

The Paris Independent

Issue #234

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(CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTO)

Pictured is team 'Always a Bridesmaid and Never a Bride,' at the Paris Legion's 4th Annual Chili Cook Off on March 7th. Left to right, Derrick Ostner, Heidi Ostner, Kelley McPate and Kieran McPate.

Things heated up at the Paris Legion's 4th annual Chili Cook Off

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

A little heat and a lot of community spirit filled the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 29 on Saturday as the 4th annual Chili Cook Off drew a steady stream of taste testers eager to crown this year's champion.

The popular event followed a simple format.

Guests paid \$5 admission and received three tickets to sample each contestant's chili and vote for their favourites by dropping their tickets into a bowl.

This year, eight teams competed for bragging rights and the coveted chili title.

Finishing in third place for the second year in a row were LuKas Oakley and Steve Howes with their Paris Meat Lovers Chili, based on a

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Firefighters face off on ice for hospice fundraiser

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

Firefighters from two County of Brant stations will trade hoses for hockey sticks later this month as the Paris Fire Station and Airport Fire Station square off in a friendly charity hockey game in support of Stedman Community Hospice.

The fundraiser takes place March 29 at 3 p.m. at the Twin Pad Arena (Gurney Pad), with admission set at \$5, and all proceeds going toward the hospice, which provides compassionate end-of-life care for patients and families across the Brantford-Brant region.

While the cause is serious, the rivalry on the ice promises plenty of spirited competition.

Airport Station enters the matchup as the defending champion, after defeating Paris in front of a packed crowd last year. Unofficial team captain Shelby McDonald says the win wasn't luck.

"It was a perfect blend of calculated skill and strategic conditioning," McDonald joked. "While we'd love to say Paris just had a wardrobe malfunction with their skates, the truth is we simply outworked them."

Paris Fire, however, is determined to change

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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Family recipe takes top prize at Paris Legion's 4th Annual Chili Cook Off

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

recipe created by celebrity chef Ted Reader.

The Paris councillors said the recipe featured locally sourced ingredients, including beer from Paris Beer Co. and beef from what they jokingly described as a "top secret" producer. The chili was also smoked at Oakley's home.

Expecting strong demand, the duo prepared a double batch this year to avoid selling out.

Both Oakley and Howes said the event drew an enthusiastic crowd.

"Anything that brings people out to discover this great legion is a win," said Howes.

Second place went to the cleverly named "Always a Bridesmaid Never a Bride" team, consisting of Derrick Ostner, Heidi Ostner, Kelley McPate and Kieran McPate — a nod to their runner-up finish for the third year in a row.

Their entry featured a white bean turkey chili made with three varieties of white beans and three types of peppers, using all-natural gluten-free ingredients.

"Every year we change the recipe. Last year it was Haggis," said Kieran.

"Everyone's recipe is totally different, and they are all really good. I don't know how people vote," he added.

Taking first place in their debut year were Paris residents Carrie and Vince McCrum with a chili called "No Team All Heat."

The winning recipe was inspired by a cherished family dish.

"We come to the legion often for other events and I saw this pop up and I thought this is something I can do," said Carrie. "I noticed the event was happening on my mom's birthday, so I thought I'm going to enter with her recipe."

March 7 would have been Isabelle Kaduk's 103rd birthday. She passed away at age 95, but her recipe lives on and now has a championship title to its name. Carrie described the chili as a classic old-school recipe, proving that sometimes the traditional approach still wins.

Other entries added their own creative flair to the competition.

Jennifer and Andrew Spencer took what they called a "12 trick approach," searching online for the top 12 chili chef recipes and selecting the most unique ingredients from each to combine into their pot.

Jennifer described the effort as a "Hail Mary," though taste testers seemed to enjoy the result.

The Paris-Brant Kiwanis Club returned to the competition again this year, serving their chili alongside a custom-made hot sauce created by Kiwanis member Tim Risebrugh.

Christine Garneau and John Bisailon entered a Texas-style smoked brisket chili that sold out within a couple of hours. The pair moved away from last year's tur-

key-based recipe and also showcased a selection of sauces sold at their business, Creek View Acres Nursery & Orchard on Johnson Road. The sauces are produced using rescued fruit that might otherwise go unharvested.

Derek and Carol Gibbons also returned for a second year with their entry titled "It's Not Your Mother's Chili."

"We want to help the Legion make some money and give back to the community," said Carol. Both are Legion volunteers and members.

Legion president Barry Humphrey said he was pleased with the turnout.

"It's been a good day. People started rolling in at 12 pm and it was standing room only," he shared.

While Humphrey admitted he had his favourites among the recipes, he wasn't willing to spill the beans.

All proceeds from the event support the Legion's building renovation fund. The organization hopes to raise \$100,000 and is currently nearing the \$15,000 mark.

Planned improvements include installing a stairlift to the upper level, new carpeting in the front foyer and stairways, a second-floor bathroom and bar, electrical upgrades, and renovations to a storage room and hallway.

Ultimately, Humphrey said the Legion is also looking toward the future.

While the current building, steeped in nearly a century of history, has served the organization well, the long-term goal is to secure a new home that is more accessible for everyone.



Derek and Carol Gibbons, featuring 'This is Not Your Mother's Chili.'



Members of the Kiwanis Club of Paris-Brant, left to right, Darian Banks, David Tisdale, Wendy Gallagher and Wendy Eveleigh.



Bringing home a third place medal again, are Paris Councillors Steve Howes and Lukas Oakley, dishing out some Paris Meta Lovers chili.



(CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTOS)

Carrie and Vince McCrum, of Paris, entered for the first time and took home the top honours with Carrie's family recipe, passed down by her mother, Isabelle Kaduk. The McCrum's won the cook off on what would have been Isabelle's 103rd birthday.



Christine Garneau and John Bisailon served up a Texas-style, Canadian made chili featuring smoked beef brisket.



Jennifer and Andrew Spencer pulled out a hail mary of recipes featuring 12 secret ingredients.

Paris Fairy Godmothers stitch together nearly 40 years of giving

EMMA BOWMAN

Paris Independent Contributor

As a group founded in 1986, the Paris Fairy Godmothers have been a quiet but powerful force, providing schools, nursing homes and organizations such as the Children's Aid Society, Pregnancy Centres, Why Not Youth Centre and Friendship House Brantford with warmth and care.

The group of 22 godmothers — and a few godfathers — meet once a month at Mary Maxim to show and tell their “Hot Off the Needles” creations, which range from Afghan blankets, sweaters and baby boots to hats and mitts, doll clothing, socks and shoulder shrugs for seniors' homes.

Gathering their balls of yarn for many rounds of knitting, they work hard each year to donate approximately 2,000 items to these establishments. This year alone, their donations included five bags of finished products for the Paris Christmas Baskets program.

The group reaches out to communities across the County of Brant and beyond. This year's donations included schools in Paris, Brantford, Cambridge and Delhi, as well as nursing homes such as St. Joseph's Lifecare, Delhi Nursing Home and Telfer Place. In the past, the Godmothers have also donated to hospitals in cities such as London and Hamilton.

In 2000, the group extended their compassion as far as Iqaluit, Nunavut, donating numerous handmade goods to a boarding home in the Baffin Island region.

Rhonda Garnier, a retired principal with



Pictured in a 2019 newspaper article: A group of volunteer knitters and crocheters meet monthly at the Mary Maxim store in Paris displaying articles that will be donated at Christmas. Shown above are some of the knitters — back row, from left, Sue McAuley, Kathy Haggert, Connie Boone, Liz Vego, Gavin Brewer, Sandra Guille, and Pat Brown. Front row, from left, Gigi Walker, Lynda Faladown, Louise Howells, and Susan Taylor.

the Grand Erie District School Board, shared that “mitts are one of the most needed articles of clothing in the winter months for schools.” Because of the cold temperatures and wet snow, she added, “kids always need hats and mitts.” Louise Howell, one of the Fairy Godmothers, agrees. When dropping off donations to an elementary school in October, she noted how students were already wearing mittens due to the chilling weather

Like most Fairy Godmothers, they act as helpers and guardians, providing comfort

for the greater good.

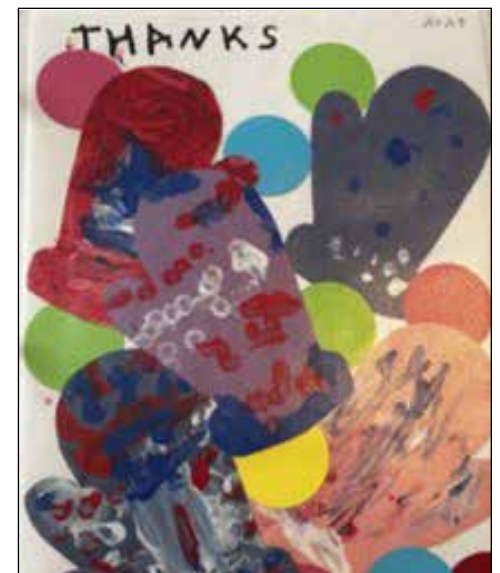
Working with yarn and needles generously donated to the group, Pat Brown, one of the organizers and a Fairy Godmother, says, “donations are always gratefully received.”

Mary Maxim alone donated multiple containers and bags of yarn — received with great joy — providing the knitters with valuable materials for larger projects. Many items, such as toddler sweaters, require at least three or four balls of yarn to complete.

Many of these patterns are skillfully remembered by heart and include fun designs and colours for their wearers.

The group not only brings warmth to the community, but has also created a bond of its own. For nearly 40 years, members have bonded over knitting and their shared desire to help others.

For their hard work and dedication to our communities, the Fairy Godmothers deserve heartfelt thanks for the warmth and care they provide. They now look forward to celebrating their 40th anniversary together.



The Godmother's appreciate all the “Thank-yous” and gratitude that their recipients send them; they are always kept and filed away in a scrapbook - especially one's from the elementary schools and senior homes.

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County of Brant, GRCA, and City of Brantford partner to sustain environmental education at Apps' Mill Nature Centre

MEDIA RELEASE

The County of Brant and the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) are working toward an agreement to transfer ownership of a 4.5-acre parcel of GRCA land within the County that includes the Apps' Mill Nature Centre.

At the same time, the County, the City of Brantford and the GRCA are developing an operational agreement that would allow the GRCA's long-running Environmental Education Program to continue at the site.

The partnership aims to maintain established school programs while creating new opportunities for municipal programming and jointly delivered initiatives at the nature centre.

For more than 50 years, the GRCA has delivered environmental education programs to people of all ages at five nature centres across the Grand River watershed. Currently, three of those centres operate on dedicated, standalone properties, including the Apps' Mill Nature Centre in the County of Brant.

Established in the early 1980s, Apps' Mill welcomes more than 6,000 elementary and secondary students each year, in addition to community groups who take part in hands-on outdoor learning experiences designed to promote environmental awareness and stewardship.

Review of environmental education program

In response to amendments to the Conservation Authorities (CA) Act and operational disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, GRCA staff undertook a comprehensive review of the Environmental Education Program.

Changes to the CA Act altered how the program is funded. Under the amendments, the program must operate without municipal funding unless a formal funding agreement is in place.

In October 2023, GRCA staff presented the review to the GRCA Board. The review focused on ensuring strategic alignment, improving financial sustainability and strengthening integration with other GRCA programs and services.

One recommendation was to relocate programming from standalone nature centres to fee-for-use conservation areas to improve operational efficiency. Further discussions were recommended regarding the future of the three standalone facilities.

In November 2023, the GRCA Board directed staff to continue discussions with municipalities, school boards and other interested organizations about potential funding arrangements and future opportunities for those facilities, including the Apps' Mill Nature Centre.



Apps' Mill Nature Centre in the County of Brant has been welcoming students for hands-on outdoor learning since the early 1980s. Each year, more than 6,000 elementary and secondary school students visit the site to explore forests, streams and trails while taking part in environmental education programs that promote stewardship of the natural world.

Agreement in principle reached

Those discussions have since led to an agreement in principle between the County of Brant and the GRCA for the transfer of the Apps' Mill Nature Centre and approximately 4.5 acres of surrounding land to the County.

The proposed operational agreement between the County, the GRCA and the City of Brantford would support the continued delivery of the GRCA's Environmental Education Program for schools at the site. It would also create opportunities for municipal and jointly delivered programming.

"The GRCA is immensely grateful for the collaboration and support of the County of Brant and the City of Brantford. The transfer of ownership and the operational agreement will not only help ensure the continuation of the GRCA's environmental programs for local students at the Apps' Mill Nature Centre but will also provide new program opportunities for municipal residents," says GRCA Chair John Challinor II. "This shared approach builds on the strengths of each partner and ensures the long-term sustainability of valued programming. We look forward to working alongside the County and City to ensure a smooth transition."

