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(CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTO)

Phil Cline, manufacturing teacher at Paris District High School, demonstrates how to fabricate a metal flower for Addison Chambers during the Women in Trades workshop held Feb. 25 at Paris District High School. Addison said she is interested in pursuing construction type courses in high school.

Sparking curiosity in skilled trades

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

Young women from Grades 7 and 8 rolled up their sleeves and picked up tools at Paris Dis-

trict High School on Wednesday evening, as the school hosted its second annual Women in Trades workshop.

Originally scheduled for Jan. 28 but postponed due to inclement weather, the event was

held Feb. 25 from 6 to 9 p.m., welcoming students and their families to explore careers in the skilled trades through hands-on workshops and conversations with educators and industry professionals.

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Young women explore skilled trades at Women in Trades workshop at Paris High

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The goal of the evening was to encourage young women to consider pathways in the skilled trades at a pivotal stage in their education. In Grades 7 and 8, students begin thinking about course selections and potential career directions in secondary school. Organizers say providing early exposure allows students to test their interests before committing to a full-semester course.

Participants were able to register for workshops in manufacturing, construction, cosmetology, green industries, and hospitality and tourism, all offered within PDHS's specialized technology classrooms.

Women remain underrepresented in many skilled trades sectors. Paris District High School (PDHS) Principal Kristy Johnson said introducing students to these pathways before they enter high school helps spark curiosity and challenge assumptions about what careers might be possible.

Last year marked the first time PDHS hosted the workshop, and the response was strong.

"The response from our school community was overwhelmingly positive from both the students and their parents," said Johnson. "This year, we have expanded our workshop options to cover most of the technology classes that we offer here at PDHS."

Johnson noted technology programming at the school continues to grow.

"We have a growing demand for technology classes in our school and have added a Hospitality program and a Cosmetology program, both with newly renovated spaces, this year to bring our technology program offerings up to 8 different sectors."

Throughout the evening, students rotated through interactive sessions, trying out equipment and learning directly from teachers and senior students enrolled in



Grade 12 PDHS student Tempy Ellis styles the hair of Grade 8 visitor Mackinley Graham, who has a keen interest in the cosmetology program at PDHS.

technology programs. Families also had opportunities to connect with community partners, local college and union representatives, and Grand Erie District School Board staff supporting initiatives such as the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program and Specialist High Skills Major.

The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program is a cooperative education opportunity that allows students to explore a trade while earning high school credits, combining approximately 90 per cent on-the-job training with 10 per cent classroom instruction. School board officials say events like this can have a lasting impact.

"We hope that the students leave the event with a new or growing curiosity in pursuing some form of technology education as either a career path or a special interest," says Johnson.

"The idea would be that these students have a chance to engage in a two hour workshop now, in Grade 7 or 8, but then opt to further their experiences by choosing some electives in the technology department that complement the other classes they take in secondary school," said Johnson.

In the manufacturing workshop, Grade 8 student Clara Gray returned for a second year. Last year she explored construction.

"It was really good. We got to use different tools and paints," she explained.

Gray said she has long been interested in construction and plans to enrol in construction and manufacturing courses when she reaches high school.

In the cosmetology classroom, a brand-new addition to PDHS now in its fourth week, students and senior mentors worked side by side. The program was introduced in the second semester following high demand, with Johnson advocating for its addition.

"So many kids were going to Brantford just to take this class," said teacher Karen Haggarty, who recently moved to PDHS after leading the program at Tollgate. A lifelong hairstylist, Haggarty said teaching is a natural extension of her career.

Grade 12 student Tempy Ellis previously took cosmetology in Brantford under Haggarty and was excited to see the course come to Paris.

"It gives our school a new opportunity and we don't have to travel everyday to Brantford. It's been a really good addition to our school," said Ellis.

During the workshop, Ellis styled the hair of Grade 8 student Mackinley Graham, who said she plans to take the course when she enters high school.

"I kind of know how to do everything already," said Graham, noting she grew up around the industry because of her mother, a home-based hairstylist.

Across the room, Grade 11 student Khloe Keogh worked on Grade 7 student Areya Herbison's nails. Herbison said the class appealed to her because of her interest in hairstyling and will help her determine whether the field is a viable career option.

Keogh, who also travelled to Brantford last year to take cosmetology before it was available locally, said bringing the program to PDHS is a positive step for students pursuing hands-on careers. She added that skilled trades courses give students the opportunity to move beyond traditional classroom learning and engage in practical, experiential education.

According to the Ontario Building and Construction Tradeswomen (OBCT), women account for just five per cent of on-site construction trades roles in Ontario, with approximately 14,200 working directly in the field. The low representation comes at a time when the province is grappling with a growing shortage of skilled trades workers. As many experienced tradespeople near retirement, Ontario faces a widening labour gap that must be filled by the next generation. In re-

sponse, industry and education leaders are increasing efforts to attract a more diverse workforce, including more women, to help address the shortfall.



The cosmetology course is brand new to PDHS students this and is already a big hit. Grade 11 student Khloe Keogh chats with Grade 7 student Areya Herbison while doing her nails. Khloe completed the course in Brantford last year before it was formally introduced in Paris this semester.



Testing out their manufacturing skills are (left to right) Charlotte Bedford, Hailey Vermeersch and Emily Lankan.



Clara Gray attended the Women in Trades workshops last year as a Grade 7 student and returned again this year to test out the manufacturing workshop.



Grade 7 and 8 students test their culinary skills in hospitality by preparing and serving hors d'oeuvres during the Women in Trades. Pictured left to right, Edith Wright, Madelyn Schmidt, Emma Ford, Leia Pickering, Avaya Darby, Lauren Churchill, Clara Bartscher, Evangeline Healy and Scarlett Roberts.

Ward 5 voters head to the polls March 16, All Candidates event scheduled for next week

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

Ward 5 residents will be heading to the polls soon for the byelection on March 16th to choose a new councillor for the ward's vacant seat.

If you still need help deciding how to vote, the Brant County Federation of Agriculture is hosting an All Candidates meeting on Wednesday, March 11 beginning at 7 pm at the Onondaga Community Hall. Bring your questions and meet the candidates.

County of Brant council received an information report at last Tuesday's council meeting outlining voting options, eligibility and key dates for the 2026 Ward 5 byelection.

The byelection will fill one councillor vacancy in Ward 5 for the remainder of the 2022–2026 term. Advance voting runs from March 9 to March 15, with voting day scheduled for Monday, March 16.

Eligible voters must be at least 18 years old on election day, be Canadian citizens and either reside in Ward 5 or own or rent property there. Individuals who own property in Ward 5 but live in another ward of the county are not eligible to vote.

Voting will be conducted online and by telephone, beginning at 10 a.m. March 9 and closing at 8 p.m. March 16.

In-person voter assistance will also be available at the Cainsville Community

Centre on March 15 and 16, as well as at County of Brant library branches and customer service offices during regular hours.

Voter Information Letters (VILs) were mailed Feb. 20, with residents expected to begin receiving them as early as Feb. 23. The letter is required to cast a ballot. Those who do not receive or misplace their VIL are encouraged to contact the clerk's department by March 9 for a replacement.

