While mentoring may sound simple, the impact can be truly BIG. We connect children and youth with caring, screened and trained volunteers through three core programs: Traditional Mentoring (One-to-one mentoring relationships), In-School Mentoring (a mentoring relationship that occurs one hour each week with a young person at their school) and Big Bunch (A group-based program that gives children and youth opportunities to build friendships, develop confidence and experience new activities and adventures). Our support extends beyond our mentoring programs. Throughout the year, we help families and young people access food supports, birthday assistance, Christmas activities, extracurricular activities, camps, community experiences and more.

We proudly serve children and youth throughout South Huron, Lambton and Middlesex Counties, including Ailsa Craig, Bayfield, Brucefield, Centralia, Clinton, Crediton, Dashwood, Egmondville, Exeter, Grand Bend, Granton, Hensall, Holmesville, Huron Park, Lucan, Parkhill, Seaford, Vanastra, Zurich and surrounding areas. In 2025, Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Huron served 154 children and youth, supported by 74 dedicated volunteers.

Research has found that every \$1 invested in Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring generates approximately \$23 in social and economic value. But the greatest return can't always be measured in dollars. It's a young person who feels heard. A child who gains confidence. A youth who discovers they can achieve more than they thought possible. A volunteer who makes a difference simply by showing up. Because sometimes, having one person in your corner can change everything.

Upcoming Events

Join us for one of our upcoming fundraising events and help support life-changing mentoring in our community. Harvesting Hope continues online with our auction at 32auctions.com/HarvestingHope2026, where you can browse, bid and support local youth. The auction closes Sunday, September 27th at 8:00 p.m. Join us for our Quarter Auction on Thursday, October 8th, for an evening of fun, prizes and fundraising. Our popular Christmas

Shopping Event returns as a two-day craft and vendor show on Saturday, November 7th and Sunday, November 8th, from 9:00am to 3:00pm at the South Huron Recreation Centre. Looking ahead, watch for our online 50/50 fundraiser coming in November. In November, also keep an eye out for our Adopt a Child trees at local businesses. Choose a tag, purchase a gift and help make the Christmas season a little brighter for a local child or family.

Whether you attend an event, place a bid, purchase a 50/50 ticket or support a family at Christmas, your support helps us continue providing meaningful mentoring relationships and opportunities for local youth.

Support our Work

It takes a community to create lasting change. Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Huron relies on the generosity of grants, local businesses, sponsors, individual donors, service clubs, fundraising events and proceeds from The Little Shop. We receive no core funding from our National Office and only limited program-specific government funding for our school-based programming. That means local support is essential to help us continue meeting the needs of the children, youth and families we serve.

There are many ways you can make a BIG difference: Make a tax-deductible donation, sponsor one of our events or programs, donate an item or experience for our fundraising auctions, shop or consign at The Little Shop, volunteer your time and help spread the word about our programs. Every gift, every purchase, every volunteer hour and every act of support helps us create more opportunities for young people to thrive.

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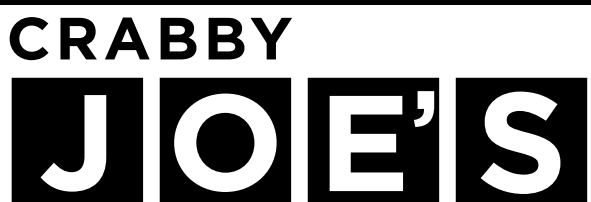
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Walks in the Woodlot continue into the fall

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

Fall is in the air, so don't miss out on a chance to learn about seasonal happenings in nature Oct. 3 from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. or go for an owl prowling Nov. 28 with local naturalist and educator Denise Iszczuk of C.O.R.E. Nature Experiences.

Sawyer Preservation Woodlot Association has partnered with C.O.R.E. Nature Experiences to provide free guided tours of the woodlot throughout the year.

"The woodlot has so much to see any time of the year. In the spring, families enjoyed exploring the forest by looking for frogs and wildflowers. I am looking forward to guiding visitors through the woodlot this fall while we learn how to identify trees, search for bugs, listen for birds, prowling for owls," said Iszczuk.

Autumn in the Woodlot takes place Oct. 3 from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. During this 60-minute family-friendly walk, discover the sights and sounds of the woodlot in autumn.

Explore the changing forest as we look closely at the trees, listen for birds, search for fascinating bugs and uncover the hidden world of mushrooms. Along the way, learn how to identify common trees and discover why trees — and all the plants and creatures that depend on them — are so important to a healthy forest.

On Nov. 28 there are two different 45-minute prowls, with one family-friendly one beginning while it's still light outside at 5:30 p.m. and the other beginning at 6:30 p.m. Together we will quietly prowling woodlot trails while listening carefully for the distinctive call of the Eastern Screech Owl. Learn about owls, their fascinating adaptations, and what makes them incredible night time hunters. Discover nature at night and hopefully see these nocturnal birds of prey hidden among the trees of the woodlot.

Registration is not required for these walks. Come ready to explore, ask questions, and enjoy the beauty of the woodlot as it comes alive with the colours, sounds and surprises of fall.



(C.O.R.E. NATURE EXPERIENCES PHOTO)

Two exciting events are coming to the Sawyer Preservation Woodlot in October and November where attendees can take in the sights and sounds of nature.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation recognizes local land trusts with Decade Award

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) has presented a Decade Award to honour the work of local land trusts. The award, for the 2010s decade and beyond, is presented during ABCA's 80th anniversary year (2026). It recognizes the work of local land trusts stewarding the gifts of generous and forward-thinking donors. This is the eighth of nine awards ABCA is presenting this year.

Recognized, with the award, were:

- Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT)
- Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy (HTLTC)
- Lambton Wildlife Inc. (LWI)
- Nature Conservancy of Canada.

A ceremony to announce the award was held, Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2026, at TTLT's Joany's Woods property.

Dave Marsh, vice chair of the ABCA board of directors, thanked land trusts and donors.

"Thanks to your boards, your volunteers, and the foresight and generosity of your donors, you are leaving a local land legacy of nature and habitat preservation for today and for generations to come," he said.

Nathan Schoelie is ABCA's acting general manager and secretary-treasurer.

"Land trusts are strong partners in conservation," he said. "We share common goals with land trusts and their vision is complementary to the work of conservation authorities like ours. Our work together strengthens the abil-

ity of land trusts, conservation authorities, and donors to protect natural spaces for future generations. We are honoured to present this Decade Award, during our 80th anniversary year, to the land trusts working in this watershed."

Land trusts are non-profit, charitable organizations that acquire land or interests in land (like conservation easements) for the purpose of conservation, access to nature, and community connection. They protect and care for these lands and conservation easements for future generations.

Daria Koscinski is executive director of Thames Talbot Land Trust.

"Thank you for this award on behalf of TTLT staff, volunteers and donors," she said. "We are thrilled to be recognized and to share this honour with the many landholders who have chosen to work with us to create lasting nature legacies. It's a pleasure to work within a collaborative conservation community with other land trusts, conservation authorities, and other partners committed to conservation. Together we are making a big difference for future generations."