"The County of Brant is proud to be part of the future of the Apps' Mills Nature Centre. This beloved location has served not only Brant residents, but neighbouring communities for decades," says County of Brant Mayor David Bailey. "We thank the GRCA and the City of Brantford, this opportunity to partner reflects the positive impact that collaboration can achieve. We are also grateful to GRCA staff, who will continue to deliver programming through their expertise and commitment to environmental stewardship, ensuring local students can experience the unique character of the Apps' Mills Nature Centre for generations to come."

"The City of Brantford is proud to work alongside the GRCA and the County of Brant to support the continued operation of the Apps' Mill Nature Centre and its popular and impactful educational programs," says City of Brantford Mayor Kevin Davis. "This collaboration will help ensure students and families can keep enjoying meaningful outdoor learning experiences, while also presenting new programming opportunities for our community. We value this partnership and look forward to what it will continue to make possible for residents across both municipalities."

Approvals and next steps

The transfer and operational agreement were approved by County of Brant Council on February 24, 2026, and by the GRCA Board on February 27, 2026.

The operational agreement was approved by the City of Brantford's Committee of the Whole on March 3, 2026, and will go before Brantford City Council for final consideration at its March 24, 2026 meeting.

If approved by City Council, municipal and GRCA staff will proceed with finalizing the land transfer and implementing the operational agreement.



Proposed land transfer outlined/shaded in purple. Lands outlined/shaded in green are not included in the transfer and will continue to be managed by the GRCA.

Ready for a **Spring Refresh?**

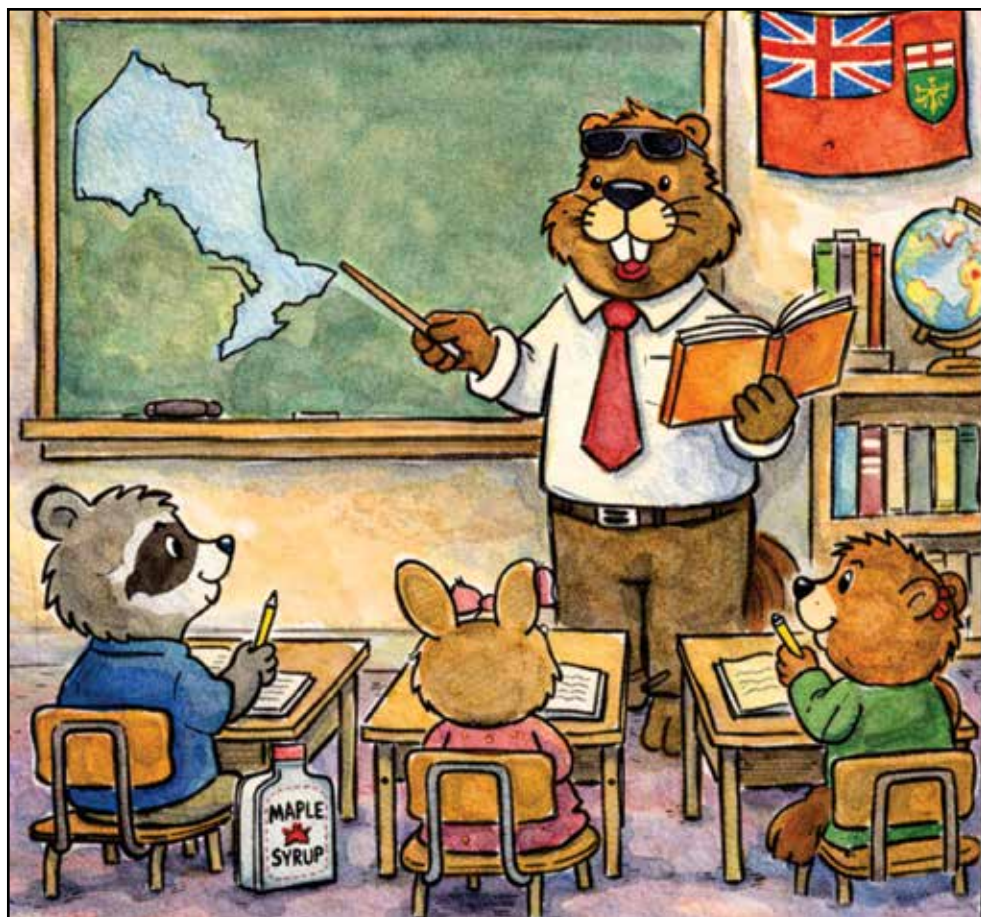
- ... just need a colour suggestion or two?
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EDITORIAL

Investing in the Future Means Investing in Education



Buster Beaverton knows the value of a good education.

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

A crowd gathered in Harmony Square on March 3 with a clear message for the province: Ontario's public education system needs reinvestment.

Parents, students and education workers came together in Brantford to speak about the pressures they say are building inside classrooms across the region: larger class sizes, fewer supports and aging schools struggling to keep up with growing enrollment.

Whether one agrees with every statistic or argument presented at the rally, the underlying question it raises deserves serious attention: what kind of future are we preparing for our children?

Education is not just another line item in a government budget. It is the foundation on which our communities, our economy and our democracy are built.

And right now, many families feel that foundation is under strain.

Across Ontario, public schools are funded primarily through the province using a formula called the Grants for Student Needs, which distributes funding to school boards based largely on enrollment along with additional grants for specialized programs. The province spends roughly \$14,000 to \$15,000 per student each year, a figure some analysts say demonstrates strong investment in the system.

But many educators and school boards argue that while spending may appear substantial on paper, it has not kept pace with

inflation, rising operational costs and the increasingly complex needs of students. Some estimates suggest Ontario schools have experienced more than \$6 billion in cumulative funding pressure since 2018 when inflation and enrolment growth are taken into account.

For families, the debate over spreadsheets and funding formulas often feels far removed from daily reality.

What we see instead are crowded classrooms where teachers are doing their best but have less time for individual students.

For many children, the need for that attention has never been greater.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted learning for years. Students spent long stretches learning from home, and educators across the province continue to work to close those gaps. Recovery takes time, patience and resources, particularly for students who require extra help or specialized support.

Larger class sizes make that work harder.

Students who need extra guidance can struggle to get it. Teachers are expected to meet a wide range of learning needs with limited support staff. Educational assistants, mental health professionals and specialized services such as speech and language support are often stretched thin.

Parents are feeling the strain as well.

Many families now find themselves helping supply classrooms with basic materials. Teachers frequently rely on parent donations to stock items such as tissues, disinfecting wipes and other everyday supplies. Schools are holding more fundraisers

than ever to generate some extra cash for programs.

Extracurricular activities, once a hallmark of school life, are also becoming more complicated. In some cases, schools no longer provide transportation for tournaments or sporting events. Parents and caregivers are left to coordinate rides, which can unintentionally exclude students whose families may not have the flexibility or resources to help.

At the same time, many schools are aging. Ontario faces a massive infrastructure backlog, with billions of dollars in repairs needed across the system. Meanwhile, communities across the province, including areas like Brant County and Brantford, continue to grow.

The province has spoken often about building new homes to address Ontario's housing shortage. But new communities need more than roofs and roads. They require schools, teachers and classrooms where the next generation can learn.

You cannot build a million homes without also building the infrastructure that supports the people who will live in them.

Schools already bursting at the seams cannot simply stretch further.

As a parent with two children currently in elementary school, I see these pressures firsthand. Teachers continue to show re-

markable dedication to their students, often going above and beyond what their roles require. Education workers step in wherever they can to support children who need help.

But dedication alone cannot replace resources.

Investing in education is not about politics. It is about priorities.

A strong education system prepares children for the workforce, supports innovation, strengthens communities and ensures equal opportunity. Underinvestment today carries consequences that last decades.

The students sitting in Ontario classrooms today will be tomorrow's nurses, tradespeople, entrepreneurs, teachers and community leaders.

They deserve classrooms where teachers have the time and support to help them succeed. Ontario has built a strong public education system over generations. Maintaining and strengthening that system requires consistent investment and thoughtful planning. The rally in Harmony Square may have been one small gathering in one community.

But the concerns raised there reflect a conversation happening across the province. If Ontario truly wants to invest in its future, the place to start is clear.

Invest in its children.

Letter to the Editor

Who Has the Right of Way When Parallel Parking?

Dear Editor:

I recently had to run an errand downtown in Paris during rush hour. I sat in line for about 2 minutes because the light which was the distance of the entire downtown area was red. When it turned green, I started driving looking for a parking spot. One was available in front of Pizza Pizza. I put my signal on and pulled up to the car in front of the empty spot in order to back into the empty spot.

Well, all traffic behind me passed me and I was not able to parallel park. I just sat in the one driving lane waiting for someone to stop so that I could parallel park my vehicle. It was not until the light turned red again that someone

finally stopped to let me park. So, if I had continued in my attempt to park my vehicle I would have been hit. Vehicles passing me were in my lane and the oncoming traffic lane.

My question is this. Who actually has the right of way here? Is it okay to pass someone who is trying to park their car on a parallel parking street? If the car swings out to get into their parking spot and they are hit by the car behind them who would be responsible? I am never in a hurry, so I don't mind waiting but I think this is going to become more of an issue if drivers don't understand how this works.

- Diane Didrichsons | Paris, Ont

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Classic Lightfoot Live bringing legendary songs to #ForParisCentre stage this month

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

Fans of Canadian music will have a chance to relive the timeless songs of Gordon Lightfoot later this month when Classic Lightfoot Live brings its acclaimed tribute performance to Paris.

The theatre-style concert, set for March 28 at #ForParisCentre, celebrates the music and storytelling of one of Canada's most influential songwriters. Audiences can expect to hear many of Lightfoot's best-known classics, including *Rainy Day People*, *If You Could Read My Mind* and *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald*, along with lesser-known tracks from across his more than 20 studio albums.

Led by vocalist John Stinson, the show has been touring Ontario theatres for more than a decade, recreating the sound and spirit of Lightfoot's recordings with remarkable accuracy. Stinson, a Toronto native who has been performing for more than 30 years, developed a deeper appreciation for Lightfoot's music after befriending two of the singer's longtime guitarists — Red Shea and Terry Clements — who helped shape the distinctive sound heard on many of Lightfoot's recordings.

The band itself has unusually close ties to the Lightfoot legacy.

Bass player Steve Eyers is Lightfoot's nephew, the son of Gordon's sister Beverly, while the show's music director, Bob Doidge, produced several of Lightfoot's later albums at Hamilton's Grant Avenue Studio.

Those family and professional connections give the performance an authenticity that sets it apart from many tribute shows.

For Paris resident Jeff Maue, those connections are also deeply personal.

Maue helped orchestrate the band's upcoming stop in Paris and shares a family link to the legendary songwriter.



(CLASSIC LIGHTFOOT LIVE PHOTOS)

Steve Eyers, nephew of Canadian music legend Gordon Lightfoot, performs with the Classic Lightfoot Live tribute band. Eyers, who grew up immersed in Lightfoot's music, plays bass in the group.

er. His former mother-in-law, Beverly Eyers, was Gordon Lightfoot's sister and for a time managed his career during the 1970s.

Despite Lightfoot's worldwide fame, Maue said the man he encountered at family gatherings was far removed from the public spotlight.

"At family gatherings, which were usually for holidays and birthdays at Gord's sister Bev's house in Barrie, he was simply 'Uncle Gord,'" Maue said. "He was always kind and polite and very welcoming to me and to my son Adam when he was born."

Although Lightfoot's songs are now woven into the fabric of Canadian music history, Maue admits he wasn't originally one of the singer's biggest fans.

"The funny thing is when I first met his niece Jane, who I later married, I wasn't really a Lightfoot fan," he said. "I was more into rock, blues and country, but of course I knew who he was."

It wasn't until Maue began attending concerts that the magnitude of Lightfoot's impact became clear.

"His Massey Hall concerts are legendary, and the fan support I witnessed was remarkable," he said. "Even when we saw him in Sudbury the whole building was buzzing, spiritual almost."

Over the years Maue also gained glimpses of the music legend's world behind the scenes, visiting Lightfoot's Tudor-style home in Toronto's Rosedale neighbourhood and hearing stories about gatherings that once included artists such as Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan and actor Jack Nicholson.

Seeing the piano and guitars where many of the iconic songs were written left a lasting impression.

"All the behind the scenes stuff was quite insightful for me," he said. "So yeah, I became a fan."