Registration is available online through the province's voter registration system, by contacting the clerk's department, or in person at designated locations, including the Cainsville Community Centre during advance voting and on election day.

Proxy voting is also permitted under the Municipal Elections Act using the prescribed form available through the county.

Election staff will operate roving polls during advance voting at Brucefield Manor Retirement Lodge and Hardy Terrace Long-Term Care Home to ensure eligible residents in those facilities can cast ballots.

The report notes that the byelection will be funded through the county's existing election reserve.

Under the Municipal Elections Act, offences such as voting when not entitled, voting more than once or offering inducements in exchange for votes carry penalties, including fines and possible imprisonment. The successful candidate will serve Ward 5 residents for the balance of the current council term.

Paris BIA board appointments, \$325 levy head to council for approval

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The Paris Business Improvement Area's 2026 executive board appointments and operating budget are being forwarded to County of Brant council for approval following the organization's annual general meeting earlier this month.

In a report presented during County Council on Feb. 24, General Manager of Corporate Services Heather Boyd outlined recommended bylaw amendments to formalize two new board appointments and approve the BIA's 2026 budget.

The BIA held its annual general meeting on Feb. 17, where two executive positions were available. Two nominations were received and both candidates were acclaimed.

Sara Graham of the Arlington Hotel and Jennifer Von Schleinitz of Paris Beer and The Wincey Mills were nominated to fill the vacant positions. They will join existing board members Councillor Steve Howes, Penny Ritchie, Zack Haight, David Mahn and Amy Jackson.

Two resignations from elected executive members prompted the appointments. The names of the two who resigned were not provided.

The 2026 operating budget, also reviewed and approved by the BIA membership at the AGM, is based on a per-business levy of \$325. The levy is applied to property owners and businesses within the BIA boundaries and funds the organization's annual programming and promotions.

According to the report, the Paris BIA serves as a liaison between County of Brant council and the downtown business community. Approval of the executive board and annual budget are described as key steps in supporting the organization's activities and initiatives.

The proposed 2026 budget includes allocations for general promotions, Christmas promotions, contracted services, website operations and facility rentals, among other operational expenses.

Council will consider bylaws to amend the appointment bylaw and approve the 2026 budget at an upcoming meeting.

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OPINION

Letters to the Editor

PMHA clarifies tournament changes, apologizes for lack of communication

Dear Editor:

The Executive of the Paris Minor Hockey Association ('PMHA') has recently received and considered correspondence, and opinions shared in The Paris Independent regarding the PMHA local league tournament held January 23 to 25, 2026.

In 2024, PMHA, the St. George Minor Hockey Association and the Burford Minor Hockey Association combined their representative programs to form the Brant County Minor Hockey Association, known as the Brant Battalion. With ice time at an even greater premium, the Executive of the PMHA determined that operating three separate tournaments was no longer sustainable or in the best interests of its players. After careful consideration, the PMHA board decided that going forward it would host one tournament for all local league divisions each season.

The PMHA board decided that the new tournament would be named the Full Moon Face Off. In moving to one event, the Board selected a neutral name rather than continuing the individual memorial tournaments honouring Lisa Dalpe, Art Coombs, Syl Apps and Rob Johnston.

The PMHA board sincerely regrets and apologizes that it did not communicate these changes to the community earlier and that it did not consult with the memorial families about the changes in advance. It was never the intention of the PMHA board to cause hurt, disrespect or diminish the legacy of Lisa Dalpe, Art Coombs, Syl Apps or Rob Johnston. Recently, the Board approved that the divisions of the tournament going forward will be named to honour Lisa Dalpe, Art Coombs, Syl Apps and Rob Johnston.

PMHA is a not-for-profit organization. All Board mem-

bers are unpaid volunteers, and any tournament proceeds help minimize registration fees and are reinvested in our players in many ways.

PMHA is proud to say that this year's tournament was a success. It supported local businesses, provided paid opportunities for teenage volunteers, and created a positive experience for our players and visiting families. We are proud of the many volunteers who dedicated countless hours to making it happen. The Board of the PMHA appreciates the community's passion and engagement. We hope that this message provides clarity to the circumstances and respectfully resolves the concerns of the public and families involved.

Paris Minor Hockey Association Board

Norfolk farmer opposes proposed 'food belt' legislation

Dear Editor:

I'm a lifelong farmer from Norfolk County, Ontario.

I have been following the ongoing campaign of Green Party MPP Mike Schreiner and Independent MPP Brady in their effort to garner support for Private Members Bill 21, which aims to create designated "food belts" across specific agricultural regions of Ontario and impose AIA's.

A "food belt" designation would negatively impact small, rural counties like Norfolk by creating excess red tape, more bureaucracy and would result in the imposition of costly AIA's for many farm operations and small business attempting to expand or diversify to maintain viability.

Ontario currently has strong farmland protection policies in place such as Greenbelt Protection, Planning Act and the recently updated Provincial Policy Statement.

The statistics used by the 3 General Farm Organizations, the Ontario Land Trust and the two MPPs to support their claim of 319 acres of farmland lost each day are taken from the 2021 Statistics Canada (StatsCan) Census of Agriculture and compared to the 2016 StatsCan Census. One only need go to the StatsCan Census for 2021 and read the notice on "changes in reporting methods" to see that a comparison directly to the 2016 StatsCan report cannot be made in some sections of the census. Another change in reporting for 2021 vs 2016 was that only farms registering an income from farming to CRA 2021 are reported in the survey.

Also, there is a significant difference in reported farmland area between StatsCan and Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) data which shows "an increase" in total "taxable" farmland.

Note: The StatsCan defines "Total Farm Area" as all farmland owned, used and/or controlled by active farmers. Whereas MPAC defines "total Farmland" as all land

assessed for tax purposes even if that land is not actively farmed.

The suggestion by the MPPs that all loss of farmland can be attributed primarily to "urban" development is a false narrative.

In Norfolk County, during the downsizing of the Tobacco industry, many farms have been purchased by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) with land that has been conserved and restored that total more than 8000 acres.

Farmers engaging in estate planning have also donated farmland parcels, for tax benefits, to the Long Point Basin Land Trust (LPBLT) in recent years. The LPBLT now owns 1200 acres of land in Norfolk County. There are 36 Land Trust affiliated groups active in Ontario searching to acquire rural properties for conservation purposes across Ontario.

All these lands are no longer included in the StatsCan data collection.

Where investors (domestic and offshore) buy farmland and lease fields to farmers, only the acreage rented for crop production is reported to StatsCan by the farm operators. It is extremely important to note that crop productions acres have increased in Ontario and across Canada. This is attributed to farm operators finding ways to improve farm productivity. Increases in crop land acres as well as annual yield increases, resulting from improved variety development and new production methods will ensure our agricultural output continues to increase every year.

The sheer size of today's modern farm equipment and economies of scale in agriculture make ownership of marginal farmland areas that have small irregular shaped fields, a high percentage of woodlots, wetlands, rocky and rolling terrain less attractive for farm operators to purchase. Non-farm residents are more likely to pur-

chase the marginal farm properties and rent back a small portion of land to farm operators or more likely plant the remaining open farmland into trees. These parcels are factored into a loss of farmland area in statistics Canada data and yet they remain classified as total farm area in the MPAC data and are not lost to development.