Roberta Buchanan is a volunteer with Lambton Wildlife.

"Lambton Wildlife Inc. is honoured to receive this recognition of its longstanding commitment to conservation and protection of nature," she said. "LWI is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year, and we are proud to be part of the broader nature community. LWI is dedicated to working collaboratively with other nature organizations to protect and enhance natural environments in Lambton County."



(AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION AUTHORITY PHOTO)

ABCA recognized the work of land trusts working in the area with a Decade Award during ABCA's 80th anniversary year (2026). From left are ABCA board vice chair David Marsh, Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy chair Kerry Teskey, Roberta Buchanan and Pete Chapman of Lambton Wildlife, Thames Talbot Land Trust conservation director Lily Vuong, Thames Talbot Land Trust executive director Daria Koscinski and ABCA acting general manager and secretary-treasurer Nathan Schoelie.

Kerry Teskey is chair of the Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy.

"On behalf of the HTLTC board of directors, I would like to thank ABCA for having recognized the importance of the work of local land trusts with this award," he said. "Our permanent preservation of important natural areas is only possible thanks to the generosity of the visionary people who leave lasting local land legacies through donations of land and endowments. I would also like to thank all the people in the community who donate to the work of your local land trusts."

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SPORTS

Gord Jr.'s win Middlesex championship



(BRIAN HODGINS PHOTO)

Gord Jr.'s had plenty to celebrate after becoming champions in the Middlesex Mens Slo Pitch league championships. The championships were held from Sept. 9-12 in Exeter and Lucan, and the team went on an undefeated run throughout the tournament. In the final, Gord Jr.'s upset the first-place Ailsa Craig Wildcats, walking away with the win after a close 10-8 match.

Hit Talkers take South Huron championship



(BRIAN HODGINS PHOTO)

After a strong season of baseball, the Hit Talkers are this year's South Huron Ladies Slo Pitch League champions. The league held its year end tournament from Sept. 10-12 in Exeter, bringing local teams together to compete. The Hit Talkers went undefeated over the weekend, edging out the HC Hammers in the final 14-8 to claim the title.

Maureen Cole
FOR MAYOR

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(DAN ROLPH PHOTOS)



Huron Perth Flag Football is back for its 2026 fall season. Young athletes played the first games of the season on Saturday, Sept. 5, at Exeter’s community soccer fields. Huron Perth Flag Football offers weekly co-ed games in the spring and fall for children aged six to 17. Pictured are Cohen Cassone and Tyler Truckle as they play during the first game of the season.



Eagles player Clayton Impens on the offensive during the Sept. 5 start of the season.



Vincent Hamilton rushes for a touchdown.



Leigh Steenbeek and Roman Savoini prepare to catch the ball as referee Cohen Skinner and Jasper Eilers watch from the sidelines.



Cleomarie Holden reaches to grab a flag from an opposing player.



Ridley Cresswell jumps for the football as Luke Brouwer comes up from behind.

Exeter Hawks topple Thamesford in home opener



Jonas Schmidt lines up the game winning goal during the Exeter Hawks' home opener Sept. 11 against the Thamesford Trojans.

DAN ROLPH

Editor

The Exeter Hawks started the 2026-2027 season of hockey on a high note after coming out on top of a matchup against the Thamesford Trojans Sept. 11 at the South Huron Recreation Centre in Exeter.

Exeter's Trey Taylor was first on the scoreboard with a goal for the Hawks at 9:12 in the first period, assisted by Chase Wedlake. Hawk Blake Jankovich was next on the board at 11:56 in the second period, though Kyle Dolmage of the Trojans replied with Thamesford's first goal of the night about a minute later.



(MACKENZIE HODGINS PHOTO)

Exeter's Sam Consitt looks for an opening in the Thamesford defence in the Sept. 11 home opener at the South Huron Recreation Centre.

Without just over five minutes remaining in the second frame, Jonas Schmidt scored a third goal for the Hawks. With Connor Clark scoring one more for the Trojans at 3:19 in the third period, the home opener was wrapped up with Exeter ahead 3-2.

The Hawks went on to host the Petrolia Flyers in Exeter Sept. 18 in a high-scoring matchup. Exeter held a commanding lead in the first period with three goals, and though the Sailors started chipping away at that lead in the second period, the Hawks continued their scoring to counter Petrolia's attempts at evening the odds.

By the final buzzer, the Hawks were ahead 10-6, in part thanks to a hat trick from Jonas Schmidt, who had a strong five-point game.

Coming off two wins, the Exeter Hawks travelled to Parkhill on Sept. 19 to play the North Middlesex Stars.

Though the first frame was goalless, the Stars hit the ground running in the beginnings of the second period with

a short-handed goal. Exeter's Harrison Meulensteen replied about five minutes later on the power play, tying the game, but the Stars' Noah Vandenburg was successful on the power play at 11:35.

With just over 30 seconds left in the period, Exeter's Justin Skirten tied the match, assisted by Trey Taylor and Chase Wedlake.

The third period started strong for the Hawks with Jayce Durand pushing Exeter ahead with a goal at 15:04, but with five minutes left in the match, the Stars evened the scoreboard again.

But an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty against Exeter's Ty Wheeler made the opening for the Stars to push ahead as Vandenburg scored the night's final goal on the power play, bringing the match to a close with North Middlesex winning 4-3.

The Exeter Hawks are scheduled to play the Petrolia Flyers at the Greenwood Recreation Centre Sept. 24 and will host the Aylmer Spitfires Sept. 25 in Exeter.

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Lucan Irish lose home opener against Petrolia, drop two following games



The Lucan Irish Six are back for another season of hockey in the PJHL's West Yeck division. The Irish hosted the Petrolia Flyers at the Lucan Biddulph Community Memorial Centre on Sept. 12 for Lucan's first home game of the season. Pictured are Cameron Davidson of the Petrolia Flyers and Lucan Irish forward Kevin Waters during the Sept. 12 home opener in Lucan.

DAN ROLPH

Editor

The Lucan Irish Six stepped onto the ice Sept. 12 at the Lucan Biddulph Community Memorial Centre for their first regular season home game since the team's relaunch, going head-to-head with the Petrolia Flyers.

The teams traded shots throughout the match, but it was Petrolia who climbed their way onto the scoreboard first with a goal at 7:38 in the first period.

The Flyers held the one-goal advantage through the remainder of the first period and a goalless second. With Petrolia racking up a second goal at

0:49 of the third period, that wrapped up the scoring of the night with the Flyers skating away with a 2-0 shutout against the Irish.

Though the scoring was lopsided, the Irish edged out the Flyers on shots, 36-34.

The Lucan Irish continued to work to find their footing as they hit the road Sept. 19 to face off with the Thamesford Trojans.

That matchup put the Irish defence to the test as the Trojans bombarded them with 23 shots on goal in the first period, though Lucan held on and denied every attempt.