Maue also brings his own musical background to that appreciation. A songwriter and longtime musician, he spent years writing songs and radio jingles in Toronto and remains a member of the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN). His career later expanded into marketing, but music remained a constant, including performing and playing alongside Lightfoot's nephew, Steve Eyers.

"I am very proud of Steve and this band," Maue said. "With regards to Gord's songs, he has been playing them since he was a kid and can now play them blindfolded. It's in him."

Maue and his son saw the group perform last fall at London's historic Aeolian Theatre and were impressed with how faithfully the musicians captured Lightfoot's sound.

"They hit every note and John Stinson sounds very much like Gord," he said. "These are lifelong professional musicians who know the music inside and out."

Perhaps most significant, the band performed with Lightfoot's blessing, which something Maue says speaks volumes.

"Gord was very detailed and meticulous about every aspect of production and performance," he said. "To have his blessing does not get any better."

For Maue, bringing the show to Paris was also about showcasing a community he has come to love.

"I've been living here and in the surrounding area for over 25 years and it's one of the greatest communities I've ever been part of," he said. "The support for arts, sports and people in need is really impressive."

He believes #ForParisCentre is the perfect venue for a concert celebrating one of Canada's most iconic musicians and is a hidden gem in the community that deserves the kind of attention the Classic Lightfoot Live band will bring to the stage.

"I'm more than happy to have recommended this venue to the band and I hope it becomes an annual event," Maue said. "Hopefully it brings people together and provides a



Paris Community Church is home to the #ForParisCentre, located at 164 Grand River St N, in Paris. The architectural beauty was built in 1893 and features superb acoustics, a new 48 channel sound board and a high-level sound and lighting system making it a fantastic location for live concerts.

little escapism from this crazy world."

The concert runs 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday, March 28, with tickets available online through the Classic Lightfoot Live website.



Jeff Maue, a Paris resident with family ties to Canadian music legend Gordon Lightfoot, stands with Michelle Benjamin, administrator of #ForParisCentre, the venue that will host the Classic Lightfoot Live tribute concert on March 28 celebrating Lightfoot's iconic catalogue of Canadian songs.



NEWS

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Construction season returns with major road work planned in east end of Paris

PARIS INDEPENDENT STAFF

As warmer weather returns, so too does construction season, with a major multi-year road reconstruction project set to resume later this month in the east end of Paris.

The County of Brant has announced that reconstruction work on Dundas Street East, Paris Road and Oak Park Road is expected to begin in late March. The project will replace aging underground infrastructure while improving road safety, traffic flow and pedestrian access in an area expected to see continued employment growth.

According to the county, the multi-year project will replace sanitary and storm sewers and watermain infrastructure, extend services and upgrade road surfaces, curbs and sidewalks. The improvements are intended to support both existing businesses and future development in the area.

The work follows earlier construction in the corridor last year, when a portion of Dundas Street East was closed for roughly six months as the project got underway. After the summer, the intersection at Dundas Street and Paris Road also faced partial closures to traffic, including a period when access via Green Lane was not permitted. The intersection reopened to traffic in November.

That work will pick back up where it left off last year, with Stage 1 construction, anticipated between March 23 and March 30, focusing on the continued work at the intersection of Dundas Street East and Paris Road. Crews will complete the installation of sanitary and storm sewers and a new watermain within the intersection and extending to the south and east.

Several traffic changes will be in place during this stage. Eastbound traffic on Dundas Street East will be reduced to a single lane and detoured onto Paris Road. Drivers will not be able to travel straight through the intersection onto Governors Road East or make left turns onto Green Lane.

Westbound traffic on Dundas Street East will remain open, while westbound traffic on Governors Road East will be reduced to one lane with no left turns permitted onto Paris Road. Southbound traffic on Green Lane will only be able to turn right onto Dundas Street East, and Paris Road will be restricted to southbound traffic only.

Stage 2, scheduled from March 30 through late summer, will expand construction to Dundas Street East, Paris Road and Oak Park Road.

During this phase, crews will complete tunneling for a watermain beneath the CN rail bridge and install water-

main services along Dundas Street East between Curtis Avenue South and Paris Road. Hydro poles will be relocated at the Dundas Street and Paris Road intersection, and work will continue on road restoration, curbing and sidewalks along the south side of Dundas Street East.

Additional work will include installing sanitary and storm sewers and watermain infrastructure along Paris Road, as well as a sanitary forcemain connecting Paris Road to Oak Park Road and extending to the railway tracks.

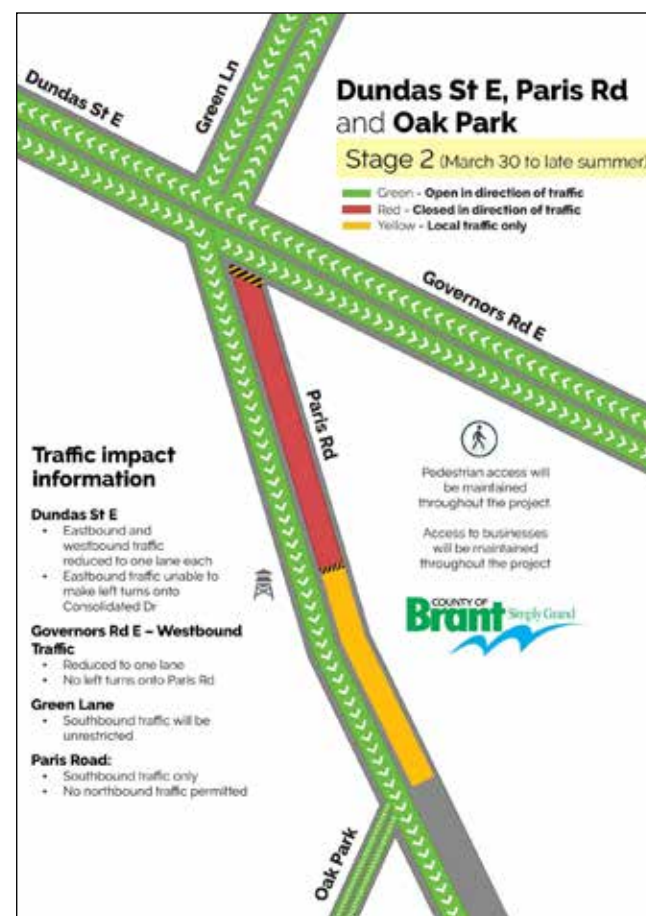
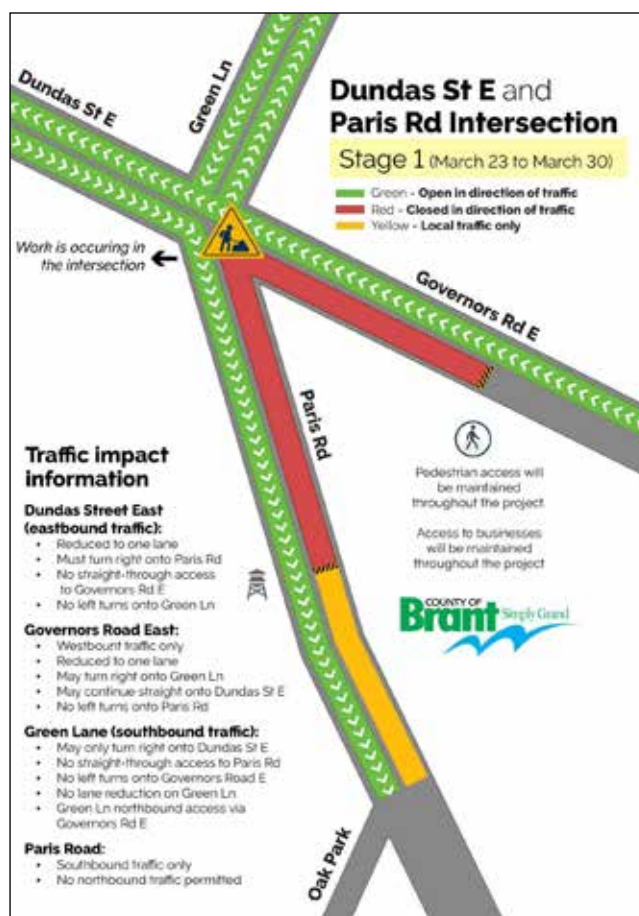
Traffic will again be reduced to single lanes in each direction on Dundas Street East, and eastbound vehicles will not be able to turn left onto Consolidated Drive. Westbound traffic on Governors Road East will also be limited to one lane, with no left turns onto Paris Road. Paris Road will remain restricted to southbound traffic only.

Stage 3, scheduled from late summer to late fall, will focus on reconstruction along the north side of Dundas Street and sections of Governors Road. Additional traffic impacts are expected during this phase and will be communicated before work begins.

Throughout the project, pedestrian access and access to local businesses will be maintained. Detours will be posted as required.

The construction will affect travel through the east end of Paris and may require motorists to plan alternate routes when travelling to and from the area.

Residents can follow the latest project updates through the County of Brant's Engage Brant page at engagebrant.ca/dundaseast or through road closure updates on municipal511.ca.



Nominations open for 2026 Salute to Brant Business Awards

MEDIA RELEASE

Nominations are now open for the 2026 Salute to Brant Business Awards, an annual celebration recognizing the outstanding achievements and contributions of businesses across the County of Brant.

"We are proud to celebrate the businesses that help shape the County of Brant's vibrant and growing economy," said Zach Gable, Director of Economic Development and Tourism. "Salute to Brant is an opportunity to recognize the entrepreneurs, innovators, and community builders whose hard work and vision make a lasting impact. We en-

courage residents and fellow business owners to nominate those who exemplify excellence in their field."

Salute to Brant Business is an annual event that brings together the local business community to celebrate the progress and achievements of businesses in the County of Brant and to share industry insights. The event highlights the innovation, resilience, and leadership that continue to drive economic growth and strengthen the community.

The five awards open for nominations in 2026 include:

- **Accessible Brant Award**
- **Brant Farms For All Agriculture Award**
- **Brant Works Innovation Award**
- **Good Times in Brant Award**

• Our Future Brant Sustainability Award

Businesses, organizations, and individuals are encouraged to submit nominations to help celebrate the remarkable work taking place throughout the community.

The County looks forward to welcoming guests to the 2026 Salute to Brant event on Thursday, September 24, 2026 at the TF Warren Group Cainsville Community Centre. Additional information about the event, including when tickets will be available for purchase, will be shared in the coming months.

For more information about the awards and to submit a nomination, visit www.brant.ca/Salute. Nominations will close on Friday, May 15 at 4:00 pm.

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HISTORIC PARIS

PARIS PAST: The End of an Era in Ayr



By Chris Whelan

Our hearts are heavy this week as we look toward our neighbours in Ayr. The devastating fire that swept through the intersection of Northumberland and Tannery Streets March 1st, didn't just claim a landmark; it upended lives. Five tenants escaped the flames with little more than the clothes on their backs, one person was reported injured after jumping through a window and tragically, a beloved pet dog was lost to the smoke.

As a community that values our shared heritage, we know that buildings can be rebuilt, but the loss of a home is a profound wound. Two local favorites, Ayr Village Pizza and Hitched Coffee, have also seen their doors closed by this tragedy. If you are able to help our neighbours, get back on their feet, please consider donating to the two separate GoFundMe campaigns that have been set up. You can find the direct links via the Ayr community Facebook pages.

Physical Donations: Thanks to Priority Mechanical, a drop-off point has been established at: 3160 Alps Road Monday to Fridays ONLY from 7:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Urgent Items Needed: Women's Clothing: Tops (M–XL), Bottoms (Sizes 8–12), Shoes (6 & 8) Men's Clothing: Tops/Bottoms (L–XL), Shoes (9.5, 10.5 & 12) Winter Jackets are also needed. Toiletries: Including all essential personal care items.

Additional ways Ayr has come together to donate/help: Foodland has a cash donation raffle for a basket; proceeds go to the 5 young tenants. Resolute Wellness will be donating proceeds from classes on Sunday to the victims. Abe Erb is donating \$2 from every Abe Burger purchased in March to those affected. Thank you to everyone for their support.

The Story Behind the Stone: The Ayr Ice House & Creamery

While the building is now gone—demolished for safety following the blaze—it leaves behind a 160-year legacy that was unique not just to Waterloo Region, but to all of Ontario.

The structure at 22 'E' Northumberland St. began its life in 1860, built by William Baker. Long before modern refrigeration, the "Ice House" was the high-tech hub of the village. Baker used the building to store massive blocks of ice harvested from the local waters, creating a giant communal refrigerator. By 1884, a cooling house was added, turning the site into a massive preservation center for the area's butter and eggs.