An in-depth look at StatsCan show minimal losses of total farmland in the counties of Wellington, Perth, Oxford, Chatham-Kent and Middlesex, due to lower acreages of woodlots, wetlands and other non-tillable areas. The largest acreages of farmland lost in StatsCan data occurs in regions with a higher percentage of forest cover and significant natural areas.

On the other side of the equation, there is potential for significant acreages of new land to be cleared and made available for crop production in the northern clay belt area surrounding Temiskaming.

MPAC shows that while land tenure may be changing in Ontario, the majority of those changes farmland remains in managed forest areas, wetlands and significant natural areas. Any Bill attempting to create economic zones based on a single economic sector in today's geopolitical world may expose the local economy to serious economic risks. The tobacco industry in Norfolk is one example that comes to mind.

A "food belt" designation WILL NOT solve any of the problems facing agriculture. Bill 21 is more likely to create more red tape, bureaucracy and to impose further restrictions on property rights facing small family farms and non-farm residents that currently live in rural areas. Bill 21 may cause harm to rural communities in Ontario, those very communities that must continue to adapt to the changes that have arisen with a more mechanized and globally focused agriculture sector in Ontario.

Frank Schonberger, Norfolk County farmer

OPINION

Letter to the Editor

Growth should prompt renewed push for lighting controls, says resident

Dear Editor:

On February 17, 2026, the County of Brant Administration and Operations Committee voted 6–2 to receive as information Staff Report RPT-0052-26 and declined to move forward with public consultation or amendments to the County's Property Standards By-law (By-law 205-02, Section 25(2) – Lighting).

- The proposed amendment sought to strengthen existing regulations by addressing light intrusion, also referred to as nuisance outdoor illumination. Specifically, the proposal aimed to:
- Reduce glare from exterior and interior luminaires
- Limit unwanted light trespass onto neighbouring dwellings
- Prohibit and regulate lighting nuisances
- Require exterior lighting for yards and parking areas to be shielded or directed away from abutting properties
- Ensure barriers or deflectors prevent light from shining directly into adjacent dwelling units
- Prevent both interior and exterior lighting from interfering with the reasonable enjoyment of life and property

While the current by-law states that properties must

provide and maintain an effective barrier to prevent light from shining directly into dwelling units and onto streets and highways, many residents believe it does not adequately address modern development patterns and increasing housing density.

Light pollution is more than a minor inconvenience. It wastes energy, increases costs, and can negatively impact human health and wildlife. Simple measures—such as using shielded fixtures, directing light only where needed, reducing wattage, and turning off unnecessary lights—can significantly reduce light trespass and glare.

Several Ontario municipalities have already acted. The City of Brantford (June 27, 2023), the City of Mississauga (November 29, 2023), the Town of Lakeshore (January 10, 2024), and the Town of Oakville (June 19, 2023, and November 18, 2024) have adopted or strengthened nuisance lighting by-laws in response to growth and increased housing density.

During the February 17 meeting, Greg Bergeron, Director of Enforcement and Regulatory Services, advised the Committee that the existing by-law is sufficient, noting that the County receives an average of 6.3 lighting-related complaints annually over the past six years. He also cited potential complexities, including increased enforcement demands and the need for evening

inspections, should new regulations be implemented. While acknowledging that nuisance lighting could be regulated in the future, the Committee ultimately chose not to pursue consultation at this time.

However, the County of Brant's population grew by 19% between 2016 and 2021, according to census data. As medium- and higher-density developments continue, homes are being built closer together and at greater heights. This changing landscape increases the likelihood of light intrusion from both exterior and interior sources. Rather than focusing solely on the number of formal complaints received, Council should consider proactive public engagement—especially as development accelerates. Community consultation would provide valuable insight into whether residents are affected and whether the current by-law reflects present and future needs.

As our community grows, our policies must evolve alongside it. The County of Brant should revisit this issue, engage residents through its community engagement framework, and ensure that its by-laws align with the realities of increased density and long-term growth.

S. Mota - Resident, County of Brant

Brant OPP host well-attended Community Safety Session



(ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE WEST REGION PHOTO)

Community members gathered at the Cainsville Community Centre on Feb. 25 for a Community Safety Information Session hosted by the Brant County OPP. Representatives from the Auto Theft Unit, Major Fraud Unit and the Brant County OPP's Project Safeguard shared practical tips on preventing vehicle theft, recognizing fraud and improving home security during the event, which extended an extra hour due to strong attendance and engagement.

Letter to the Editor

Camera program worth reconsidering

Dear Editor:

I read in the Paris Independent news that the photo camera for speeding program has been scrapped. The program was here for a short time and collected \$700,000 in surplus fees.

I think if drivers drive too fast through these areas, they should be charged. We all know the police cannot be at all locations all the time, so make the drivers responsible for their bad driving habits by paying the fees.

These surplus fees could be put towards improving our roads which would help the budget re annual taxes. Through investigating with province, there could be other areas where the fees could be used.

Hopefully council members have contacted the province to set up discussions relating to the above. Also, numbers seem to count, so council should contact other councils to create a larger base of concern, let province know and maybe they will take a second look at their decision. Numbers do count.

The items province is considering for speeding have already been used to no avail, i.e. flashing lights at schools.

Western provinces have had this program for years to include driving through caution lights.

Interesting times ahead

- Shirley Simons, Paris, Ont

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Dream inspires local author's self-published books and educational game

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

A dream more than two decades ago sparked an idea that would shape the creative path of a local author and game creator.

"My first creative ideas was my boardgame in 2004. I don't really know how or why this idea came to me. But I had a dream one night and I drew the image of my game," Carol Madou recalled.

That idea became Balancing Act Challenge, an educational board game designed to teach healthy eating based on Canada's Food Guide. Madou's son, who was 11 at the time, helped test early versions of the game, adding fun elements such as a challenge square and a Canadian flag square.

Inspired to publish it so it could be used as a teaching tool, Madou first had to obtain government permission because of copyright protections tied to Canada's Food Guide. Once approval was secured, she began researching how to produce the game, working with a local graphic artist and printer.

"I am proud to say that my game is 100% Canadian," she said.

Now, 21 years later, Balancing Act Challenge continues to be purchased by teachers and parents - something that still surprises her.

"And I am happily surprised that my game is still selling now, 21 years later. And so I am excited to share this!" she said.

One teacher who bought the game last November told Madou that interactive learning can be more effective than tradi-

tional instruction. "She said that by playing the game, the children may learn about nutrition. Instead of just hearing it from their teacher. She said 'I could talk about nutrition until I'm blue in the face.'"

Seven years after creating the board game, Madou turned her attention to writing. While reading a mystery novel she found predictable, she thought, "I can do better than that." She began drafting a mystery romance, novel but soon found inspiration for a children's story. Her first published book in 2011 became *When Pigs Can Fly!*

Writing appears to run in her family. Her mother wrote many poems, and she later learned that her grandmother also wrote. She edited her mother's poems, found non-copyrighted pictures and published *Dapple* in 2020. Across all her books, Madou focuses on delivering positive messages.