But the Irish's luck started to shift in the second period after the Trojans secure two goals on the power play. From



(DAN ROLPH PHOTOS)

Lucan's Sean Whelan presses the attack against the Petrolia Flyers on Sept. 12.

there it was all Thamesford as they scored five more goals by the end of the third, wrapping the game up 7-0 in the Trojans' favour.

The Irish were back in action Sept. 20 as they took on the 2025-2026 West Yeck division champions, the Mt. Brydges Bulldogs, in Mt. Brydges.

The Bulldogs matchup was action-packed from the start, with Mt. Brydges scoring three goals in the first period. With less than three minutes to go in the first, Lucan's Matthew Rutledge put the Irish on the board, pushing into the second frame 3-1.

The second period saw the Bulldogs continuing their scoring spree with four more goals while denying the Irish another of their own.

With Colton Henderson of the Lucan Irish scoring at 4:15 in the third period, the final buzzer blew with the Bulldogs ahead 7-2.

After a challenging 2025-2026 season in the Provincial Junior Hockey League's West Yeck division, the Irish's former board of directors announced earlier this year that the team wouldn't be renewing its PJHL membership.

However, a new board of directors was brought on board to guide the team's first steps into a new era for the 2026-2027 season.

The Lucan Irish are scheduled to play against the Port Stanley Sailors in Port Stanley on Sept. 25, followed by an encore matchup against the Sailors in Lucan on Sept. 26.

BACK IN TIME

30 Years Ago

September 25, 1996 - Fern Dougall of R.R. 3, Exeter has received a special pin and certificate from the Ontario Heritage Foundation for her efforts in completing the Usborne Township history book, "Between the Fences."

At the recent banquet of the Exeter Minor Soccer group, Nick Fragiskatos received the Scott Hasselback Memorial award as an outstanding coach.

40 Years Ago

September 24, 1986 - The owner of one of Hensall's largest employers with a current staff of about 35 is leaving the village. Agripress president Adrian Bayley said this week his firm is merging with Associate Designs of London to form a single London based advertising agency.

Melissa Moore was named Queen of

the 1986 Exeter Fall Fair, succeeding Sherry DeBoer. Winning Queen titles in the Homemaking Division were Marylou Thomson, Cathy Norris, Mary Ruston, Ann Delibridge, Josie Ryckman and Darlene Lynn.

55 Years Ago

September 24, 1971 - Benson W. Tuckey, president of Guenther-Tuckey Transports Ltd. announced Wednesday that he has sold his local trucking firm. New owners are Laidlaw Motorways Ltd. of Hamilton. Mr. Tuckey will remain as general manager of the local operation and said business would continue as usual with no employer or operational changes.

There was no surprise at Friday's Progressive Conservative nomination meeting in Goderich as Hon. C.S. MacNaughton was named the party's candidate in the Huron riding for the provin-

cial Oct. 21 election.

65 Years Ago

Members of the Trivitt Memorial Anglican Church choir reported thefts of \$5 and several wallets during the special "Prayer for Peace" service Sunday night.

A London police official will give Exeter officials and merchants advice on methods of preventing robberies at a special meeting Thursday night.

70 Years Ago

September 24, 1956 - Married women teachers have stepped into the breach and saved South Huron school from a critical shortage of instructional staff. Inspector John Goman said that nearly 75 per cent of the lady teachers in the area are married.

William Moody, road superintendent in Usborne Township for 23 years cele-

brated his 90th birthday at the home of his daughter Mrs. Stanley Coward.

Four new teachers are joining the staff of SHDHS this year. They are Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Perry, Miss Heather Goldstein and Mrs. Andrew Dixon.

80 Years Ago

September 26, 1921 - The garage of Graham Arthur was broken into and a quantity of cigarettes and cigars stolen.

105 Years Ago

September 24, 1896 - The apple crop in this district is so large that many farmers have had to prop up their trees to keep them from breaking. There are two evaporating institutions here, besides nearly every second farmer has a small plantation of is own. Thousands of dollars worth of apples are wasting on the trees.

COLUMNS

BANKER BILLY GOSSMAN: From a family of 15, he settled for 10 of his own



BOB HEYWOOD

Examiner Columnist

Anyone who grew up in this area and is over sixty years old should remember “Banker” Billy Gossman. When he passed from this life to the next in October 1967, he earned a colourful and commemorative editorial in the Exeter Times Advocate. At the top of the page is the picture of a stately gentleman with a full bushy beard and penetrating kind eyes, dressed in a three-piece suit complete with a cane and a stylish bowler hat pulled down over his forehead. His lips are pursed with a forced tight smile, like he’s thinking, “Can we get this over with so I can tell you another corny joke.”

Times Advocate Editor Bill Batten started his story in this way: “Most communities have a well known ‘character’ in their midst, but there are few which could boast of having a more colourful one than Bill Gossman, who died last week in South Huron Hospital.” Bill was born on Feb. 16, 1891, in Dashwood (although his usual answer was that he was “born in a bed.”) He was one of fifteen children in the mostly German village where his father operated a dry goods and grocery business. Having 14 siblings, he and his brothers who lived at home were expected to get a job and to give their parents all their earnings until they were 21 years old. Bill recalled while working for as low as 25 cents per day, the Gossman parents clothed and lodged them and gave them a small allowance. He recalled when he was a youngster, he and some of the other lads were given 25 cents each to go to the Zurich fair. They walked both ways, paid their 10 cent admission, had plenty of fun and still had enough money to take some candy home. He never lost his love of a country fair as he often could be seen on the midway and viewing the displays at the Exeter Fall Fair into the 60’s, usually in his suit and bowler hat.

As soon as Billy turned 21, he struck off on his own and made his way to London where he landed a job in a cigar box factory

owned by the venerable London industrialist, Sir Adam Beck. His congenial personality earned him an opportunity to do some personal gardening at Sir Adam’s residence. Being of German heritage, he recalled once that he offered to make some sauerkraut for his boss. He cooked it himself since the chef didn’t know how. “They almost chased me out of the house but Sir Adam really enjoyed it, and the cooks even ended up cleaning up the rest of it.”

Following his stint in London, Banker was drawn back to the area, settling in Grand Bend. It was in the resort village that he became somewhat of an icon amongst the vacationers. For close to 30 years, Billy operated seasonal shops or booths, selling “soup to nuts” or anything that would turn a buck. He became one of the first sidewalk concessions on Main Street, offering hot dogs and hamburgers, and honing his comedic style with each customer. In a 1962 interview with the T.A., he quipped that he had become “somewhat of a big shot in Grand Bend.” Some seasons he had several booths in different parts of the village and for a time operated a six-table pool hall in the building which later housed Mrs. Ravelles’ gift shop.