The scale of production was staggering. The Galt Reporter once noted that the Ayr Ice House & Creamery stored upwards of 50,000 pounds of butter at a single time before it was exported across the Atlantic to the British market.

What made this building truly iconic was its construction. Most ice houses of the Victorian era were rectangular and made of wood; Ayr's was a 27-foot square masonry marvel. To keep the ice from melting through the humid Ontario summers, the engineering was extreme:



(NORTH DUMFRIES HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY PHOTO)

The Walls: The foundation walls were a massive 5.5 meters (18 feet) thick, built of rubble stone.

The Insulation: The upper brick walls were packed with sawdust—a natural insulator—and coated in cement parging.

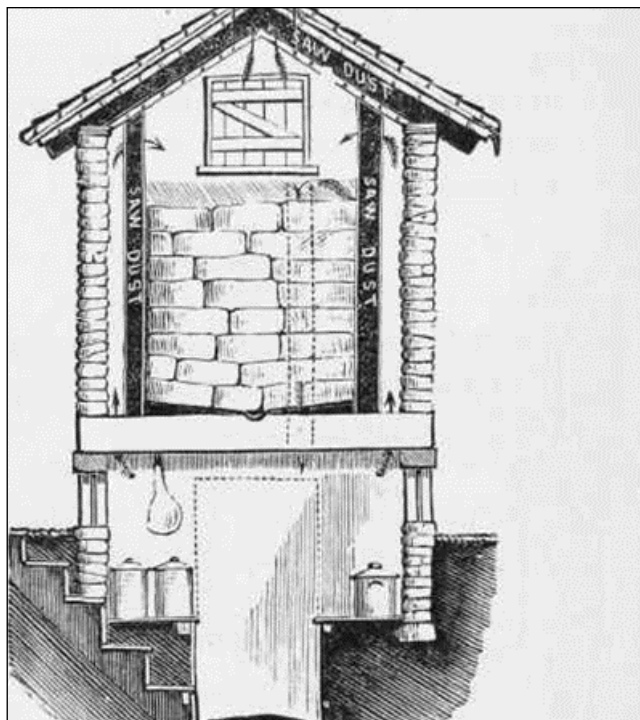
The Reflection: In early photographs, the building appeared white because it was treated with whitewash to reflect the sun's heat away from the precious ice within.

If you ever looked closely at the exterior, you might have noticed twenty distinct plaster markings. These weren't decorative; they marked where support tongs were once anchored to hoist heavy ice blocks into the upper storeys.

As technology changed, so did the building. In 1906, it became the Nihtside Creamery, and later, in 1937, it transitioned into G.H. Lawrence's Bakery. For 32 years, the scent of fresh bread replaced the scent of chilled cream, serving as a cornerstone of daily life in Ayr.



(NORTH DUMFRIES HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY PHOTO)



(NORTH DUMFRIES HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY PHOTO)



(HITCHED COFFEE PHOTO)

Langford Schoolhouse launches community history project

Residents with ties to Langford and the surrounding rural area are being invited to help preserve local history through a new community project centred around the historic Langford Schoolhouse.

Organizers have launched an initiative to collect photographs, documents, objects and personal stories connected to the schoolhouse and the broader Langford community. The materials will help form the foundation of a small museum and archival collection planned for the site.

Community members are encouraged to share items that reflect the area's past, including photographs of the schoolhouse, class photos, farms, families and community events. Documents such as maps, report cards, letters and newspaper clippings are also of interest, along with

objects connected to the schoolhouse and local life.

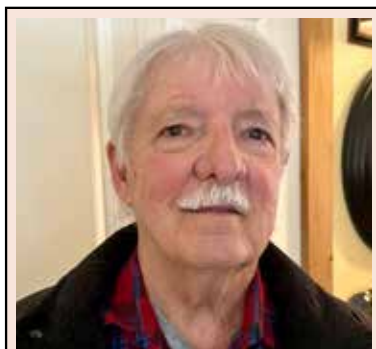
While donations of historical materials are welcome, organizers say items can also be scanned or documented and returned to their owners.

The project will also include recorded oral histories from people who remember attending the schoolhouse or who have stories about life in the Langford community. Organizers say these personal accounts will help capture important pieces of local history that may otherwise be lost over time. Anyone interested in participating, sharing materials or learning more about the project is encouraged to contact the Langford Schoolhouse. For more information, email info@Lconserv.ca or call 226-802-2801.



Students pose in front of the Langford Schoolhouse in this class photograph, c. 1930s. Community members who recognize anyone in the photo are encouraged to contact the Langford Schoolhouse.

THEN AND NOW: The evolution of the Cockburn Block - Part 3 #69



By **Wayne Wilkinson**
Paris Historian / Artist

In my previous columns, we explored the unfolding history of the Cockburn Block. Many readers have expressed surprise at the sheer number of businesses that have called #65 and #71 home—some becoming local institutions, while others remained merely a footnote in the town's ledger. This week, we turn our focus to #69, the central unit of this 1901 landmark.

Little is known of the building's first occupant, who advertised simply as "Miss Nelson's Millinery." A phone directory from a few years later lists a Miss Margaret Nelson, who was likely the proprietor. Records show she moved her shop to a new location in 1907, leaving the space for a new era of commerce.

In 1922, Dennis L. Dennis established the D.L. Dennis Specialty Store. A sur-

living photograph from 1925 shows a proud Marion Dennis standing before a beautiful window display of her clothing line. Interestingly, the store also maintained a thriving sideline selling the immensely popular "Watkins" products. J.R. Watkins of Plainview, Minnesota, founded his company in 1868, starting with medicinal liniments. By the 1890s, the business had boomed; door-to-door salesmen were "peddling" everything from natural baking products to seasonings and extracts like vanilla, banana, butter, and cherry.

D.L. Dennis closed its doors for the final time in 1931. The following year, Emma Wright's Fancy Goods opened its doors. By 1936, the business began a series of moves to other locations, eventually evolving into the Wright and Ellis Specialty Shop.

In 1940, a major shift occurred when the Eaton's Order Office moved into #69. For years, Parisians visited this location to order goods directly from the iconic Eaton's catalog. However, 1955 brought a unique "musical chairs" transition: the Eaton's office moved north to #133—the former home of Russell Johnston's Meat Market—while Johnston himself became the new tenant here at #69. Russell Johnston was already a fixture in Paris, having opened his butcher shop shortly after his arrival in 1950.

The butcher shop served the community until 1977, followed by the short-lived Paris Cheese House (1977–1980). In 1981, Pat Luciani opened the Paris Travel Centre. After several name changes and decades of service, that business—now known as Direct Travel—can still be found today in the Water's Edge complex.

The late 90s and early 2000s saw a revolving door of diverse businesses:

Now You're Cooking: Arrived in 1995.
Crafty Café: A cozy gift shop and café

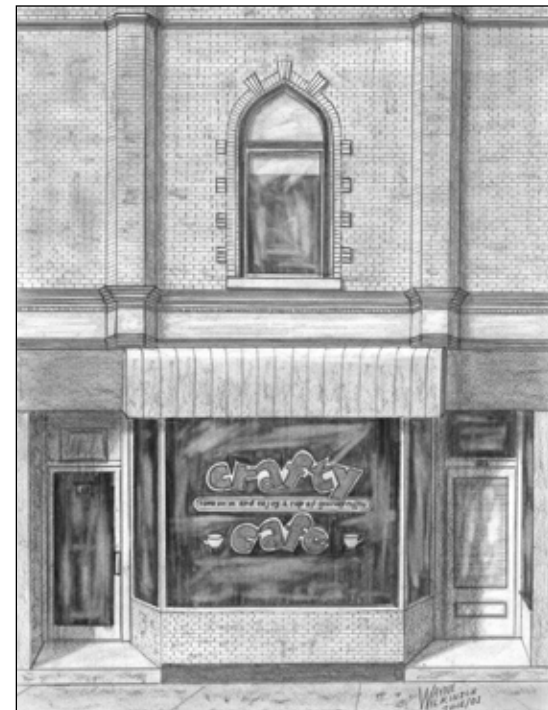
that operated from 1998 to 2002.

Suzy's Clothing: A trendy boutique that moved in during 2002.

RE/MAX Realty: Occupied the space starting in 2006.

Since 2010, the address has seen sporadic occupation and several vacancies. Currently, the interior stands completely gutted—much like its neighbor at #71—awaiting a full renovation and rejuvenation by Handkind Construction Co. It will be exciting to see which new ventures will eventually make #69 their home. Like so many entrepreneurs before them, they will soon become the next piece in the ever-changing mosaic of downtown Paris.

Note: Some information may have been obtained from the archives at the Paris Museum & Historical Society. Visit the Museum in the Syl Apps Community Centre to discover more history of Paris.



The Paris Independent SPORTS



Sponsored by Paris Canadian Tire

Paris and Airport stations renew friendly rivalry March 29 in support of Stedman Community Hospice

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

that outcome.

Its unofficial team captain Phil Dalpe says last year's loss has provided plenty of motivation heading into the rematch.

"Losing that game is motivation enough," he said. "The team will bounce back from the outcome of last year."

The Paris squad has been putting in extra ice time throughout the year, building chemistry and adding a few new players to the roster.

"We've been practicing shinny more than ever," Dalpe said. "We've got a couple of gritty new additions as well."

Airport Fire, meanwhile, isn't revealing too many details about their training program.

"We can neither confirm nor deny the existence of high-intensity drills in full bunker gear," McDonald teased.

The friendly trash talk goes both ways. When asked how he would describe Paris Fire's hockey style, McDonald offered three playful words: "Persistent, loud and... hopeful."

Dalpe responded with confidence of his own.

"They have a team over there that doesn't play together," he said. "We've been practicing. Talk is cheap."

Despite the competitive edge, both teams agree the real purpose of the game is supporting an organization that means a great deal to the community.

Stedman Community Hospice, located in Brantford and operated by St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre, provides 24-hour residential end-of-life care for people living with life-limiting illnesses. The hospice relies heavily on community support, with approximately half of its operating budget



(MICHELLE MALVASO PHOTOS)

Pictured from last year's charity game, Paris goalie Tyler Svirk makes a dramatic dive and save during the third period.

funded through donations and fundraising efforts.

Nearly 150 volunteers contribute more than 12,000 hours each year, helping ensure patients and families receive compassionate support during one of life's most difficult moments.

"Stedman is a pillar of the Brantford and Brant County community," McDonald said. "Almost everyone on our team has been touched by the incredible work they

do providing comfort and dignity to families during their hardest moments."

Dalpe echoed that sentiment.

"Stedman Community Hospice is top notch," he said. "We've all had someone there that we love. They don't get enough credit for what they do."

The game also reflects the strong bond within the fire department itself.

"It shows how tight-knit the department is," Dalpe said. "We're a big family and it's nice to show the community we mean business in community events as well as

servicing."

As for the final message ahead of puck drop, the defending champions are confident.

"Paris should be prepared for a long sixty minutes," McDonald said. "We've still got the trophy, we've still got the hunger, and we've got a whole lot of community support behind us."

Fans are encouraged to come out, enjoy an afternoon of hockey and support a cause that touches many families across the region.



Richard del Rosa takes a shot on net while teammates Nate Ferris and Luc Lawrence wait to catch a rebound. Word on the street is Nate stepped up his game this year.



Members of the Paris Station and Airport Station pose for a photo from the 2025 charity game that raised money for Community Living Brant.

U11B Battalions win all three games in best two out of three semifinal series

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The Brant Battalion U11B team faced more than just their opponent in a dramatic Southern County playoff semifinal series against the Ayr Flames this weekend.

Despite controversy, delays and a forced replay that threatened to derail their momentum, the Battalion remained focused and determined, ultimately winning a decisive Game 3 to keep their season alive and advance to the finals.

The best-of-three series opened Friday, March 6 in Paris, where the Battalion edged Ayr 2-1 in a tightly contested back-and-forth game.

After a scoreless first period, Levi Blake put Brant on the board in the second period, finishing a play set up by Jett Rollins and Alex Thoms.

Midway through the third period, the game took an unusual turn when Ayr's goaltender left the ice due to illness during the final 12 minutes of play. He later returned, with Brant holding a 1-0 lead.

Nolan Kearsley extended the Battalion's lead with an unassisted goal, putting Brant ahead 2-0 before Ayr responded late to cut the deficit to one. The Battalion held on for the 2-1 victory.

The series shifted to Ayr the following day, where Brant delivered one of its strongest performances of the season.