"With all of my books, I wanted to share my stories and they all have a good message," she said.

Themes of family, friendship, trust and forgiveness are central to her work.

"I feel that having a caring family and friendships are a great benefit towards having a positive life. In any good relationship, trust and forgiveness are needed," she said, adding that she hopes readers, especially children, will apply those lessons in their own lives.

Her newest children's book, published in 2025, *But Frogs Eat Dragonflies!*, addresses anti-bullying.

"The message I want young readers to take away is that we need to stand up

against bullying; practice kindness and so everyone feels safe and included," she said. "My story 'But Frogs Eat Dragonflies!' tells how friendship and trust are important, and bullying is wrong."

After attempts at traditional publishing, Madou chose to self-publish. While comfortable with editing, she needed help navigating printing software, sourcing non-copyrighted images and finding illustrators for her children's books. By reaching out to contacts and asking questions, she built the support network she needed.

"I am surprised at the change and growth in myself as I have done the marketing myself, with some good luck in asking the right questions to the right people," she said. Writing, she emphasizes, is a hobby she is passionate about and that passion drives her forward.

Madou also encourages young aspiring writers, particularly those who feel they lack support.

"Some say they don't have much support from their family. But I tell them not to give up on their dream; I wrote my first book when I was 50 years old. They are young and can have a bright future," she said. "I am not an expert, but it brings me joy when I can encourage someone."

She continues to sell her books and Balancing Act Challenge at vendor shows and community events, sharing information through business cards and postcards with her contact details. Her books are currently available at Commonplace Books in Ingersoll. Looking back at everything she has created, from children's stories to a mystery romance novel and an educational



Carol Madou displays copies of her children's book *When Pigs Can Fly!* and promotional materials at a vendor event, where she continues to share her self-published books and educational board game with the community.

board game, Madou says she is proud of it all. But if she had to choose one accomplishment that stands out, it would be her game.

"It took much research and involved different companies & individuals. And it has lasted this long, despite the Canada's Food Guide being updated since 2004. I am happy that it is still being used as a teaching tool, as nutrition is an important issue," she said.

For Madou, what began as a dream has grown into a lasting creative journey rooted in learning, encouragement and the belief that it is never too late to follow a passion.

If you're interested in obtaining a copy of Carol's books, reach out to her via email at madouauthor@hotmail.ca

Paris Lions Club invites residents to serve and connect at March 17 open house

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

For nearly a century, the Paris Lions Club has quietly helped shape the fabric of the community. Now members are inviting others to be part of that legacy.

The club will host a wine-and-cheese meet and greet on Tuesday, March 17 at 7 p.m. at the Paris Fairgrounds, offering residents a chance to learn more about Lions membership and the impact the service club has had since 1931.

"The first major project for the Lions Club of Paris was the formation of Lions Park in 1931," said Past President Rod Laframboise. "The Lions has led improvements since then including splashpad,

swimming pool, amphitheatre, and baseball diamonds."

Over the decades, the club's footprint has extended far beyond the park gates. Laframboise said the Lions have long supported youth sports and youth organizations, while also providing annual scholarships to students at Paris District High School.

"Over the past 95 years the club has supported the Willet Hospital, Green Lane sports complex, Sensity, Brant Sports Complex, and the Cowan Community Health Hub to name a few," he said.

Much of the club's impact comes through partnerships with other local organizations. The Lions support initiatives such as the Salvation Army, the Paris Christmas Hamper Program, Par-

ticipation Support Services, Children's Safety Village and Jason's Wheelhouse.

"These local organizations have improved the lives of many of our neighbours," Laframboise said.

Guided by the Lions motto, "We Serve," members also take on hands-on projects including road cleanups, vision screening, used eyeglass collection, tree planting and feeding those in need.

The March 17 open house is designed to give prospective members a closer look at that work. Attendees will learn about the club's eight pillars: Childhood Cancer, Diabetes, Disaster Relief, Environment, Hunger, Vision, Humanitarian and Youth. Displays highlighting the club's history and community projects will

be set up, and guests will have an opportunity to speak directly with members.

"Most importantly, the attendees will meet our diverse membership and get to talk to our members about why they became a Lion," Laframboise said.

He acknowledges that many people want to give back but hesitate because of time constraints.

"We recognize that people lead busy lives and they have job and family responsibilities. As such, you can contribute as many hours as you can," he said.

For those not ready to commit to full membership, the club also offers a "Friend of Lions" option, allowing volunteers to help with fundraising events and initiatives without becoming full-fledged

members.

On a personal level, Laframboise said joining the club a decade ago helped him put down roots in the community.

"When I moved to Paris 10 years ago, I joined the Lions Club of Paris so that I could meet new people, become more involved in the community, and contribute to having a positive impact on others," he said.

As the club looks toward its 100th anniversary, members hope more residents will step forward to carry the tradition forward — not just to serve, but to connect.

Those interested in attending the March 17 meet and greet can RSVP to lionsparisrsvp@gmail.com

HISTORIC PARIS

PARIS PAST: The visionaries of the Nith: A history of the Paris Lions Club



By Chris Whelan

The history of the Lions Club of Paris and its many contributions to our town would fill the pages of several newspapers. Throughout our history, since the early 1930s, the Lions Club has always been there to lend a helping hand to those in need. Whether through grand civic projects or quiet acts of charity, their presence has been a constant source of strength for the community. For today, let us look back and tell the story of the tremendous beginnings of this amazing group of people.

In 1931, the town of Paris was a community of 4,137 souls navigating the onset of the Great Depression. As the economy faltered and the distant drums of the Second World War began to beat, the residents faced a period of profound uncertainty. Yet it was precisely during these lean years that a group of ambitious business and professional men converged to form the Paris Lions Club. Their mission was simple but monumental: to ignite a collective spirit of service that would provide for those the era had left behind.

The early work of the Lions was intimate and immediate. The founding members focused on the health and dignity of the town's underprivileged children. In a time when "the wherewithal" was scarce, the Club stepped in to fund vision testing, furnish eyeglasses, and pay for dental and tonsil operations. They ensured the town's youth were nourished, supplying milk and cod liver oil to those in need, and bringing a sense of happiness and cheer during the Christmas season.

However, the Club's ambitions soon soared beyond individual acts of charity toward a grander vision of civic improvement. Before it was a park, the land across the Nith River from downtown Paris was a "hidden meadow." Accessible only by steep, winding paths from King's Highway #2, it was a wild sanctuary of willow trees and wintergreen, known mostly to adventurous boys playing pirates and cows grazing in the shade.

In 1931, a visionary member Jack Cameron shared a grand idea with the newly formed club. He beckoned fellow Lions Jack Knill and Jim Kogan to explore the thickets between old Laurel Street and the river. Where others saw an overgrown riverside, they saw a sanctuary. The land, once part of the estate of town founder Hiram Capron, was eventually acquired from the Capron Estate and Mike Collins—whose home on Laurel Street was a remnant of the early distilleries that gave "Distillery Hill" its name.

By July 1935, the Paris Star reported on what had become the most ambitious program for civic improvement in the town's history: the creation of the Lions Park Children's Playground. The goal was to provide a modern, supervised space for wholesome recreation, fostering "safety and healthy bodies" for every child in Paris.