Batten’s article continues that after his years in Grand Bend, Billy returned to London where he worked as a handyman and a gardener. The family home burned to the ground one day, after which he decided to buy a house in Dashwood, where he had started out in life. There he and his wife and children grew Dutch set onions, and he peddled fresh fish up and down the concessions. As a lad I remember him driving in our lane in an old vintage car with a large wooden box attached to the car’s frame at the back. As he drove in, he was hollering “fresh fish, fresh fish,” turning around at the barn and heading back out the lane. If mom or dad failed to appear, he just kept going out to the road to visit the next farm. I remember the big box being full of ice pieces and some of the biggest fish I had ever witnessed. I suppose his bushy beard and his jokes and riddles endeared his visits to many kids throughout the years.

Billy had only met his wife to be on one occasion before he sailed overseas to England with the 96th Regiment during the First World War. Shortly after landing in Europe, he wrote a letter addressed to Mabel Geiger, Breslau Ontario. In it he proposed to her, which she

accepted, writing back to him that “they would raise chickens and geese and something else.” Bill reported to the Exeter Times “that something else was children and we raised 10.” Mabel must have been a remarkable and patient lady. When the editor asked if his nickname “Banker” was owing to the fact that his business ventures had left him well off, which many people felt was the case, he replied that “raising 10 kids don’t leave you much to be rich with.” He then explained that as a youngster he swept the floors of a private bank in Dashwood, owned by Joseph Snell. It was that early boss who had dubbed him “Banker Gossman.”

At one point he had taken a job as a flag man with a construction company where he tripped, receiving a nasty blow to the head. Billy spent six weeks in each of the two hospitals in London and then six more in the Toronto Compensation Hospital. The article went on to explain that it hadn’t changed his sense of humour. Apparently, he reported to a nurse one day that he had spotted a bed bug in his roommate’s watch. “He got in between the ticks,” Bill reported to the doctor who was almost ready to start a major extermination process. Another joke he used often while serving up hot dogs in Grand Bend, was as he handed the food to a patron, he would tell them to eat it quickly so they could head down the street to see the horse with the wooden leg.

“There’s no way! You have to be kidding. Whereabouts is it?”

“It’s down there, three blocks on the other side of the street, standing on the merry-go-round.”

In later years, Billy started selling raffle tickets for any organization that would enlist his services. Apparently, he carried a clipboard and customers could take their choice of up to a dozen different draws with prizes ranging from cars to boats, animals to cash money. Strathroy Lion’s Club heard of his sales prowess and enlisted him to take their contest on. He sold eight hundred books of tickets receiving 25 cents a book for payment. Not bad for the man who had worked hard for 25 cents a day in his early years. He himself won a large cache of groceries, a bedroom suite and a four-slice toaster which may have all been better used earlier when he was raising his brood of 10 children.

An article that was in the London Free Press in 1958 report-

ed that Banker Bill had over the years taken the time to see more of Canada and U.S. than most of us would ever hope to see. Many of his trips across Canada and to the United States were made in vintage automobiles like the old Model T from which he peddled his “fresh fish.”

The London Free Press writer wrote: “One man who hasn’t heard of today’s high cost of travel is Dashwood’s inimitable and irrepressible Billy Gossman, a character with a far flung reputation.” Banker had recently returned from a 3,000-mile trip to the west coast and he was pleased to report that it had only cost him \$25. His formula for cheap travel was the fact that he was ready and willing to strike up a conversation with anyone he happened to meet. After he broke the ice with a simple and often silly joke or riddle, he would pull out a 20-pound scissor sharpener from a leather carrying case. He quipped that the Westerners had never seen such a contraption. He would go up and down the streets knocking on doors and plying his trade. He left Dashwood on July 2 behind the wheel of his 1950 Dodge, but it wasn’t until he reached Tobermory that he sharpened his first set of scissors. The travelling entrepreneur stated that he charged “75 cents and down, depending on how rich they are. Women in big homes will pay me 75 cents like nothing at all, but sometimes for poor people I do it for nothing. They usually give me a free meal.”

As usual his stockpile of anecdotes broke the ice with even “the wealthiest tourists in the ritziest resorts.” His favourite, of course was, “have you seen the horse with the wooden leg?” Now being in Alberta, his quick reply to their query as to where this special horse was, rolled off his tongue for the one thousandth time. “Why it’s at the Calgary Stampede, on the merry-go-round.” Banker went on to tell the Times Advocate about the time he entertained a crowd of tourists at the chair lift in Banff.

“There was a lot of fancy dressed people around and nobody was saying anything. So I steps up to an old lady and asked her if they grew strawberries where she came from? ‘Oh yes’, she replied ‘I have a big patch in my own garden’ to which I asked her what she put on them. She replied ‘manure and fertilizer.’ I told her that I always put cream and sugar on mine. All the fancy



(JACK DOERR PHOTO)

A photo of Bill Gossman

people laughed.”

Once Billy arrived at his son Kenneth’s home in Lethbridge, he parked his Dodge and hitchhiked his way to the Pacific coast. He drank in the beautiful scenery, expressing that everyone should see the Takakkaw Falls, 1,345 feet high in Yoho Valley, B.C. He also stated that he had never been so scared as he was on the chair lift in Banff, stopping half way up and swinging in mid air “sweating like a horse.” The boat trip across the Juan de Fuca Strait to Vancouver Island was

highlighted when he went up to the captain and told him he would sure love to tell his friends back in Ontario that he had the pleasure of driving the ship. The ship’s pilot stepped aside and let Banker fulfil his wish. At the Calgary Stampede, he was approached by a fellow wearing a hat and sunglasses. It wasn’t until he removed them that he realized it was his friend from Exeter, Percy McFalls.

Bringing hundreds of postcard scenes into the TA office, showing the places and scenes that he had visited, one picture was of the Lower Spiral Railroad Tunnel at Field B.C. which was five miles in length. Instead of paying the fare, he reported that he “climbed aboard a flat car, crawled under a bulldozer and went all the way through.” I guess that constituted one more “stroked out line” on Banker Gossman’s bucket list. When the TA reporter asked him if there was any chance of him borrowing Billy’s scissor sharpener so he could duplicate the journey, the quick answer came, “Sure but you have to take me along.” One rumour that I remember hearing as a lad was that Banker had purchased a property (perhaps the Dashwood Hotel) and paid the full price in coins, probably derived from his concession stands in Grand Bend. I have not been able to substantiate that feat. Another well repeated rumour concerning him was that

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

one time he actually drove all the way to Florida with no motor in his car. He confessed the story was simply an embellishment of the fact that he had once made the trip from Wingham to Exeter without turning on his motor. He explained that a tie-rod was broken and he kept asking passing motorists to push him to the nearest gas station. How-

ever, when he arrived at the next station, he waited until they had gone and then he would shove the car back out onto the road himself and repeat the request as he flagged down the next willing "pusher."

Throughout Billy's life, he often sported a full beard making him the perfect "stand in" for Santa Claus at parades and gatherings near and far. At the time of his 1962 interview with the lo-

cal paper, he had just walked off with the top prize for the shaggiest beard in a centennial celebration in Yale, Michigan. Whenever he headed out to one of these contests, his good wife, Mabel, would curl his shoulder length hair into a neat roll and tuck it under his hat. His signature fedora in turn supplied him with another of his often-repeated jokes. When anyone commented on his hat, Billy would quickly take it

off and hold it to his admirer and ask, "Do you know where I got this hat.?" "No" — "Well I got it off the top of my head" came the quick reply as he planked it back on its perch and walked away.