Dominating possession and the offensive zone for much of the game, the Battalion limited the Flames to just six shots on goal in a commanding 2-0 win.

Nash McLaren opened the scoring in the first period with an assist from Jacoby Bonnell. The Flames pressed late, but Bonnell sealed the victory with an empty-net goal from the defensive zone with just 38 seconds remaining in the third period.

Celebrations, however, were short-lived.

Following the game, the team learned that Ayr had appealed Friday night's result, citing rules related to goaltender injuries. In the rulebook, a team with an injured goalie is allowed 10 minutes to recuper-

ate. Ayr appealed they did not have proper recuperation period and they were given a penalty for delay of game when the game resumed, when the penalty was not warranted. The Ontario Minor Hockey Association ruled in favour of Ayr, ordering the final 12 minutes of Game 1 to be replayed.

That replay took place Sunday, March 8.

Brant lost the resumed portion of the game, forcing a sudden Game 3 immediately afterward to decide the series.

The Battalion fell behind 1-0 after the first period but refused to let the setback define their weekend.

The team rallied with disciplined, heads-up hockey. Forward lines moved the puck effectively while backchecking hard, and the defensive corps disrupted Ayr's attacks by breaking up plays and intercepting passes. Goaltender Mason Monteiro was steady in net throughout the series, turning aside several Ayr scoring chances and keeping Brant within reach.

The breakthrough came late in the second period when Alex Thoms scored to tie the game 1-1.

Momentum quickly shifted.

Jacoby Bonnell scored the go-ahead goal at the 13-minute mark of the period, and Nash McLaren added an insurance marker with just two minutes remaining. Blake assisted on all three goals.

The win secured Brant's place in the Southern County finals, where the Battalion will face Twin Centres for a chance to advance to the OMHA finals.

Head coach Jon Kristman said the team's ability to stay composed through the weekend's challenges made the victory even more meaningful. "The team overcame a lot of adversity through the weekend and pushed through despite what seemed like everything against us," said Kristman. "The kids stayed motivated and continued to grow and pushed forward in their season." Following the hard-fought victory, the Battalion gathered at Eggsmart in Paris for a celebratory meal and a chance to decompress after an intense and emotional playoff series.



(CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTO)

Brant Battalion U11B team celebrates after a game three win against the Ayr Flames on Sunday, March 8. The win propels them into the Southern County Finals against Twin Centre.

Paris men's billiards: The Legion report

JEFF "STONES" JOHNSTON FILLING IN FOR SCOOP STEWART

Sports Correspondent

It was a night of high-stakes action and high-energy laughs at the Legion this week. To keep things running smoothly without Oscar, we brought in the "big guns" for logistics: Rawd Kinfit handled the accounting, while I took over the scoreboard. (Despite my best efforts to tip the scales for Motor and Dalpe, the talent in the room was just too much to overcome!)

The skill level on display was nothing short of amazing. It was a tough night for some; Floods and Wheels struggled to find their rhythm, and last week's winners, Willy and Grieg, unexpectedly found themselves bringing up the rear.

The frustration was real—even Wilson jokingly asked me to sub for him! The semi-finals and finals were packed with "oohs," "ahhs," and plenty of laughs. In a game where the 8-ball can be notoriously elusive, the competition remained fierce until the very last shot. In the end, the "steady sharks" of the evening, Holmes (J-Dog) and Kopper, proved to be as smooth as ever. They secured the victory on the 8-ball in a fantastic final match against Pickles and Big Al, who took the loss with sportsmanship and a smile.

Honourable mention: A valiant effort goes out to Motor and Dalpe, who put up a great fight but ultimately came up short in the semi-finals. And to Big Larry and Billy B: keep your cues ready — there's always next time! We're all thinking of you Scoop, get well soon!

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GrandBridge partners with PowerBank to develop solar and battery storage projects in Southwest Ontario

MEDIA RELEASE

GrandBridge Corporation has signed a co-development agreement with PowerBank Corporation to jointly develop solar generation and battery storage projects across parts of southwestern Ontario.

The agreement will see the two companies collaborate on projects within the service territory of GrandBridge Energy, which includes the City of Brantford, the City of Cambridge, the Township of North Dumfries and the County of Brant.

Projects developed under the partnership are expected to be submitted to the Independent Electricity System Operator's (IESO) long-term procurement and local generation programs. The companies will also explore additional commercialization opportunities such as Virtual Power Purchase Agreements (VPPAs), net metering and other procurement mechanisms.

Under the agreement, PowerBank will lead the development and construction of projects, while GrandBridge will provide development and construction capital and co-own the projects.

Sarah Hughes, president and CEO of GrandBridge Corporation, said the partnership is part of the company's strategy to address growing electricity demand across the region.

"GrandBridge is committed to developing solutions that enable immediate capacity growth while preserving our ability to connect future customers. We are taking a proactive approach in response to significant growth in energy consumption and peak demand experienced by our electricity distribution company, GrandBridge Energy, driven by electrification and growth in our communities."

Hughes said solar generation and battery storage can be deployed relatively quickly and at competitive costs compared to large transmission infrastructure projects.

"Solar generation and battery storage solutions can be developed in relatively short timeframes and at competitive costs, alleviating the pressure of securing incremental transmission capacity. Combined with other innovative grid solutions — including GridShare, GrandBridge Energy's new Local Capacity Auction program, which provides price signals for customers to participate in local grid events — these resources can form part of an affordable toolkit to help limit grid congestion."

She added that the partnership will help strengthen the reliability of the local electricity system.

"PowerBank is a like-minded and experienced partner in renewable energy and battery storage, and we are excited to co-invest in energy solutions that support our customers while enhancing the performance, reliability and resiliency of the electricity grid in Southwest Ontario."

Dr. Richard Lu, president and CEO of PowerBank Corporation, said the agreement marks an important step for the company's growth in Ontario.

"We are proud to sign this co-development agreement with GrandBridge Corporation, marking a significant milestone for PowerBank's presence in the Ontario market. PowerBank has a long history in Ontario, beginning operations here in 2013, and this partnership reflects our commitment to deploying our development and construction expertise to meet the province's rapidly evolving energy needs. GrandBridge's deep roots in the communities they serve, combined with PowerBank's expertise in solar and battery storage development, creates a powerful partnership to deliver clean, reliable energy solutions. PowerBank

has developed over 100 megawatts of renewable energy projects across North America, and we look forward to bringing that experience to this partnership. Together, we are well-positioned to respond to the growing demand for local generation capacity and contribute to the long-term resilience of Southwest Ontario's electricity grid."

The agreement establishes a three-year collaboration period for the development of electricity generation and storage projects with a nameplate capacity of two megawatts or greater within GrandBridge Energy's service territory.

The projects will primarily be developed for submission to IESO requests for proposals and local generation programs, though the partners may also pursue alternative procurement opportunities.

Projects developed through the partnership will follow an 80/20 ownership structure at financial close, with GrandBridge Corporation holding an 80 per cent ownership interest and PowerBank Corporation holding 20 per cent. The structure could be adjusted if First Nation partners participate in the projects.

GrandBridge Corporation is a municipally owned investment holding company with full ownership of GrandBridge Energy Inc., GrandBridge Group Inc. and GrandBridge Solutions Inc.

GrandBridge Energy delivers electricity to approximately 115,000 customers across Brantford, Cambridge, North Dumfries and the County of Brant.

PowerBank Corporation is an independent renewable energy developer focused on distributed and community solar projects across Canada and the United States. The company has developed renewable energy projects with a combined capacity of more than 100 megawatts and maintains a development pipeline exceeding one gigawatt.

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Education workers demand more funding for schools

KIMBERLY DE JONG

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Education workers rallied at Harmony Square in Brantford to call on the provincial government to reinvest in public education on Tuesday, March 3, 2026.

Organized by local unions that represent more than 5,500 public education workers across Brantford, the County of Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk, the rally was held to raise awareness around what organizers describe as the chronic underfunding of Ontario's public education system.

Union leaders say schools across Ontario are struggling with staffing shortages, growing class sizes and reduced access to student supports, which they attribute to years of provincial underfunding.

Representatives from both the public and Catholic school boards, various unions, parents and even students were present at the rally.

Organizers said that since 2019, students have experienced a loss of supports, including fewer educational assistants and special education supports, reduced access to mental health professionals, large class size and deteriorating school infrastructure.

"Today represents the coming together of all of our local education unions under an education crisis," said Carolyn Proulx-Wootton, president of the Grand Erie Elementary Teachers' Federation. "We have tremendous unmet needs in our schools, and the cause is not the actions of trustees or school boards, but Doug Ford's provincial government underfunding our schools by \$6.35 billion since 2019."

Proulx-Wootton said education workers are increasingly filling gaps left by reduced access to services and supports for students.

"... Education workers continue to show extraordinary professionalism and care for students, even as we are stretched far beyond what any education worker should be asked to carry day after day," she said.

She noted that workers are often compensating for the absence of services such as psycho-educational assessments, speech and language supports, mental health services and specialized programs for students with complex needs.

"We are compensating for the absence of critical supports, including psycho-educational assessments, speech and language services, mental health supports, a variety of Special Education Programs, autism therapies and educational assistance to meet many students where they are at. Education workers are stretched beyond their limits, and families are seeing the consequences every day. Over 64,000 children as of today, are waiting for therapy through the Ontario autism program. ... This is a manufactured funding crisis of epic proportions that has repercussions for our children, and without intervention, our students are getting left behind."

Sarah Kuva, president of CUPE 5100, which represents the educational support workers at Grand Erie District School Board, told the crowd that they were urging the Ontario government to begin bargaining with unions as soon as possible.

"School boards across this province are dealing with se-



(KIMBERLY DEJONG PHOTO)

Representatives from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation District 23 Educational Support Staff and Early Childhood Educators bargaining unit pose for a photo during a rally at Harmony Square on Tuesday, March 3, 2026.

vere underfunding and understaffing issues, and students and education workers are most affected. Early bargaining gives students, parents and education workers certainty in the fall. Waiting until the last minute will only create chaos and instability in our schools," she said. "... We are ready to bargain now. We're prepared to come to the table at any time. There's no reason for the delay, the government has the ability to start bargaining in March. Our message is simple: come to the table, fund our schools properly, address the staffing crisis and make students and worker safety a priority."

Kuva said she hoped the rally would demonstrate that education workers across the region are united in their call for increased investment in schools.

"I'm hoping that people will see that as a collective, labour wants to see an investment in education," she said. "Our heart and soul is in public education, and we want to see the needs of students met, the needs of buildings met, we want to make workers safe and we want students to be all that they can be."

Nathan Core, first vice president of the Ontario Teachers Federation, told the crowd that public education was worth fighting for.

"Public education belongs to the people of Ontario, it belongs to our students and it belongs to our communities. This is worth fighting for."

Core said public education plays a central role in shaping communities and supporting the development of future generations.

"... Public education is not simply a line on an expense form; it is the very foundation of a healthy democracy. This is where children learn to think critically, to collaborate, and where they learn to care for one another. It's where we build futures," he said.

"... Investment in public education is not optional, it is essential. The government may make decisions at Queen's Park, but public education is in our communities, and when communities raise their voices together, change can

happen. So let's keep standing together. It may be cold, but let's keep advocating together and let's keep reminding this government, and any government, that our students deserve fully funded, fully staffed, fully supported public schools."

Proulx-Wootton later encouraged parents and other residents to reach out to their local MPPs, and make it known to the provincial government that they care about properly funded education.

"It would be huge if they could let their elected representatives know what they know about education; that they know it's underfunded and that it matters to them," she said. "Education is particularly special because it's not just a public service that we're doing this year or an ongoing service. Public education is an institution and it is getting students to their full human potential. Children are the future, and we need to create a system to support them."

Kimberly De Jong's reporting is funded by the Canadian government through its Local Journalism Initiative. The funding allows her to report rural and agricultural stories from Blandford-Blenheim and Brant County.

Paris Post Office announces relocation to Pinehurst Road plaza

The Paris Post Office has announced it will be moving from its long-standing location at 139 Grand River St. North to a new, modern facility at 197 Pinehurst Road, Unit A3, situated in the same plaza as McDonald's.

To facilitate the transition of equipment and mail services, the current Grand River St. North location will officially close its doors at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, March 20.

The Post Office will reopen at the new Pinehurst Road

location on Monday, March 23, at 8:00 a.m.

"We wanted to provide our customers and friends with as much notice as possible to minimize any inconvenience," said a spokesperson for the local branch. "We look forward to continuing to serve the Paris community from our new home and appreciate everyone's patience during this weekend move."