Lions Park in the 1960s - postcard from my collection

(PARIS MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTO)

To fund such a massive undertaking during the Depression required a "stroke of genius." The Club organized a massive Summer Carnival held from May 30 to June 1, 1935. The event featured a floor show, dancing, and a high stakes draw for two 1935 Ford vehicles and six ladies or gents Gruen watches. The nation-wide appeal was a resounding success, enriching the Club's coffers by a staggering \$5,164.35 after expenses, this was a small fortune at the time.

With resources secured, the Lions set to work. The project involved the preparation and maintenance of the land, as well as the installation of state-of-the-art playground equipment.

Bill Elman volunteered his expertise to survey the land. The J.D. Adams Company of Paris lent a grader to the Club free of charge to level the terrain. Swimming in the rivers was a dangerous sport so a centerpiece of the park was a wading pool, designed to accommodate 350 children at once. A plank bridge was constructed to connect the west end of Mechanic Street to the heart of the park, providing easy access for the townspeople.

Despite the intensity of this project, the Lions never wavered in their "regular" work, continuing to provide medical care and food for the town's vulnerable. On September 11, 1935, the final deed of the land was ceremoniously handed over to Mayor Stewart. The park was later officially dedicated to the town under the leadership of W.G. Pickell, owner of the Paris Star at the time.

The original Lions Park quickly became an idyllic retreat. Families from near and far flocked to the Nith River for picnics, making use of the swings, teeter-totters, and the natural beauty the Lions had preserved. Over the decades, the park expanded, bolstered by significant contributions from Paris Playground Equipment and the ongoing dedication of the Lions Club members.

Today, the legacy of those founding members remains etched into the landscape of Paris. From the community

pool to the expansive green spaces, the Lions Club set a high standard of motivation and civic pride. They transformed a hidden meadow into a communal heart, proving that even in the darkest economic times, a vision shared by dedicated individuals can create a sanctuary that lasts for generations.



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Panthers fall just short in Championship thriller

GEORGE LE GRESLEY

Sports Correspondent

The last time Paris District High School made it to a Senior basketball final was in 2001. For this year's edition, it was a four-year project, and as Juniors, they started with a winless season. The only obstacle has been the Assumption Saints, who, during the regular season's two meetings, had defeated the Panthers. Those two losses to ACS were the only two for the Panthers, and the team's goal was to reach the final and meet the Saints. They reached that goal, and the final was last Monday at Assumption's gym, with a full house of basketball fans.

Assumption took charge of the score-sheet, leading all the way, at one point holding an eight-point lead, and eventually leading the Panthers by 20-15 at the end of the first quarter. The score could have been closer had a few shots gone in, but the feeling on the team was that the Panthers were still in the game.

In the second quarter, the Panthers started fast, catching up on the scoreboard to 20-19. At that point, Assumption came on strong, stretching their lead to 32-21. The Panthers kept on battling to end the half at 34-39. Normally, Paris Canaan Sherbino dominates the scoring, but in this game, with the Saints double-teaming him, he was held to 8 points. The game plan became obvious: the team would have to get more players involved in scoring, with Elliott Scheidel scoring 8, Dexter Quesnel scoring 5, and Eoin Wright and Nathan Brewster scoring 4 points each.

The final two quarters were the most dramatic, exciting minutes of basketball one could witness! The Panthers trailed most of the third quarter, almost catching up with ACS with 3:45 left, trailing 40-38, and at the end of the quarter, trailing 47-44.

In the final quarter, Elliot Scheidel was a beast, blocking shots and grabbing rebounds on both ends of the court, stopping Assumption from stretching their lead. With 2:40 left in the game, the Panthers trailed by a score of 52-50. The last two



(MICHELLE MALVASO PHOTOS)

Paris Panthers' Canaan Sherbino surveys the floor while setting up a play during high school basketball action, drawing close defensive coverage as he controls the tempo for his team.



Elliott Schiedel lays one up.



Pictured is the Paris Panthers Senior Basketball team and the Assumption Saints during the AABHN finals last week. Paris lost a 57-54 nailbiter.

minutes of the game were full of missed attempts, turnovers, and fouls. The Panthers' strategy now was to foul the opposition to stop the clock intentionally and hope the fouled player would miss their shots so that they could take possession of the ball and score either a 2- or 3-point field goal. The plan worked so well that with 24.8 sec-

onds left to play, Paris trailed 56-54. The only thing that defeated the Panthers was, of course, ACS, but time was the Saints' as they won the game 57-54.

The Panthers advanced to the CWOS-SA tournament over the weekend. We will publish an update on their performance in next week's edition.



Paris Panthers' Elliott Schiedel (left) and Nathan Brewster (right) rise to challenge an Assumption player's shot at the rim during high school basketball action, contesting the attempt in heavy traffic under the basket. Also pictured is Canaan Sherbino breaking in for a shot.

Panthers Girls hockey defeat Assumption for AABHN north crown



(GEORGE LE GRESLEY PHOTO)

Paris goaltender Kenzie Coates stretches across the crease to make a key save as Assumption Saints players crash the net during girls' high school hockey action.



(GEORGE LE GRESLEY PHOTO)

Members of the Paris Panthers celebrate after defeating the Assumption Saints 3-2 to capture the AABHN North championship, earning redemption against the only team to beat them during the regular season.

GEORGE LE GRESLEY

Sports Correspondent

Redemption was on the line — and the Panthers delivered.

After advancing by default in the semifinal against North Park, the Panthers faced a familiar rival in the championship final: Assumption, the only team to defeat them twice during the regular season. With a North Division banner at stake, Paris seized the moment, holding off a late Saints surge

to secure a hard-fought 3-2 victory and claim the AABHN North championship.

Kenzie Coates got the start in net for the Panthers. In the first period, both teams played a tight game, giving each other few scoring opportunities until the 5-minute mark. Sydney Kipp scored on assists by Raegan Charter and Harley Shuart. Assumption came back to tie the score a minute later, making it 1-1, which was the score at the end of the period.

The second period belonged to the Pan-

thers, with goals by Reese Halliday and Rowan Worrall for a 3-1 lead. Reese's goal was assisted by Alyssa Oakes and Taylor Drinkle, and Rowan's goal was assisted by Scout Hergott-Leader and Taylor Drinkle.

In the third period, Assumption pulled out all the stops, trying to catch up and tie the game, but with two minutes left, the Saints scored to make the score 3-2. Assumption called a time out to work out a strategy to tie the game and pulled their

goalie for an extra attacker. Despite the extra player on the ice, the Panthers played great defense and won the AABHN North championship.

The Panthers will now face the South Division champion for a chance to advance to the regional championship. We will provide an update on their progress in next week's edition.

Titans swept by Tavistock in Doherty Division playoffs

GEORGE LE GRESLEY

Sports Reporter

The Paris Titans, down 2 games in the best-of-7 playoff series against the Tavistock Braves, have a mountain to climb to reach the next round of the PJHL'S Doherty Division playoff series. Last Monday, they headed off to Tavistock, where in the first period the Braves had a hefty 22 shots on Paris's goalie, Colton Thompson, but still led on the scoreboard, 3-2, at the end of the first period. Cole Kersey had two goals and brother Blake Kersey scored a power play goal.