Bill Batten finished his memorial editorial in 1967 with the following paragraph: "While Banker may not be rich by monetary standards, all who meet him know he's had a rich life — one that has been lived by the use of

his wits to provoke people who can't think fast enough to know 'do you know how do they make ice in Florida, well they freeze water' or that 'no one has ever really seen a sausage hanging 'up' in a butcher shop because they all hang down.'"

His name and his exploits often appeared in newspapers and even a time or two on radio and television. Thanks for the memories, Billy Gossman!

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



JUDY FINKBEINER JOHNSON

Examiner Columnist

It is Christmas Day 1886 and young William D. Lee has received a diary. With beautiful penmanship, he will faithfully make entries every single day of 1887, the year he turns 21. William came to America from Belfast, Ireland, five years ago and hasn't been back since. He works in a shipping-related business and is living in a boarding house in Brooklyn, New York. William will marry and father my husband Barry's Aunt Betty, married to his Uncle Robert Johnson known as Bill, the nickname for William, his middle name.

No family or friends were privy to Betty's age. All learned with surprise that she was a good number of years older than her husband from her pastor's eulogy at her funeral. I think I now know why she was so secretive, from her father's diary.

Cannon and diaries

Barry has a cannon that Bill made in university while studying engineering. His brother John, later Barry's Dad, lived in the Johnson hometown of Niagara Falls; he made the gunpower. Bill and John often fired the cannon by Horseshoe Falls, until that

fateful day when it misfired, creating a wound that left a lifetime scar on John's forehead. He escaped injury even after serving as an engineer in the Second World War in Europe, narrowly escaping death while part of a unit detecting mines on a Belgian roadway before Allied troops travelled on it to take the strategic seaport of Antwerp. The men wore headgear/earphones that masked sound except for mine alerts. When John looked up from the road, he realized he was now alone. His comrades were in ditches at the roadside, yelling and gesturing at him to take cover because the road was under fire, ambushed by German soldiers.

I treasure four diaries of Betty's father, written in his twenties before he became Rev. Lee. They have opened a window into understanding more about this rather mysterious accomplished woman with a less-than-tactful demeanour.

Quiet farewell

The last time I saw Betty, she and Bill were celebrating a milestone anniversary in their home, still as smitten with each other as newlyweds. There was a frailty and an unusual quiet vulnerability about her that day. While we chatted, I believed I was seeing Betty who had dropped that brittle mask. She was saying goodbye to me, without uttering the word.

As always, this attractive little lady was impeccably dressed and coiffed as she received guests in her living room. Above the piano she played very well there was a large oil paint-

ing of small children in splendid attire, early generation family members from Belfast, Ireland.

Hello William Lee

Writer's note: Spelling and abbreviations are reproduced as written in the original diary.

Diary entry, Saturday, January 1, 1887: Determined to keep a diary but am afraid it will be like keeping a new umbrella.

William's handwriting is beautiful, written in ink with not a single correction. This is a careful gentleman.

Tuesday, January 4: Worked as usual and in the evg went with Belle and a party of friends tobogganing to Washington Park. It is novel fun greatly exciting and Belle and I enjoyed ourselves. Went down the slide six times. Got home 11:45.

Mmm. Belle. Tell me more. (Toboggan slides were stories high and wildly popular!)

Saturday, January 8: Met Miss A and took her home.

What about Belle, William?

Sunday, January 9: We have a regular old-fashioned snowstorm. Went to prayer meeting and church in the morning and S. School in the afternoon. Went with Belle and John to our church. Saw Miss A.

Wednesday, January 12: Today I

became a man my 21st birthday. Received congratulations from many. Mr. and Mrs. K gave me a beautiful dressing-case. Their kindness I hope I fully appreciate.

Only 21 William! I am sad that on this important day, you are far from your family, friends, and your homeland and haven't been able to see them for five years.

Monday, January 17: Went to Y. People's prayer meeting. Saw Miss A. but was much disappointed in not going home with her. Got knocked out by another fellow. Think I am a regular duffer.

(Duffer: stupid person, fool.)

Saturday, January 22: Wrote Papa to-day that I had determined to go home in April. Perhaps Belle will not go. Hope she will.

Sunday, January 23: Attended five services. Went to Dr. Guyler's in the morning and in the evg. With Belle to Beachers. Saw Miss A. and asked her out for Wednesday which she accepted.

William, what are you thinking? A day after hoping Belle will go with you from New York to Belfast you are asking Miss A. for a date?

Tuesday, January 25: In the evg. Belle told me her age 27. How badly she and I felt as that was the decisive point.

Wednesday, January 26: Went with Miss A. to the Y.M.C.A. and spent a

very pleasant evg. She is very agreeable and nice.

William, doesn't seem like you are spending a long time moping about the revelation of Belle's age! Wonder why those six years are a dealbreaker in your era. Is this why the daughter, Elizabeth known as Betty, who you will have in the future doesn't divulge her age to anyone?

Sunday, February 13: Saw Miss A. asked her out for Tuesday. She consented. Belle feels quite vexed.

No wonder Belle is often vexed now William. You two are "singing from a different hymnbook".

Monday, February 14: Received one comic valentine "a dude" from Belle.

(Translation of dude in the 1800s: a dandy, man who tried to dress like high society European gentlemen, but just looked too flashy.) Ouch, I call that a "zinger" William. Are you starting to get the message? Belle isn't just "vexed," in today's slang she is "pissed off!"

William writes of his work which is involved in a store associated with shipping. Weather is splendid or wretched. He often expects a letter from home and is very disappointed when it is late coming. His life is busy with church on Sundays, Y.M.C.A. entertainments, the gymnasium, lectures, and dinner at different homes. Miss A. is still in the picture, centre frame. But so is Belle, on the edge.

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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Why the world comes to Stratford



PAUL KNOWLES

Examiner Columnist

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

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

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

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

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

The answer to the second

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

And I find the information about where these people come from to be very interesting. Helena told me that my question about country of origin was not something she has seen before, and that she was intrigued by the data she accessed through the online ticketing system. She called the findings, “interesting and inspiring”. I agree.

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

After that, Helena shared the list in alphabetical order. People came to Stratford from Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Japan, Malawi, The Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, New Zealand, Panama, Peoples' Republic of

China, Portugal, Qatar, Singapore, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sweden, Spain, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom.

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

plays.

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

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

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

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

I don't know about you, but when I see that dreaded slip of white paper tucked into the play brochure, announcing an understudy, I feel let down.

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

You might think that the Tempest – Shakespeare's final play written solely by the bard – and Something Rotten, a musical written only a decade ago – would have nothing in common. Essentially, that's true. Except for the whole understudy thing. Because again, when we saw this terrific musical, one of the



(DARIANE SANCHE PHOTO)

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

lead roles – Portia – was played by an understudy. And again, Michelle Bardach, stepping into the role, was amazing. No offense intended to the usual actor, but I can't imagine a finer portrayal of the character.