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Funding now open for Culture Days 2026 events in Brant

Community information session set for March 25 as organizers prepare for fall arts celebration

PARIS INDEPENDENT STAFF

The County of Brant is inviting artists, community groups and cultural organizations to begin planning for Culture Days 2026, with funding applications now open and a community information session scheduled later this month.

Eligible organizations and individuals can apply for up to \$750 in funding to support local Culture Days programming. Applications are currently being accepted, with a deadline of Friday, April 24, 2026.

To help interested participants learn more about the program and funding opportunities, the county will host a Culture Days Community Information Session on Wednesday, March 25 at 1:30 p.m. at County of Brant Council Chambers, located at 7 Broadway St. W. in Paris. Participants can attend either in person or virtually to brainstorm ideas, connect with other community groups and ask questions about planning events for this year's celebration.

Culture Days is a national celebration of arts, culture and heritage that will take place September 18 to October 4, 2026, offering communities across Canada the opportunity to showcase local creativity through workshops, performances, exhibitions and interactive experiences.

The County of Brant has become a strong participant in the annual festival. In 2025, the county ranked seventh among the top

participating small municipalities in Canada, recognizing the community's strong engagement in arts and culture. Brant has also been selected for the third consecutive year as one of Ontario's Culture Days Festival Hubs, with details about local hub programming expected to be announced later this spring.

Financial support for Culture Days programming is returning for a fourth year, including \$10,000 supported through the Mayor's budget to help enhance creative experiences across the community.

"Culture Days is a wonderful community celebration and another opportunity for residents to get out and explore Brant," said County of Brant Mayor David Bailey. "We are also so pleased to have been acknowledged as 7th in the Top Participating Communities for Small Municipalities across the country."

"We're happy to continue supporting our local creators through this funding," said Mayor Bailey. "We encourage creatives from across the County of Brant to take advantage of this opportunity and showcase their talents during this year's Culture Days."

Registration for Culture Days events will open later this month. Residents are encouraged to follow the County of Brant on social media or visit the Culture Days webpage for updates.

To learn more about Culture Days, apply for funding, or access the virtual information session link, visit www.brant.ca/



Children take part in a hands-on arts activity during a past Culture Days event in the County of Brant. The national celebration of arts, culture and heritage returns Sept. 18 to Oct. 4, 2026, with funding now available to help local artists and community groups host creative experiences across the county.

CultureDays.

For additional information, contact culture@brant.ca or call 519-44BRANT

(519-442-7268) or 1-855-44BRANT ext. 3013.

Back in the groove: Local musician Dan Adams reclaims his life

CHRIS WHELAN

Editor

For Paris resident Dan Adams, 63, a guitar has been a permanent fixture in his life since the age of 15. By the time he hit 20, he was a fixture of the Southern Ontario music scene. For three decades, Dan crisscrossed the province with popular bands like Tumbling Dice, Rusty Stone, Supernatural, Rusty Nutz, and Rock Jah. Music wasn't just a career; it was his heartbeat. He played hundreds of shows in the hazy, smoke-filled clubs of the era, fueled by the raw energy of a live audience.

In the early 2000s, life shifted gears when Dan moved to Brantford to raise his two youngest daughters as a single father. However, the music stopped abruptly in 2011. An emergency surgery for a deadly aneurysm was followed, just two weeks later, by a devastating stroke. The man who spent his free time playing on stage spent the next seven months in a hospital bed. When he finally returned home, he returned to a different world. The stroke had left his left hand atrophied and his left leg dragging; suddenly, he was forced to nav-

igate fatherhood and daily life using only his right side.

The physical toll led to a dark psychological spiral. Exhausted, depressed, and mourning the "death" of his former self, Dan fell into a heavy addiction to his pain medication. To the outside world, he was a father doing mundane chores and learning to walk again; behind closed doors, he was consuming a month's worth of pills in just four days. The addiction turned him "unhinged," eventually leading to an assault charge and a desperate crossroads. The turning point came through a court-ordered recovery program at St. Leonard's in Brantford. With the support of therapists and his doctor, Dan fought his way back from the brink of withdrawal and reclaimed his mind.

Today, Dan has come full circle. Having moved back to Paris to be near his family, he has rebuilt the bonds with his daughters—whom he calls "forgiving, great kids." Though his left hand remains silent, his right hand has found a new way to play. He is once again recording original music, proving that while the stroke changed his life, it couldn't take his soul. Dan Adams is more than a musician; he is a survivor.



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Local social worker launches community mental health events in Paris

RUBY JONES

Cultural Correspondent

Paris is known for its peaceful scenery and strong sense of community — qualities that make it an ideal setting for reflection and personal growth. This March, local entrepreneur Kathleen Foldvari, founder of A Minute for Mental Health, is offering two community events this month focused on reflection, creative expression and supporting mental well-being.

A Minute for Mental Health was created to make trauma-informed mental wellness support more accessible through education, assessment and practical planning. The organization helps individuals and teams pause, reflect and build resilience within the realities of everyday life.

Foldvari, a trained social worker, moved to the area about five years ago and began working with the Prima Care Family Health Team. Over time, her focus shifted toward mental health support, with a particular emphasis on suicide prevention and helping individuals navigate periods of crisis and emotional strain.

“My passion has always been mental health, especially supporting those who support others in different ways,” said Foldvari. She’s experienced the tremendous impact of grief, losing her father to ALS in 2020, after losing her brother to suicide.

“All of those were very impactful experiences and led me to a place where I was struggling with my mental health because of everything; it all felt like it was happening at once,” she recalled. From that personal experience, the concept for

the events was born simply because she didn’t want anybody else to feel alone in prolonged grief.

“My brother died by suicide in 2017, so it’s been very important for me to be able to contribute to the community and doing the prevention work to make it a safer community for others as well.”

Foldvari’s first event is being offered in collaboration with Stephanie Cuachon of OnCue Executive Solutions. Titled “The Pause: Beyond the Hustle,” the session will take place at the Paris Branch of the Brant Public Library on March 17 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The event is designed for those who support others or carry significant leadership responsibilities, including mental health and health-care professionals, educators, founders, caregivers and others in helping roles.

“Stephanie and I are both first-generation Canadians and racialized women who are ambitious in our fields and have lived experience with burnout, depression, and ADHD,” she said.

The format of The Pause is practical and conversational, less lecture, more guided application; you can expect short teaching segments, guided reflection prompts, simple assessment tools, immediate-use worksheets and frameworks and more practical and sustainable suggestions.

The second event is in collaboration with a few folks, including Eirinn Todd founder of Peers & Poets, who is training as a peer support worker and wanted to create a positive impact by pairing mental health awareness, community support, and poetry. Popping up at the Dog-Eared Cafe on



Kathleen Foldvari speaks at the 2025 Suicide Prevention Flag Raising ceremony at County of Brant Chambers in downtown Paris.

Saturday, March 28th from 7 pm to 10 pm, this event is free, thanks to the support of the Dog-Eared. Any donations clocked at the door or on the ticket link on Eventbrite, will be donated to The Canadian Mental Health Association and HOPE Brant.

The event will feature speakers, activities and poetry. CMHA representative Lill Patrella and her team will be on hand to support the evening, while Sandy Van Bergen, along with HOPE Brant volunteers, will lead an interactive activity highlighting the power of peer support in mental health.

“We’re passionate about bringing this event to Brant. Not just as a one-time experience, but as part of a larger culture

shift around burnout, especially among high-achieving people where it’s not often talked about,” said Foldvari. “Being passionate and ambitious, and successful, and taking care of your well-being, there’s a way that you can balance those things by being a little bit more mindful or being very mindful about what your nervous system and your brain’s needs are.”

You can find out more information about A Minute For Mental Health, find event registration links and discover further details online at www.aminuteformentalhealth.ca or by searching The Pause: Beyond the Hustle or Peers & Poets on EventBrite.



The Pause organizers Stephanie Cuachon of OnCue Executive Solutions and Kathleen Foldvari of A Minute For Mental Health.

Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. What actor starred in Ace Ventura?
2. What is the capital city of Iran?
3. What does MAID stand for in medical terms?
4. Which Renaissance artist painted 'The School of Athens' in the Vatican?
5. In 'Children of Men', what event has made humanity desperate?
6. The Danube River flows into which sea?
7. Which hormone is produced by the pineal gland and helps regulate sleep cycles?
8. A Phon is a unit of what?
9. What is the highest-rated daytime talk show in American Television history?
10. What country do the Galapagos Islands belong to?

This week’s answers are found on pg. 23

Readers' questions about grief and healing answered by local grief specialist



THE GRIEF JOURNEY By Tammy Adams

Grief is something everyone experiences at some point in life, yet it can often feel isolating, confusing, and difficult to talk about. In a new monthly column, *Ask the Grief Coach*, certified grief recovery specialist Tammy Adams will answer readers' questions about navigating loss, understanding emotions, and finding ways to move forward while honouring the people and experiences we carry with us. Each month, Tammy will respond to questions submitted by members of our community, offering practical insight and compassionate guidance for those who may be struggling with grief of any kind.

If you have a question, you would like Tammy to address in a future column, we invite you to submit it to stories@theparisindpendent.com.

Questions may be edited for length and clarity, and names can be withheld upon request. By sharing your question, you may help others who are experiencing similar feelings but don't know where to begin.

1. For someone who has recently lost a parent, the grief can feel overwhelming and unpredictable. What are some common emotions or reactions people experience, and how can they tell what's a normal part of grieving versus when

they may need extra support?

Recent losses, and even those that happened years ago, can leave us feeling overwhelmed.

There are common symptoms associated with grief, but it's important to understand that not everyone will experience all of them. Grief may include reduced concentration and focus; a sense of numbness (physical, emotional, or both) often mislabeled as denial; disrupted sleep; changes in our appetite; riding a roller coaster of emotional energy; profound fatigue or sudden bursts of energy; feelings of isolation; anxiety; fear; and overwhelm.

These reactions can be normal and natural responses to loss. They do not always occur. In fact, there are no reactions so universal that everyone, or even most people will experience them. Nor are there fixed stages of grief that individuals must move through.

The "Five Stages of Grief," created by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, were originally designed to support those who were dying; not those living with loss. It is important to understand that grief is deeply individual. Our emotions are shaped by our unique relationship with the person or event surrounding the loss. Trying to force our healing into a system that was never intended for the grieving can leave us feeling stuck or unable to move forward. We can feel confused and inadequate in our grieving process.

I often compare grief to chronic pain, and sadness to acute pain. Chronic pain can dictate our level of joy and limit how fully we engage in life. Acute pain, like a headache or a sprained ankle, is uncomfortable, but we trust that it is temporary and that we will move through it.

One indicator that it may be time to reach out for additional support is by noticing when sadness begins to loop. When it occupies most of our thoughts. When it is all that we want, or are able, to talk about. This can be a sign that we have moved from temporary sadness into deeper unresolved grief and can be our sign that perhaps we

need help navigating the path forward.

2. Many people say they feel pressure to "be strong" for their family or to move on after a certain amount of time. Is there such a thing as a timeline for grief, and how can someone give themselves permission to grieve in a healthy way?

We are often taught to "be strong." But too often, being strong means not allowing ourselves to feel the emotions we are carrying.

To move through grief, we must be honest about how we are feeling. When we focus on being strong for others, we can unintentionally silence ourselves. And it is also important to understand that it is impossible to be something for someone else. We cannot carry their emotions for them, just as they cannot carry ours for us.

When we choose honesty over strength, we give others permission to do the same.

Grief is an emotional experience shaped entirely by our relationship to the person or event that is no longer part of our lives. No two people will grieve in the same way. No two people will grieve on the same timeline.

Rather than measuring progress by time, consider measuring it by honesty. Notice the emotions that arise. Name them. Give yourself permission to sit with them. Without distraction. Without judgment. Find a friend who can listen without trying to fix you, advise you, or rush you forward.

3. For those of us navigating life milestones without a parent, birthdays, holidays, or even ordinary moments, what practical coping strategies can help manage those waves of sadness while still honouring the relationship we had?

Navigating life's milestones can be challenging. For some they find that it is the first birthday that is the most difficult. For others it can be years down the road.

We are taught to distract ourselves from our emotional pain, but what we really want to do is to remember those we are missing.

Here are a few suggestions to manage

those waves of sadness:

- Access a friend or family member who will hold space for you as you recall your loved one: someone who will just be a heart with ears.
- Begin journaling to discover what emotions are showing up. Practice allowing them to have a voice. Give yourself permission to feel the emotions that do show up.
- Celebrate their memories by writing a poem detailing your good memories and the things you loved about them.
- Scrapbook memories, create fridge magnets, and wall collages are ways to keep your memories alive.
- Gather the family together and have their favourite meal and share stories.
- Create a space of honour in your garden or living space.
- You might want to do something that reflects their values or life contribution by donating in their name.