The second period was all Tavistock, scoring 3 goals, one of them short-handed on a Titans' power play. The period ended with Tavistock leading 5-3. The period Tavistock again scored a short-handed goal on a Paris power play to make the score 6-3, followed by a Jack Kersey goal for the Titans and an empty net goal for Tavi at the end of the game for a 7-4 final and a 3 game to 0 lead in the series.

Next up was game 4, an 8:30 start in Tavistock, where the Braves jumped to a 3-0 lead in the first period and a 4-0 lead after the second period. Blake Kersey scored early in the period to drop the scoring deficit to 4-1. Tavistock followed up with three more goals, two of those being power play goals to stretch their lead 7-1. The period ended with Aiden Switzer scoring a power play goal and Keegan Clarke scoring for a 7-3 final in favour of Tavistock, who swept the Titans on four games straight.

To summarize this season being a failure for the Titans is an understatement, and the fault doesn't necessarily fall to the players. The team had, at my count, four coaching changes and a General Manager leaving. I have no idea why all these changes happened, but this turmoil can cause havoc with a team's progress toward developing a philosophy for playing hockey. The only solution for next season is consistency behind the bench to take full advantage of the talent on their roster.

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Brant County Sports Hall of Fame announces fall induction class

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The Brant County Sports Hall of Fame Ad Hoc Committee has endorsed a new class of inductees who will be formally welcomed this fall, recognizing a group of athletes, builders and a championship team whose contributions helped shape sport in the community.

The Committee reviewed the Athlete Recognition Policy and each nomination, during its February 4 meeting, noting that the policy permits a maximum of four inductions per location per year. Six nominations were received for Paris. Following discussion, the Committee voted to induct one builder, one team and two athletes into the Paris Sports Hall of Fame.

Nominations for Arthur “Ace” Wilson – Paris, and Andy Moran – Paris, were referred to the Sports Hall of Fame nomination process for 2027.

The Sports Hall of Fame exists to recognize athletic achievement, honour builders of sport, foster civic pride and promote health and wellness by highlighting residents who have participated and excelled in sport.

Last year’s induction class included Andy Stryker, Bob Coyne and Jack Tollhurst.

This year’s inductees are:

Zac Dalpe – Athlete (Paris)

Paris native Zac Dalpe is being inducted following an accomplished hockey career that spanned junior, international, professional and NHL levels.

A graduate of Paris Minor Hockey, Dalpe won OMHA championships in 2002 and 2003 and represented Team Canada internationally as a teenager, earning MVP honours at tournaments in Sweden and Belarus. His junior career included standout seasons with Stratford and Penticton, where he captured a World Junior ‘A’ Challenge gold medal and tournament MVP honours.

Dalpe was selected 45th overall by the Carolina Hurricanes in the 2008 NHL Entry Draft and went on to play 15 professional seasons. His career included 574 AHL and NHL games, a Calder Cup championship, international success with Team Canada, and appearances with multiple NHL clubs. He also played in the Stanley Cup Final with the Florida Panthers during the 2022–23 season.

Dean Morrison – Builder (South Dumfries)

Dean Morrison’s contribution to minor hockey in St. George has been defined by leadership, mentorship and decades of volunteer service.

Morrison began coaching in the St. George Minor Hockey system at age 18 and continued long after his own children had finished playing. His involvement extended to executive leadership, including several years as president of the association, where he spent countless hours supporting families, coaches and players.

Known for his steady presence at the arena and behind the scenes, Morrison played a key role in maintaining and strengthening the minor hockey system during periods of growth and change, making him a respected builder within the community.

Sue Morrison – Builder (South Dumfries)

Sue Morrison is being recognized for her longstanding commitment to youth sport and community recreation in St. George.

For many years, Morrison served as a coach and trainer within the St. George Minor Hockey system, supporting player development and team operations behind the scenes. Her involvement extended beyond the arena through work with Parks and Recreation, advocating for the development and maintenance of sports fields and playgrounds to ensure children had safe, accessible spaces to be active.

Morrison also contributed to community life through involvement in several non-sport organizations, reflecting a broader dedication to building a healthy, engaged com-

munity.

Doug Robb – Athlete/Builder

Doug Robb’s influence on hockey extends from elite officiating to pioneering adaptive sport.

Robb officiated at some of the highest levels of the game, refereeing provincial, national and international championships, including the Memorial Cup, Centennial Cup and World Junior Championship. He also served as a linesman in the WHA, including the Summit Series and international competition across Europe.

In recognition of his service, Robb received the Ontario Hockey Association’s Gold Stick Award in 2019.

Beyond officiating, Robb was instrumental in forming both the Hamilton & District and Brant & District Sledge Hockey Associations, helping to expand inclusive sport opportunities. He also served as president, coach and referee within sledge hockey, winning multiple provincial championships, and coached the St. George Peewee Rep team in the late 1980s.

Marilyn McCulloch – Builder (Paris)

A Paris resident since 1968, Marilyn McCulloch has played a pivotal role in building and sustaining community sport infrastructure.

McCulloch was deeply involved with the Paris Little League Association for a decade, serving as president and leading initiatives such as the installation of lights at the Pete Lavoie diamond. She also held multiple executive roles with the Paris Athletic Association and was instrumental in replacing the ice plant at the Syl Apps Arena.

Her contributions extended to the Paris Public Pool, where she chaired a committee that secured Trillium Foundation funding for new change rooms, and to the Syl Apps Optimist Skate Park, co-chairing efforts to build the original facility in 2012.

McCulloch’s work reflects long-term dedication to improving access, facilities and opportunities for local athletes.

PMHA 2002 Hoogs Installations Bantam Wolfpack – Team (Paris)

The PMHA 2002 Hoogs Installations Bantam Wolfpack earned recognition for a landmark achievement in Paris minor hockey history.

The team captured the 2002 International Silver Stick ‘C’ Championship, a prestigious title that followed years of competitive success and near misses in previous Silver Stick tournaments. Many of the players had developed together through the Paris Minor Hockey Association system, making the victory a proud moment for the entire community.

The championship remains one of the most significant team accomplishments in local minor hockey.

Sandy Boyd – Athlete (Paris)

Sandy Boyd is recognized for an exceptional women’s hockey career that reached the national and international stage.

Boyd played senior hockey with teams in St. George, Ayr and Burlington before joining the Hamilton Golden Hawks, where she helped win multiple provincial and national championships. Her success culminated in selection to Team Canada, where she won gold at the Women’s World Championship, including an undefeated tournament run.

Boyd retired from hockey in 1992 to begin a career with the Guelph Police Service, closing a chapter on one of the most accomplished women’s hockey careers connected to Brant County.

St. George Lions Club – Builder (South Dumfries)

Founded in 1945, the St. George Lions Club is being inducted for its longstanding commitment to sport and recreation in the community.