Something Rotten is actually “something unusual”, in that it was presented at Stratford only two seasons ago. But it's back and I'm glad – it has become one of my favourite musicals ever. The entire cast is terrific (including the astonishing dancers, put through their paces by the great Donna Feore, who both directed and choreographed the play). And I confess a special affection for Dan Chameroy, who plays the entirely outrageous Nos tradamus, and my friend Steve Ross, whose Shylock comes to a much better end than Shake-

speare ever imagined.

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

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

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



(DARIANE SANCHE PHOTO)

Members of the company performing one of innumerable, amazing song-and-dance numbers in “Something Rotten”.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The classic Festival Theatre.

MENTORING MATTERS: The power of being there



AMY WILHELM

Examiner Columnist

This September, Make Life Bigger for a young person. What can a Little bit of your time mean to a young person? More than you might think. It takes as little as one hour a week to help a child gain the confidence to achieve more.

For a young person navigat-

ing school, friendships, family, their future and everything in between, having someone like you in their corner can change what feels possible for them. A Big Brother or Big Sister doesn't need to have all the answers. They just need to be there. To listen. To encourage. To show up. To help a young person believe that their ideas, experiences and future matter.

And the impact of that connection reaches far beyond a single moment. Every \$1 invested in Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring pays society back \$23 in social and economic value. With the support of our volunteers, donors and partners, Big Brothers Big Sisters has positively im-

pacted more than 31,000 young lives across Canada this past year. Here at home, Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Huron has served 154 children and youth, supported by 74 dedicated volunteers. Together, we are helping young people build confidence, develop meaningful relationships and realize their full potential.

"I became involved as a Big Sister just over a year ago, and have thoroughly enjoyed my match with my Little Sister," said Big Sister Nicole. "Our relationship has always felt very natural and I feel that we both have many common interests and personality traits, making our friendship easy-going!"

"I wondered for a while during the first six months of our match if she was enjoying the match as much as I was. It became clear to me that I am a positive person for her and someone she feels she can trust as she has been able to open up to me. The smile on her face and the eagerness in her voice when I pick her up is evidence to me that she is enjoying our match, and our friendship."

"I sometimes wonder if I am getting more out of the match than she is. I have always desired to be a positive influence in her life, and I have to say, she is a positive influence in my life too. I truly feel that we will remain lifelong friends, beyond the extent of our match. It has become

evident to me that the best way for me to support her through life's journey is by continuing to be a positive encouragement, consistent mentor and listening ear."

This Big Brothers Big Sisters Month, we're celebrating the people who choose to make room for mentorship and the young people whose lives are made bigger because of it. Whether you become a mentor, support mentorship in your community, or help spread the word, there's a place for you in this movement. A Little Moment. A Big difference. Reach out to find out how you can get involved, and Make Life Bigger for a young person.

LIVING RETIRED: Flying Pants



BY GARY CHALK

Examiner Columnist

When Jan and I go on a vacation that involves flying, I wing it: I don't wear pants. I don't like it, Jan loves it; but she has no skin in the game. On our recent trip to the British Isles this is how my problem pants went down...

"Jan, have you seen the pants you got out for me to wear on the plane?"

"Gary, what do you mean? You are wearing them."

I looked down at myself. I didn't see pants. All I saw was a plethora of pockets! There were the usual two front pockets. But below those two front pockets were two more, larger pockets. These pockets had zippers. AND, below those pockets down beside my knees were two more pockets — even larger, with more zippers. That was SIX POCKETS just on the front — no wonder I couldn't see my pants! The pockets continued with the usual two back pockets, these had Velcro closures. And, you will never guess what's inside all of these pockets: smaller hidden pockets!

I wasn't buying it. "Jan who is kidding who? I am wearing pockets that are sewn together to make it look like a pair of pants. Don't try to tell me these are pants. These are not pants,

they are pocket pants."

"Gary, those pants are made specifically for traveling. They are casual, comfortable, and lightweight. They won't crease sleeping on the plane. You look good in them. And besides when we take excursions off the cruise ship you need to have places to put stuff."

I shrugged and put my hands in my pockets. Well, I tried. There are so many pockets I didn't know which pockets to put my hands in. Unfortunately, I started at the two front pockets with Velcro. It was like trying to get my hands into Fort Knox — IMPOSSIBLE. I couldn't rip the Velcro open!

Next, I tried slipping my hands in the pockets with zippers down beside the knees. Guess what? You need both hands AND hold your leg at the right angle AND drop every-

thing in your hands to finagle the zipper open!

I wouldn't give up. Finally, I got my hands in the two front pockets that have no closures. But this is where I realized that these pockets had smaller pockets in them. I didn't like the feel of my hands inside pockets that were inside my pockets. Jan stared at me in disbelief. "Gary, what are you doing with your hands in your front pockets? You're moving them around — well let's say it you shouldn't be doing what you're doing."

Two hours later Jan and I were at the airport about to go through security. It's a bottleneck of travellers hoisting carry-on luggage into bins on a moving conveyor belt. Everybody is asking two

questions: "Do I have to take my iPad out of my backpack?"

and "Do I have to take my shoes off?" This when it happened...

"Please remove everything from your pockets." OMG!

Here is what my pocket pants produced: passport, pen, pencil, paper, paperclip, pills, and pocket lint. I was peed off!

On the other side of the metal detector, I gathered the plethora of pocket paraphernalia into my pocket pants.

Here's the thing: my travel pants have almost as many pockets as my suitcase has zippers. Don't get me started.

Living Retired is written by Gary Chalk and published throughout Canada and USA. To receive Living Retired by email each week, or to book Gary to bring his unique sense of humour to your service club, corporate event, or retirement party contact Gchalk@me.com

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SOUTH HURON COUNCIL BRIEFS

JOHN MINER

Examiner Reporter

South Huron in a lame duck period

South Huron council is now considered a "lame duck" under provincial rules that restrict what a council can do during an election period. The lame duck status is triggered when 75 per cent of the current council might not be re-elected. All of the six council positions in South Huron have been contested by two or more candidates. Council is restricted until Nov. 14 from appointing or removing from office any officer of the municipality; hiring or dismissing any employee; disposing of any real or personal property of the municipality with a value exceeding \$50,000; and making any expenditures

that exceed \$50,000.

Council start time kept at 6 p.m.

Updating its procedural bylaw, South Huron council has voted to keep the start time for regular council meetings at 6 p.m. There had been suggestions that the time should be moved to 5 p.m. The updated bylaw also specifies that council meetings are a maximum of three hours long, but may be extended for an hour with unanimous agreement of all members.