A candlelight vigil is a beautiful option to celebrate the time you spent together, to keep their spirit alive in your home. Keep the candle lit for as long as you need and blow it out as you say goodbye.

About the Columnist

Tammy Adams is a Certified Coach Practitioner and Grief Recovery Method Specialist, supporting individuals across Canada. To learn more about *The Grief Recovery Method*, visit tadams.ca or contact Tammy for a free consultation.

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Why Belgium should be your next European escape

MARIA WHEELER

Paris Independent Contributor

I'm going to gush a little more about my country of birth. I hope you won't mind. As with many of us immigrants, even though we have made our home here in Canada, an invisible thread keeps pulling us back to the country of our youth. And yes, distance does make the heart grow fonder.

Belgium is often just considered a lay-over, or a quick filler for North American tourists on route from Amsterdam to Rome. Brussels and Bruges are the two cities most often visited on such a lay-over. In my previous travel column, I shared some of the gems you can find in Antwerp, one of my own favourite stomping grounds since I studied there - don't ask me how long ago that is... I hope those tips have inspired you to start rethinking your European travel plans.

There are, of course, other Belgian cities that are more than worth a visit. Ghent boasts a series of UNESCO World Heritage sites. Hasselt brands itself as the "capital of taste" owing to its "jenever" distilleries, "speculaas" cookies, and chocolate production. Ostend is the main city by the North Sea, with a huge white beach and an amazing boardwalk full of restaurants. Louvain is another gem, a student town like Antwerp, Ghent and Hasselt, with an amazingly ornate 15th century city hall that will mesmerize you. Its university is 600 years old, one of the oldest in Europe. All these cities are located in the north of Belgium, the Flemish or Dutch-speaking region. In the south, the French-speaking or Walloon region, cities such as Liège on the Meuse river, or Dinant, which has a citadel perched on the rock overlooking the city, will show you an entirely different side of the country, literally and figuratively. Belgium has so much to offer, all within a span of about 225 km max from the border with Germany to the North Sea. Easily visited by train, or by car if you wish for a bit more flexibility.

Belgium, just like the Netherlands, enjoys a full-on bicycle culture. Kids learn to ride at a very young age and many seniors, some as old as 90, still make weekly outings in group. It's a great way to stay fit, and to spend time with friends you may have known since you were a kid yourself. Bicycling is very safe because most Belgian roads have bicycle paths that are separated from the car lanes by curbs or hedges. On www.fietsknooppunt.be you



Maria's late mother and her son share a lighthearted moment before setting off on a bike ride through the Belgian countryside — a nod to the country's deep-rooted cycling culture and the generational ties that keep drawing families back to their homeland.



(MARIA WHEELER PHOTOS)

Castle De Borrekens in Vorselaar dates back to the 12th century and remains one of the region's most striking medieval landmarks. Surrounded by a moat and framed by towering trees, the centuries-old castle feels like a step straight into a fairy tale.

will discover the prettiest bicycle routes. The trails cover some 90,000 km and are dotted with cafés and restaurants where tired cyclists can enjoy a coffee, a beer (the selection is amazing!) or a meal. The routes take you through the beautiful countryside, along rivers and canals, and into smaller cities and towns, each with its own little treasures.

The place where I grew up is a good example. It is home to about 8000 inhabitants and to a castle that was built in the 12th century. Across all those centuries, it was owned by a noble family. The last baron passed away in 1998 and his children sold the property. As with so many of those ancient buildings, the upkeep was most likely prohibitive. Years ago, I had the pleasure of being invited into the castle to view the main floor, a real privilege that I owe to my late dad. It was magnificent: full of antique furniture and books, priceless works of art, and ceilings painted with clouds and herons. Unfortunately, it is not open to the public, but if you're up for it, you can take a walk from the parish church to the castle and back - about 2 km - under a canopy of ancient trees. I swear it takes you back to the Middle Ages. A forest, a castle, turrets, and a moat with ducks. It's like entering a fairy tale.

Our son used to live in a small city called Lier, population about 35,000. It is a lovely place that is located on a river called the "Nete" (doesn't that sound a lot like our "Nith"?). A few years ago, we took a river cruise on the "Nete". Nothing grand: it was just a barge that had room for about a dozen or so people and a guide, but we learned so much about the town's history from that man! And at the end of the ride, the ice cream vendor was waiting for us by the dock.

Lier is the proud owner of a beguinage that used to house a community of lay religious sisters who had "retired from the world". It was founded in 1258 and designated UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1998. The last surviving beguine died in 1994. The beguinage counts 11 streets and 95 small, mostly white 17th or 18th century homes. Walking around this neighbourhood gives you the most peaceful and zen feeling, and makes you want to reach for the rosary in your pocket. It's like walking around in the long ago past.

If you like to people-watch, walk towards the "Zimmerplein", a town square surrounded by eateries and filled with outdoor patios. The square is home to the "Zimmerstoren", a tower that was originally part of the town's for-

tifications. We're talking 14th century of course! In 1930, Louis Zimmer, astronomer and clockmaker, built the Jubilee Clock into the face of the tower. It consists of 12 clocks that encircle a central one. You really ought to sit down for a rest, admire the tower and listen to the beautiful sounds the chimes make.

A few hundred yards from there you will arrive at the main town square, which hides a fascinating memorial. It is a copper circle worked into the cobblestones, on the very spot where in the year 1590 a woman named Cathelyne was burned at the stake as a witch. It states that her courage (she confessed under torture but didn't name anyone else) put an end to this awful superstition in the area.

Lier is one of the many towns and municipalities that adorn the countryside, and they all have treasures to be proud of. Castles, beguinages, city walls or gates, centuries-old churches, abbeys, belforts, renaissance buildings, and very old farm buildings. And you can admire them all while you ride along on your bike. But there is one very special place where a lot of these buildings have been brought together. That place is called Bokrijk. It is an open-air provincial park and museum that displays a large collection of historical buildings from all over Flanders. It is a beautiful place to spend a day, away from the noise of the city. It feels like you've been transported in time. Sound like a theme?

You must have noticed that I love history. When you're a kid, growing up in a European town, this all seems normal, everyday. You don't realize how special it all is. It's not until you're older, or wiser maybe, that you come to appreciate it. And then when you move to North America, you miss it all. That's why I love going back, always ready to discover something new.

A couple of years ago, I came across a pamphlet for the Winter Garden of the Ursulines, and my son and I decided to make an outing of it. It is part of a former international boarding school for well-to-do girls, not far from Lier, led by the Ursuline nuns. In a day and age when women were not yet thought of as being equal to men, these nuns were way ahead of their time, building the school from scratch and becoming such successful entrepreneurs that their profits allowed them to also educate poor girls in neighbourhood village schools. The girls in the boarding school

Soak up the natural beauty, culture, architecture, and history in Belgium

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

didn't just learn how to do embroidery and recite bible verses; they were taught languages, math and sciences. The Winter Garden, built in 1900, is a magnificent stained-glass dome, where the girls could relax away from classes at times when the weather didn't allow outside walks. It's plain magic and totally worth the visit! But make sure to reserve your tickets in advance, because they book months ahead of time. We were lucky to get in.

Of course, Belgium lived through two world wars. Many buildings were destroyed, in the first war or in the next. Part of the boarding school for instance was levelled and was eventually rebuilt. People who had some money left the city and found lodgings in the countryside, away from the bombing. My grama cooked for some of those families. People who had transportation tried to flee the invading army. My dad, as a child, was put in a truck and ended up witnessing the bombardment of Dunkerque from the back of that truck. But the army had by then overtaken them and they decided to return home.

Both wars left a lot of scars, trauma and death in their wake, as wars do. The countryside still bears witness to that. In small and large ways. Two Canadian soldiers were buried in my hometown cemetery;

one was an airman, and the other died while demining the castle grounds after the invading army had fled. Some towns have somewhat larger war cemeteries, but the largest ones are in the west of Belgium, between the coast and the border with France. During the first world war, that was where the heaviest fighting took place and where up to 600,000 soldiers lost their lives. The City of Ypres, destroyed by the fighting, is a place of remembrance for people who wish to pay their respects to soldiers from that war. The Last Post is played every evening at Ypres' Menin Gate to honour the dead. It is a truly moving event that will bring tears to your eyes.

From Ypres it is only a 15-minute drive to Tyne Cot Cemetery, by Passchendaele, where the Canadian Memorial is located. Tyne Cot is the largest Commonwealth cemetery anywhere in the world. It contains the graves of nearly 12,000, mostly unnamed soldiers of the Great War. It is monumental in size, beautiful in its simplicity, but mostly awe-inspiring when you see row upon row of white crosses that name men and boys who were cut down in the prime of their lives. It will leave you speechless. This is Flanders Fields. This is where John McCrae wrote his famous poem. Lest we forget.

I'm sorry. I know this is heavy stuff. You

may need to talk it through, debrief so to speak, with your travel mates, over a beer maybe. There is no shortage of that in Belgium. You're in beer country. Stella, Duvel, Hoegaarden, Rodenbach, and Gueuze are among the most well-known. Then there are a number of abbey beers such as Trappist, Leffe, Chimay, and Affligem. Those are just a few of our many foamy brews. My personal favourite is Lindemans Kriek, a cherry beer that is especially lovely on a summer's day. I found it in Niagara-on-the-Lake once, a veritable treat!

It is a mere 45 km drive from Tyne Cot to De Panne at the Belgian coast. Take a stroll along the boardwalk or through the dunes, dip your feet into the sea, or rent a family-size go-cart for some team peddling. Who said you couldn't have a beach vacation in Belgium? My meal suggestion at the coast: try the "tomaat-garnaal", a tomato on a bed of lettuce, stuffed with a delicious North Sea shrimp filling. Fries on the side of course. It's one of my own favourite summer meals.

So please, do go and enjoy my home country. Soak up the natural beauty, the culture, the architecture, the history, and the art. Do the shopping, the beer-tasting, experience the chocolate and culinary treats, do not skip any of it. And, perhaps, rent a bicycle and take a ride along those

routes that I mentioned. You won't regret any of it!

About the columnist: Maria Wheeler is a Belgian Canadian who has lived in Paris since 2011. She loves family, travel, colours and beautiful sights. Along with her husband Tim and lab Raven she has recently been exploring Ontario in their travel trailer. They hope to make it to the West Coast later this year.



The beguinage in Lier, founded in 1258, is a peaceful maze of narrow streets and whitewashed homes that once sheltered a community of lay religious sisters. Today, the UNESCO-designated site offers visitors a quiet step back into centuries of Belgian history.

MARCH BREAK

Drop-in Public Skates

Monday, March 16

10:30 am to 11:30 am	Brant Sports Complex Free! <i>Sponsored by Ayr Farmers Mutual Insurance Company</i>
2:30 pm to 3:30 pm	Gaukel Memorial Community Centre

Tuesday, March 17

1:00 pm to 2:00 pm	Burford Community Centre <i>Sponsored by Stubbe's Precast</i> Free!
2:30 pm to 3:30 pm	Brant Sports Complex <i>Sponsored by Stubbe's Precast</i> Free!

Wednesday, March 18

2:30 pm to 3:30 pm	Gaukel Memorial Community Centre Free! <i>Sponsored by Ayr Farmers Mutual Insurance Company</i>
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Thursday, March 19

2:30 pm to 3:30 pm	Brant Sports Complex <i>Sponsored by Nathan Ackland Insurance Agency</i> Free!
3:00 pm to 4:00 pm	Burford Community Centre <i>Sponsored by Nathan Ackland Insurance Agency</i> Free!

Friday, March 20

2:00 pm to 3:00 pm	Burford Community Centre
2:30 pm to 3:30 pm	Gaukel Memorial Community Centre

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Riddles

What appears overnight in March,
makes the roads worse, but
somehow means spring is coming?

Potholes

What do Canadians gain in March
but immediately complain about
losing sleep over?

Daylight Saving Time

What returns in March, sings loudly
at sunrise, and acts like it owns the
neighbourhood?

Birds

What appears when the snow melts,
sticks to everything, and follows
you into the house?

Mud

What arrives every March and tricks
people into thinking winter is over?