For nearly eight decades, the club has supported minor hockey, baseball, soccer and figure skating through spon-

sorships, facility development and hands-on volunteerism. Lions members helped build and maintain early rinks and ball fields, supported junior hockey programs, and played a central role in fundraising for arena construction and expansions, including Gaukell Hall.

The club continues to provide annual financial support to local sport organizations, reinforcing its legacy as a cornerstone builder of community sport in St. George.

2006–2007 Burford Coyotes Novice Rep Team – Team (Brant West)

The 2006–2007 Burford Coyotes Novice Rep Team earned its place in Brant County sports history with a championship season that set a new standard at the novice level.

The Coyotes captured the OMHA ‘C’ Division Championship, becoming the first Novice team from Brant County to achieve the feat. The team also won two additional tournaments during the season, underscoring its depth and consistency.

Led by head coach Keith Gorman and trainer Rick Horvath, the Coyotes’ success was built on teamwork, development and a strong foundation that benefited players as they advanced through the hockey system.

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LOCAL SPORTS HEROES: Built on championships and community sport: The athletic journey of Matt Kopp

SCOOP STEWART

Paris Independent Sports Reporter

Matt Kopp's athletic career is defined by long-term success in baseball and hockey, highlighted by numerous tournament victories and provincial and national championships. His accomplishments were built through years of commitment, strong leadership, and a family deeply involved in sport.

From his earliest seasons in T-ball, Kopp showed a natural ability for baseball. By the early 1990s, that talent quickly translated into results. He was part of the Tri-Mite championship team in 1990 and earned a Gold Glove at the 1993 Mite Tournament. Success continued through Squirt and Pee wee levels, including tournament championships in New Hamburg in 1994, Great Lakes Squirt in 1995, Waterford in 1996, and multiple Great Lakes Pee wee titles. In 1996, Kopp also captured a silver medal at the Eastern Canadian Pee wee Championships.

As he advanced to Bantam, Kopp's teams continued to excel. The 1998 season included tournament championships in Lorne Ford and Oshawa, an Ontario Summer Games championship, and an Ontario finalist finish. In 1999, he earned the Ontario Bantam Championship, establishing himself among the top players in the province.

Kopp's Midget years marked the peak of his competi-



Championship team with all its many sponsors on display

(SCOOP STEWART PHOTOS)

tive career. In 2000, he earned a silver medal at the Ontario Midget eliminations. The following season became the defining moment. In 2001, Kopp won both the Ontario Championship and the Canadian Midget Championship, a national title achieved after more than a decade of development. He followed that success with an Ontario silver medal in 2002 and was selected as a pickup player for the 2003 Canadian Midget Championship, where the team finished fourth overall. He later played with the Ayr Vics during the 2004 and 2005 seasons.

While baseball was his favorite sport, hockey also played a significant role. Kopp reached the Triple A level at a young age and competed at the highest minor hockey level for several years. Beginning in 2000, he spent five seasons with the Paris Mounties, forming lifelong friendships through the game.

Leadership was a constant throughout his athletic career. Kopp was regularly named captain or assistant captain, learning early the importance of teamwork, accountability, and preparation. Those lessons have carried into his professional life, where he now works as an Estimating Manager with Aecon Utilities.

Athletics ran deep in the Kopp family. Both parents, Steve and Caroline, were gifted athletes and played an active role in Matt's development. Steve not only sup-

ported his son from the sidelines, but also coached at the highest levels, including the Ontario and Canadian championship teams. Caroline was equally involved, spending countless hours helping with training and even stepping in as a goalie during practices. Together with Matt's grandparents, the family provided unwavering support through years of practices, games, and tournaments across the province and country.

Looking back, Kopp credits his parents, grandparents, and the many coaches who guided him along the way for shaping both his athletic success and personal character. The friendships formed through sport remain strong, with former teammates still staying in touch and reconnecting easily years later.

At its core, Matt Kopp's story reflects the best of community sport. It is a story built on family, teamwork, and dedication. The championships stand as milestones, but the relationships and lessons gained along the way are the lasting legacy.

Matt you made all your family proud thank you for making Paris proud also!

*Always a pleasure,
Scoop Stewart*



**House
League
Standings
- Week of
February 25**

**12-14-Year-Old Factory
League Winter finals**

Bronze Medal Game: Lakers defeat Raptors, 38-37
Gold Medal Game: Fever defeat Hoopers, 25-23

This week's top scorers:

Bahadur, Lakers, 21 points
Jayshaan, Raptors, 14 points
Averi, Fever, 11 points.

Paris men's billiards: The Legion report

SCOOP STEWART

Sports Correspondent

The atmosphere was electric last week as the seasoned pros of the Paris Legion Men's Pool league took to the felt. These wily veterans got right after it from the first break, proving once again that—as Momma used to say—life is like a box of chocolates: you never know what you're going to get.

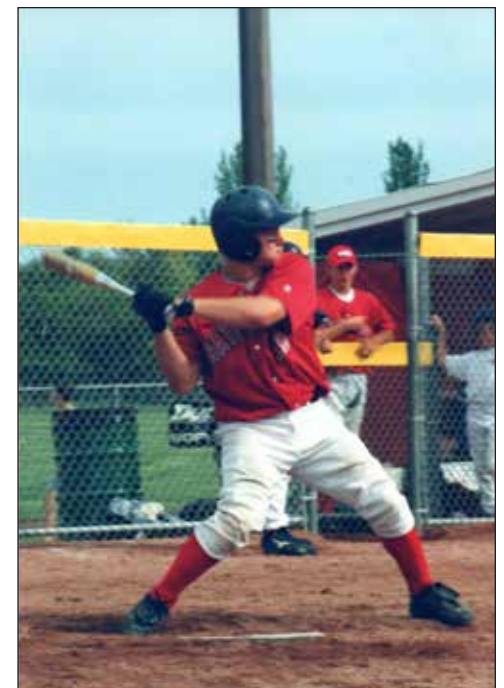
The night was defined by grit and tactical play, but all eyes eventually turned to the decisive showdown. It came down to

a high-stakes battle featuring Willie D. and Grieg G. against the formidable duo of Steve K. and Chris W. In a display of nerves and precision, the slightly more "mature" (and definitely more experienced) team of Willie Dafoe and Grieg Graham reigned supreme. For those keeping count at home, this marks a two-in-a-row victory streak for Willie!

Another fantastic night of competition in the books. We'll see you all back at the Legion this week for more high-stakes action. Until then, keep your cues on the table! *Always a pleasure... Scoop*



Matt Kopp left with his father Steve Kopp



Matt Kopp up to bat getting ready to hit a home run!

Ladies' Darts: High score of 105 headlines play

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The upper hall of the Paris Legion was vibrating this past Thursday night, and it wasn't just from the impact of darts hitting the cork. Between the vintage tracks, a "yoga queen" on the decks, and some high-stakes candy counting, the local ladies' dart league proved once again why Thursday is the undisputed favorite night of the week.

The evening's atmosphere was set by Patty S, who earned the title of "Yoga Queen" while pulling double duty as the night's DJ. Blasting hits from the past, Patty kept the energy levels high, leading an impromptu

dance party that lasted all night long.