Graders needed quick repairs

Two out of South Huron's three road graders were knocked out of commission during spring grading, requiring immedi-

ate repairs. One grader required a remanufactured rear axle that cost \$70,612.94. The other grader needed the transmission repaired for \$55,895.39. The two repairs used up 71 per cent of the equipment maintenance budget for South Huron's transportation services department. In a report to council, transportation services manager Jeff Wolfe said equipment maintenance will be over budget in 2026 but the overall spending is trending close to budget and is being managed closely.

South Huron looking at property sale

There are no public details, but South Huron council has been considering the sale of a piece of property. After meeting in a closed session for a half hour on Aug. 10, council voted 5-2 to proceed with Op-

tion 1 as outlined in a staff report. No other details were provided and the report remains confidential. Municipal clerk Alex Wolfe advised in an e-mail that Option 1 relates to the disposition of land.

Construction values up in second quarter

The value of construction in South Huron in the April to June period was substantially higher than in the same period a year ago, according to a building department report. The total construction value reached \$17.9 million compared to \$12.6 in 2025. House construction led the way with \$8.7 million worth in the second quarter, followed by \$3.6 million of new agricultural construction, and \$2.6 million of new commercial construction.

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KINGMA / DENOMME

Thank you for your kindness during this painful time. Your support brought us comfort as we grieve our daughter, Denise.

Special thanks to my husband Harry, son Darryl, Michelle and Kobe; my sisters and all the staff at the South Huron Hospital. I would also like to thank my coworkers and customers for all the cards, donations, food, flowers and sympathy. Special thanks to Haskett Funeral Home's Allyson and Noah.

Your kindness will be remembered

Sharon and Harry Kingma



Johnson

In Loving Memory of
our precious son, uncle
and brother, Cody.
Taken from us suddenly,
17 years ago
on September 19, 2009

Missing You

We are missing you a lot more
each time we hear your name.

We've cried so many tears
yet our heart's broken just the same.

We miss our times together
things in common we would share.

But nothing fills the emptiness
now that you are no longer there.

We have many precious memories
that help to get us through.

Each one of them reminders of how
much we are missing you

Love you so very much,
Forever and Always,
Mom, Dad, Jake, Liam & Emily
XOXOXO.

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Musical storytellers play fall concerts at Bayfield Town Hall

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

Two compelling singer/songwriters from Yoruba and Mohawk cultures are bringing their music to Bayfield Town Hall this fall.

Kunlé — Saturday, Oct. 3, at 7 p.m.
Award-winning artist Kunlé is a Nigerian-born, Toronto-based singer, composer, and multi-instrumentalist whose work draws from Yoruba storytelling, folk traditions and global music. His songs feature a powerful interplay between vocals, talking drums, and fingerstyle guitar—brought to life through dynamic performances.
Supported by a top-notch five-piece ensemble, Kunlé’s Town Hall concert will feature material from his June 2026 release *The Journey* — a masterful sophomore album that seamlessly fuses West African folk storytelling with soul, roots, and contemporary guitar work. Moving seamlessly between Yoruba, Pidgin, and English, his songs balance cultural depth with a soulful, contemporary sensibility.
Accomplished in music and theatre, Kunlé’s stage credits include a 2024 Dora Mavor Moore Award for outstanding production, a nomination for outstanding sound design and composition for Soulpepper Theatre’s “Three Sisters,” and a 2022 Premier’s Awards

nomination for music director, composer and performer in Stratford Festival’s “Death and the King’s Horseman.”
Logan Staats — Saturday, Nov. 7, at 7 p.m.
Logan Staats hails from Six Nations of the Grand River, and has earned a reputation as one of Canada’s cultural tastemakers, a land defender and one of our premiere storytellers. He pairs gritty and compelling songwriting with raw, authentic and high energy performances that electrify audiences. Weaving his way through folk, rock, roots and Americana music, Staats’ powerful voice has become a fan favourite across Canada and around the world.
Recent highlights include performing for 18,000 fans at the Los Angeles Forum for Life is a Carnival: A Musical Celebration of Robbie Robertson, along with Eric Clapton, Mavis Staples and Van Morrison. Staats was also interviewed for the accompanying documentary, directed by Martin Scorsese. Other recent performances include the Juno Awards, Massey Hall, Mariposa Folk Festival, Calgary Stampede, CBC Music Festival and the Canadian National Exhibition.
Tickets are available at bayfieldtownhall.com.
ing kirktonvetclinic.com.



(BAYFIELD TOWN HALL HERITAGE SOCIETY PHOTO)
Nigerian-born and Toronto-based singer Kunlé will be performing at Bayfield Town Hall Oct.3.



(DANNY SHUMOV PHOTO)
Logan Staats, a musician from Six Nations of the Grand River, will bring his raw and authentic performance to Bayfield Town Hall Nov. 7.

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Riddles

What is the richest nut?
A cash-ew!

Why did the fruit salad skip its own wedding?
It had a lot of can't-elope!

What kind of beer won't get you tipsy?
Root beer!

What kind of poultry is always going to the bathroom?
Chick peas!

Why did the citrus tree go to the hospital?
Lemon-aid!

You cut me, slice me, dice me, and all the while, you cry. What am I?
An onion!

What kind of apples do computers prefer?
Macintosh!

What has many ears but cannot hear?
Corn!

I'm a bird, a person, and a fruit.
What am I? A Kiwi!

I'm the father of fruits. What am I?
A papa-ya!

What vegetable always loses in every competition yet is a terrific rapper?
Beets!

What vegetable can you use to tie your shoelace?
A string bean!

Sudoku

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

Solutions on pg. 30

Pet of the Week 🐾 🐾 🐾

Enjoy a safe and happy fall with your furry family members!

Autumn brings new hazards for pets, including mushrooms, antifreeze, rodenticides, and seasonal decorations. Keep harmful items out of reach and supervise pets during outdoor adventures.



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MARSHALL & WENDELL

Marshall and Wendell are once again our Pets of the Week as they continue looking for their forever home. Marshall is 7 years old, while Wendell is 3. They are described as “wonder boys” with lots of love to give. Both Marshall and Wendell are available for adoption from Heavenly Hills in Lucan, ideally as a pair. For more information, contact heavenlyhillsadopt@gmail.com.



Nominate your pet to be a Featured Pet by emailing info@exeterexaminer.com

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SEPTEMBER

RECURRING SEPTEMBER PROGRAM EVENTS 2026

THURS. JULY 16 - SEPTEMBER 10 AM - Mourning Walking Group - STARTING JULY 16 TO SEPTEMBER Grief can feel heavy and isolating. Mourning Walking Group starting July 16. MacNaughton-Morrison Trail, 68 Hill St., Exeter. Every Thursday at 10 a.m. Dates: July to September. Duration: 1 hour. Registration required. Grace ggough@jes-sicashousehospice.ca or 519-235-0941.

MON & THURS. 8:45-9:45 AM MEDIUM Low Impact Aerobic Exercise - that includes cardio, strength, & flexibility exercises. Community Room GBACHC. cmaxfield@gbchc.com

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

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

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

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

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

THURSDAYS 9:30-12PM Early On program free program for adults with children birth to 6 years. Adult Day Wing,

GBACHC. Optimist Park until October , then moves inside Adult Day at GBACHC. Contact earlyonchildcare.ca or 519-786-6161 x 9226.