One warm day

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 19

Sponsored by:



PET OF THE WEEK

HAZEL

Meet our Pet of the Week:

Hazel, the sweet 10 month old Great Dane was in to visit this week and thought the exam room chair was a perfect fit! She looked more like a character from Goldilocks and the three bears and still has some growing to do! Thanks for coming to see us Hazel

Stay tuned for more heartwarming stories every week from Paris Veterinary Clinic.



Word Search

WEIRD THINGS FOUND IN JUNK DRAWERS

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

- Flashlight
- Batteries
- Screwdriver
- Rubberbands
- Thumbtacks
- Paperclips
- Chargers
- Extensioncord
- Measuringtape
- Envelopes
- Scissors
- Superglue
- Coincollection
- Flashdrive
- Keychains
- Lighters
- Magnifyingglass
- Nailclippers
- Pushpins
- Binderclips
- Tapeholder
- Padlocks
- Earbuds
- Calculator



WEEKLY Horoscope

March 10 - March 17, 2026

ARIES

Mar 21 - Apr 20



Momentum returns gradually, Aries. A decisive action sparks opportunity and renews focus. Stay determined—it strengthens confidence and accelerates steady progress.

TAURUS

Apr 21 - May 21



Quiet persistence benefits you, Taurus. Reliable routines restore comfort and steady uncertain thoughts. Trust patience—it strengthens security and keeps ambitions within reach.

GEMINI

May 22 - Jun 21



Ideas flow quickly now, Gemini. An unexpected conversation sparks curiosity and inventive thinking. Follow inspiration—it opens doors toward progress and lively collaboration.

CANCER

Jun 22 - Jul 22



Inner calm returns, Cancer. Familiar comforts renew confidence and balance. Move patiently ahead and believe in yourself.

LEO

Jul 23 - Aug 23



Careful planning supports progress. Resolving unfinished matters restores order and confidence. Rely on precision—it guides decisions with clarity and assurance.

VIRGO

Aug 24 - Sept 22



Careful planning supports progress, Virgo. Resolving unfinished matters restores order and confidence. Rely on precision—it guides decisions with clarity and calm assurance throughout the week ahead.

LIBRA

Sept 23 - Oct 23



Harmony feels possible, Libra. Honest conversation eases tension and strengthens connection. Choose fairness—it restores balance and encourages lasting cooperation.

SCORPIO

Oct 24 - Nov 22



Focus intensifies now, Scorpio. A quiet realization encourages meaningful transformation. Trust instinct—it reveals resilience beneath the surface.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23 - Dec 21



Enthusiasm grows steadily. New experiences broaden perspective and renew motivation. Say yes—it encourages growth that reshapes your outlook.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22 - Jan 20



Dedication brings results. Thoughtful preparation leads toward steady advancement. Stay focused—the foundations you strengthen promise lasting achievement.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21 - Feb 18



Inventive thinking guides you, Aquarius. A fresh perspective inspires collaboration and forward movement. Trust originality—it strengthens your distinctive voice and ideas.

PISCES

Feb 19 - Mar 20



Quiet reflection restores purpose and emotional clarity. Welcome intuition—it gently guides you toward renewal, balance, and calm confidence.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

MARCH 11

Johnny Knoxville, Actor (55)

MARCH 12

Liza Minnelli, Musician (80)

MARCH 13

William H. Macy, Actor (76)

MARCH 14

Steph Curry, Athlete (38)

MARCH 15

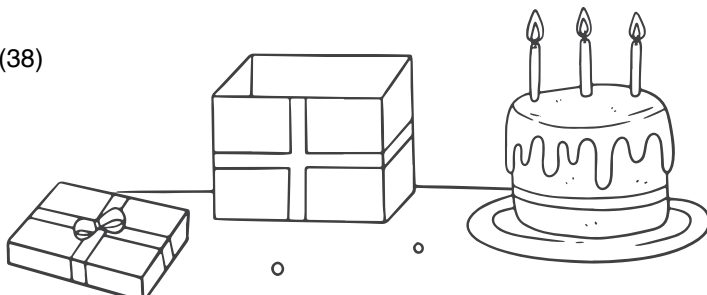
Bret Michaels, Musician (63)

MARCH 16

Lauren Graham, Actress (59)

MARCH 17

Rob Lowe, Actor (62)



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

Catholic Women's League Monthly Meeting - The Catholic Women's League will hold their monthly meeting on Wednesday, March 11th at 7 PM in the Sacred Heart Parish Hall, 17 Washington Street, Paris.

All Candidates Meeting - 7:00pm - All Candidates meeting for the Ward 5 bye-election, at the Onondaga Community Hall. Bring your questions and meet the candidates.

THURSDAY, MARCH 12

Free Will Offering Soup Luncheon - St. Paul's United Church - 48 Broadway St W at noon

Brant Heritage Quilters Guild - Will be holding their monthly meeting on Thursday, March 12 at St. George United Church, 9 Beverly St. E., St. George. Doors open at 6:15pm with meeting start time 7pm. New members welcome. Cost for non-members \$5/meeting.

Women Inspiring Women, Women's Institute Monthly Meeting - Thursday March 12th, 7-9pm at the Paris Fairgrounds Community Room. Brant Food for Thought - supporting school-based nutrition programs in Brant County.

Men's Probus Club of Brantford monthly meeting - will be held on Thursday, March 12, 10:00 a.m. till noon, at Walter Gretzky Municipal Golf Course, 320 Balmoral Drive with keynote speaker Mark Hebscher, one of Canada's most popular speakers, sports writer & author, who's hosted radio and CHCH TV sports shows and anchored Sportline. The goal of the Probus Club of Brantford is to provide fellowship, friendship, and enjoyment for people in their retirement and semi-retirement years. Men's Probus Club, website: brantfordprobus.ca. Mailing address: PO Box 26003, Brantford, N3R 7X4. Come join us.

TUESDAY, MARCH 17

Join the Paris Lions Club today! - Want to learn more about the club and how you can get involved? The Club is hosting a new members evening on Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at the Paris Fairgrounds starting at 7pm. Join Lions members for wine, cheese and good conversation. Discover how you can make a difference. You can RSVP to lionsparisrsvp@gmail.com.

TUESDAY, MARCH 17TH, 24TH & 31ST

The Brant Men of Song Will Be Holding Their Choir Practices - on Tuesdays on March 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st at the First Baptist Church 70 West St., Brantford from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. New members are always welcome to attend and enjoy some singing.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21

Oxford Philatelic Society OXPEX & OTEX 2026 Stamp Show - St. Mary's Catholic High School, 431 Juliana Drive, Woodstock, ON, N4V 1E8. 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Free admission and parking. Framed and Judged exhibits, Stamp dealers, youth gift bags, Sales Circuit, draw prizes. Contact: dhfe@silomail.com Web: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>

SUNDAY, MARCH 22

Brantford Symphony Orchestra presents Bachmania - Sunday, March 22 (3pm) at the Sanderson Centre. Join us as we celebrate music of the famous Bach family and say farewell to Maestro Sarabura and Concertmaster Leslie Dawn Knowles, retiring at the end of this season. Pre-concert chat 2:30pm, post-concert reception 5pm. Tickets \$44 or \$49 for adults, \$10 for students with ID, FREE for children and elementary students, available at: tickets.sandersoncentre.ca or by calling the box office at 519-758-8090 12-5pm Mon-Sat.

TUESDAY, MARCH 24

The Knights of Columbus Monthly Meeting - The Knights of Columbus will be holding their monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 24th at 7:30 PM in the Sacred Heart Parish hall at 17 Washington Street, Paris.

SATURDAY, MARCH 28

Experience Fanshawe at Open House - All locations are open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 28. Meet faculty and current students from all areas of Fanshawe Drop-in and ask about your program interests, career options and becoming a Fanshawe

student Hear from college experts on student life, admissions, financial aid, and more! Explore our campuses at London, Woodstock, Simcoe, St. Thomas, Clinton and Tiverton.

SUNDAY, MARCH 29

Catch all the action as the Paris Fire Station takes on the Airport Fire Station - in a charity hockey game to benefit Stedman Community Hospice. Game takes place at the Brant Sports Complex on March 29th at 3 pm. Everyone welcome. Bring your \$5 admission - or extra donations - and enjoy a great game for a great cause.

THURSDAY, APRIL 9

Free Will Offering Soup Luncheon - St. Paul's United Church - 48 Broadway St W at noon

SATURDAY, APRIL 11

"Celebrate Spring" Artisans & Vendors Market - It's been a long winter, but spring is sure to arrive! St. George United Church, 9 Beverly St. East (Hwy. #5), St. George is pleased to host awesome artisans and vendors once again - on Saturday, April 11th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Lots of baking, deli, gardening and gift ideas for spring & summer fun! Coffee, treats & lunch available. Admission of \$2.00 to support the local Food Bank. For more information, please contact (519) 448-3842.

Paris Maple Syrup Festival - Hosted by the Lions Club of Paris. Saturday, April 11 from 8 am to 5 pm at the Paris Fairgrounds. Enjoy homemade pancakes served fresh and delicious all day long! Alongside this sweet tradition, we welcome a wide variety of food vendors, artisans, makers, and local businesses to be part of this well-loved community event.

SUNDAY, MAY 10

Mother's Day Garden Party at Brae Manor Hobby Farm from 10am to 4pm! Pick your own spring bouquet in our Victorian garden and enjoy matcha or a mimosa, sweet treats, live music, a wildflower stroll, and an in-house art exhibit by renowned Paris artist Holly O. Tickets are \$40 and must be pre-purchased. 54 East River Rd, Paris, Ontario. Visit www.braemanorhobbyfarm.ca or email braemanorhobbyfarm@gmail.com for details.

SATURDAY, MAY 30

Join us for the Alzheimer Society IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's in Brantford/Brant County - Mohawk Park - Lower Pavilion, Brantford. 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. This annual walk helps raise funds so the Alzheimer Society can continue providing vital programs, support, and resources for people living with dementia and their families in our community. Bring your friends, family, coworkers, or start a team and walk with us. Every step helps make a difference. To learn more, register, or donate, visit www.walkforalzheimers.ca and select Brantford/Brant County. Let's come together as a community to support those affected by dementia!

1 & 3 TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

The Brantford Stamp Club - In Support of the Food Bank - The Brantford Stamp Club meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday September to December and January to May as well as the 1st Tuesday in June and December. Meetings are held at The Branlyn Community Centre 238 Brantwood Park Drive in Brantford. Doors open at 7pm and meetings start at 8pm.

SECOND TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

The Probus Club of Brantford - The Probus Club of Brantford with 140 members, provides fellowship, friendship, fabulous guest speakers and fun for retired and semi-retired men. We meet on the second Thursday of each month at the Walter Gretzky Municipal Golf Course, 10:00 a.m. to noon. Find out more at BrantfordProbus.ca

EVERY OTHER FRIDAY

Ingersoll Country Music Jamboree Meeting - In 2026 it's your fix! Ingersoll Country Music Jamboree meeting every other Friday 1-4 p.m. at Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St. S. Ingersoll. Join us, walk ins welcome. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Perform, listen, dance & enjoy! March 20, April 10 & 17, May 1, 15 & 29, June 5 & 19.

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SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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I will pay cash for antiques and collectibles. Coca Cola, Pepsi or any pop company. Brewery items - Kuntz, Huether Labatts, etc. Old radios and gramophones, wristwatches, pocket watches, old fruit jars - Beaver Star, Bee Hive etc. Any old oil cans and signs - Red Indian, Supertest etc. Any small furniture. If you are moving or cleaning out stuff please contact me - 519-570-6920.

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QUIZ ANSWERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Jim Carrey | 6. The Black Sea |
| 2. Tehran | 7. Melatonin |
| 3. Medical Assistance in Dying | 8. Loudness |
| 4. Raphael | 9. The Oprah Winfrey Show |
| 5. Infertility | 10. Ecuador |



Dan MUYS

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
FLAMBOROUGH–GLANBROOK–BRANT NORTH

PARIS Mobile Office Hours

My office has hosted these weekly since October to communities around the large geographic riding of Flamborough-Glanbrook-Brant North.

We will also be having a pop-up office in **Glen Morris** on March 18th from 10:00am to Noon at Centennial Hall.



Upcoming Pop-up Office

Dates in Paris:

At Paris Beer Co.
31 Mechanic Street (Winsey Mills), downtown Paris
Every Friday – 1:30 to 4:00pm

- **Fri. Mar. 13th**
- **Fri. Mar. 20th**
- **Fri. Mar. 27th**

Dan Muys, MP for Brant North

519-448-1483

Office: 6 Main St. S., St. George

Mail: Box 1100, St. George, ON N0E 1N0

dan.muys@parl.gc.ca | DanMuysMP.ca



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