THURS. SEPT, 3RD 2:30PM - Coping with Grief” Adult Day wing GBACHC. Join this monthly group for support and strategies to work through your grief. Contact Mickey Gurbin ggurbin@gbchc.com for more information.519-2382362 x 223

FRI. SEPT. 11,18 & 25 - Vinyasa Yoga and Chair Yoga GBACHC in Community room. Vinyasa at 8:30am, Chair at 9:45 am. Contact cmaxfield@gbchc.com Wed. 10-11:00 am Sept 16 “Walk & Talk Hensall Arena” Contact Grace at gbon-nett@gbchc.com . Fun social walking program with coffee and chatting to finish

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

OCTOBER

FRI, OCT. 2ND - 2 - 7:30 PM & SAT, OCTOBER 3 - 8:30 AM - 12 PM - South Huron Hospital Auxiliary Fall Rum-mage Sale - Cash sales only and please bring your own bags. *Donations accepted Thursday Oct 1, 2026 7 AM to 8 PM.* For more info find us on facebook or buy and local buy and sale sites or call 519-235-1900.

FRI. OCT. 2ND 6:00PM - 9:00PM AND SAT. OCTOBER 3RD 9:00AM - 12:00PM. Apple Day for 1st Exeter. Youth will be at various businesses in Exeter handing out apples and collecting optional donations.

OCT. 4TH - 9th Annual Murray’s Miles. Mark your calendars. We proudly remain the only event in Canada to raise much needed funds and awareness for esophageal cancer. MacNaughton Park, Exeter Ontario - Insleystrong@gmail.com 519-719-1088

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

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

SAT. OCT. 24TH 10:00 A.M - 2:00 .P.M. Harvest Market Fundraiser - MARK YOUR CALENDERS! Shop for home baked goods, assorted jams jellies and preserves, farm fresh produce, seasonal handicrafts and holiday décor as well as a selection of gently used household items looking for a new home. Something for everyone! *Hosted by Exeter-Hensall United Church 42 James Street Exeter 519-235-0860 exeterunitedchurch@gmail.com*

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

NOVEMEBER

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

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QUIZ ANSWERS

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

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SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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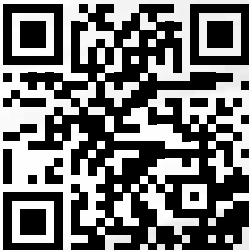
PHOTO QUIZ ANSWER

ANSWER:
Tree Swallow

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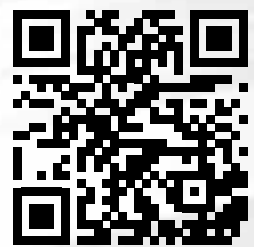
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ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR
EXETER CHAPTER #222

BBQ Half Chicken Dinner

Sunday, Oct 18, 2026

Prepared by Pineridge Barbeque Co.
Served by Exeter Eastern Star Members

Includes: homemade potato salad, creamy coleslaw, Pineridge
baked beans, roll & butter, Jumbo Soft Cookies

TAKE OUT ONLY - \$25 PER MEAL | ADVANCE TICKETS ONLY

Pick- Up Time: 4-6 p.m.
Exeter Masonic Hall, 248 McConnell St. , Exeter, ON

FOR TICKETS CALL:

Jeanie 519 235 1588 | Cathy 519 236 4134

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All collectibles including sports cards, beanie babies, Funko pops and stamps.
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Exeter Examiner
NEWSPAPER

Ask the
Arborist



By Joel Hackett • 519.272.5742 • jtsquote@gmail.com

Joel Hackett is a certified Arborist residing in the St. Marys area. Currently,
he spends most of the year running Joel's Tree Service. For contact call
519.272.5742 or email jtsquote@gmail.com

Dear Arborist,

I recently contracted someone to do
my trees, and its been a while have not
heard from them. Should I follow up or
just find someone else. Is it normal to
have a long wait.

Thanks

T

Dear T,

I would definitely recommend
following up. There has been a

number of bad

storms. Tornado touch downs, and
high winds. There is a lot of damage
from the storms. Trees falling down,
broken, mangled, on houses, and
across driveways.

Naturally this kind of work gets
prioritized, as it needs dealt with
right away.

Sincerely

The Arborist

Overheard
At McCafé

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"It's the time of
year where
Toronto Maple Leafs
fans start to feel
hopeful and alive."

"Great to see high
attendance at
Terry Fox runs
across the
country."

Have you heard something humorous around town that you think might be of interest to others?
Either email them to us at info@exeterexaminer.com with the title
"Overheard at McCafé" or call 519.655.2341.



South Huron Hub

September 24, 2026

South Huron Recreation Programs

- Youth Indoor Soccer Skills Program
- Youth Intro to Volleyball
- Youth Badminton
- Dashwood Coffee, Cards & Checkmate
- Tiny Tots Playtime
- Shuffleboard
- Parents Night Out Program

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

Fall Hydrant Flushing

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

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

If you have any questions or concerns, please call 519-235-0310 ext.230

October Blood Donor Clinic

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

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

Important Dates

Monday, October 5th

Regular Council Meeting
6:00 PM (EST)*

Monday, October 19th

Regular Council Meeting
6:00 PM (EST)*

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

South Huron Votes 2026!

South Huron's municipal election is this October. If you are an eligible voter, please take a few minutes to confirm you are on the voters list by contacting the municipal office at 519-235-0310x0, email vote@southhuron.ca, or drop into Town Hall at 322 Main Street South, Exeter, or one of several voters helpdesk popup locations (list of dates/times and locations are available on the [municipal elections page](#) at [SouthHuron.ca](#)). Even if you have voted in previous municipal elections, we encourage you to confirm as this is the first municipal election where Elections Ontario has compiled the information for the voters list and we want to ensure everyone eligible to vote gets on the list.

Voter Information Letters, which provide information on how to vote in the upcoming election, will be mailed out the first week of October.

2026 - 2027 Public Skating - begins Sunday September 20th

Exeter Arena

Sunday: 11 :00 AM - 11 :50 AM

Tuesday: 11 :00 AM - 11 :50 AM

Thursday: 11 :00 AM - 11 :50 AM

Stephen Arena

Monday: 4:00 PM - 4:50 PM

Wednesday: 4:00 PM - 4:50 PM

Please note there will be no public skating on the following days: October 12, November 22, December 6 & January 24

MUNICIPALITY OF SOUTH HURON

322 Main Street South, PO Box 759, Exeter, ON N0M 1S6

PHONE: 519-235-0310 • FAX: 519-235-3304 • TOLL FREE: 1-877-204-0747

WEBSITE: www.southhuron.ca

Building Services ext. 6

Community Services ext. 222

Transportation, Roads ext. 230

Water & Wastewater, Landfill ext. 230

Afterhours ext. 7