The spirited energy translated into some "vigorous" celebrations on the floor. Bev W (affectionately dubbed the "Motor Boat Queen" by her peers) and partner Nancy B were seen celebrating their big win with an enthusiasm that matched the loud music upstairs. While the darts were flying, the drama of the "Valentine's Guess" reached its conclusion. After missing out on the contest last week, Gail D was given a second shot at redemption by Kris "Booner".

In a display of pinpoint accuracy that would make any pro jealous, Gail guessed the exact number of candy hearts remaining in the jar: one. For her perfect intuition,

she walked away with a haul of Werther's, lottery tickets, and a custom hoodie provided by local sponsor Jaymack Supplies Ltd.

The competition on the boards was just as sharp as the wit in the room. Here are the top performers from Thursday night:

- The Double-Out Leaders: Five players dominated the finishes this week, with Katy O, Patti S, Nichole D, Debi P, and Tracy T each securing two double-outs.
- Team Closers: Bryanna K, Michelle

S, and Gail D (capping off her lucky night) each secured a crucial win for their respective teams.

- High Score of the Night: Shari E took the crown for the highest single turn, racking up an impressive 105.
- The Bullseye Sisters: Skill clearly runs in the family this week. Debbie K hammered home two bullseyes in her second game, while her sister Diane S followed suit with one of her own.

Panthers eliminated in AAHBN playoffs



(GEORGE LE GRESLEY PHOTO)

The Paris District High School boys' hockey team was eliminated from AAHBN playoff action with a 5-3 loss to Brantford Collegiate Institute on Feb. 23. The Panthers finished the regular season in third place with a record of five wins, one loss and two ties.

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Wednesday, March 18

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Grand Erie Public Health report highlights food insecurity across the region

MEDIA RELEASE

One in four households across the Grand Erie region experienced food insecurity in 2023–2024, according to a new report released by Grand Erie Public Health.

The report examines the extent and impact of food insecurity locally, highlighting the growing challenge individuals and families face in affording enough nutritious food to support their health and wellbeing.

Food insecurity refers to inadequate or unreliable access to food due to financial constraints. As part of its legislated responsibilities, Grand Erie Public Health collected food affordability data in May 2025 using the Ontario Nutritious Food Basket across 23 grocery stores in the region. The results show the average monthly cost of a basic nutritious diet for a family of four is approximately \$1,200 across the region.

When food costs are considered alongside rent and income, many households are unable to meet basic needs. Local analysis shows a single person receiving Ontario Works in Brantford-Brant falls more than \$900 short each month for rent and food alone, while a family of four on Ontario Works in Haldimand-Norfolk is short by more than \$700.

The report also includes insights from local residents with lived experience of food insecurity, who described skipping meals, relying on food banks and facing ongoing challenges in trying to make ends meet. Public health officials note food insecurity is associated with higher rates of chronic disease, mental illness and increased health-care use, and that children in food-insecure households face greater risks to their long-term health and de-

velopment.

At its Feb. 18 meeting, the Grand Erie Public Health Board of Health endorsed a new Municipal Primer on Food Insecurity, a resource outlining the causes and local impacts of food insecurity and supporting municipalities in understanding their role in responding. The Primer will be shared with the City of Brantford, County of Brant, Haldimand County and Norfolk County to support coordinated local awareness and action.

“The Board of Health is proud to endorse a Primer for Municipalities on Food Insecurity in the Grand Erie Public Health Region. Food insecurity is a growing public health issue affecting one in four households locally, with significant impacts on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities. This endorsement reflects our shared commitment to raising awareness and supporting healthier communities,” said Maria Kinkel, Chair, GEPH Board of Health.

“Food insecurity is a significant and growing public health concern in our region, with serious impacts on the physical and mental health of individuals and families. Addressing this issue requires continued awareness, advocacy, and collective action to improve health and wellbeing across our communities and ensure people have the supports they need to live healthy lives,” said Dr. Jason Malenfant, GEPH Medical Officer of Health.

The Food Insecurity in the Grand Erie Public Health Region report and the Municipal Primer are available at www.geph.ca/foodinsecurity. Printed copies are also available at the Brantford-Brant office at 194 Terrace Hill St., Brantford, and the Simcoe office at 185 Robinson St., Suite 200.

Crime Stoppers tips lead to 29 arrests in Brant-Brantford in 2025

PARIS INDEPENDENT STAFF




Crime Stoppers tips in Brant-Brantford have led to 29 arrests and 134 charges in 2025, according to newly released statistics.

During a County of Brant OPP Detachment meeting on February 24, the organization reports receiving 841 tips last year, resulting in the recovery of \$120,350

in property and \$3,515 in cash. Police also seized drugs valued at \$77,500 as a result of information provided anonymously through the program.

Since its inception, Crime Stoppers Brant-Brantford has received 28,597 tips, leading to 3,355 arrests and 8,516 charges. Over that time, authorities have recovered more than \$14 million in property and seized nearly \$34.8 million worth of drugs. Crime Stoppers allows members of the public to submit information anonymously through its tip line 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or online at <https://crimestoppersbb.com>

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Local legends and familiar faces

STONES
Around Town
By Jeff Johnston
(a.k.a. Stones)

Life is all about the connections we make, and lately, the local rounds have been full of them. My friend Diane and I recently spent some quality time "chillin' with our buds," including my new friend Carol E. and her crew from the Winncy Mills.

A big hello goes out to Nancy Rowley (a good friend of my sister, Jen!) and Bev Carr. And to Buzz Cockburn: love ya like a brother, man. Moving him back from Timmins was an adventure, to say the least. Seeing Buzz reminds me of the old days with Buzz Sr. and Pete Kilgore. God bless Pete—he's the one who originally convinced me you could smoke dry banana peels!

Sending healing vibes to Susan (Lane) Buck, a first-class nurse and lady, as she preps for a new knee. Hi to Mr. Lane as well. If you're looking for quality service, make sure to see Christine and John at John M. Hall; they truly are your go-to pair.

While dropping off papers at Telfer Place, I had a bit of a "TV moment." From across the dining room, I heard a shout so loud I thought Mrs. Wolowitz from The Big Bang Theory was coming for me: "Johnston! Bring the paper to us!" Turns out, it was just Carol Jones and Marie Cruikshank keeping me in line. I did exactly as I was told! God bless the gals at Telfer; it's always a riot visiting. I got to see so many friends' moms, including Mrs. McCulloch and Marilyn Brown. Sending love to Shawna, Kelly, Chris, Mike, and Pat way over in Australia. We also take a moment to remember John and Bob—gone but not forgotten.

Out in Burford, we have a local rockstar: our school crossing guard. A big salute for the incredible job you do keeping the kids safe! Also, a tip of the cap to Patience at Foodland—keep smiling, it makes a difference. As I always say, I'd rather be mindful than get an earful.

I also had the pleasure of attending Ladies' Dart Night for their Valentine's celebration. Huge thanks to Gail D. and Nancy B. for the hospitality. It was a room full of 30 ladies loving life—pure camaraderie and community support (plus, they spoiled me with cookies). It's an amazing way to make new friends, and all ages are welcome!

I'm a firm believer that information is power, and there are a few things our councillors might not be shouting from the rooftops that I think is useful for all to know:

- Free Notary Services: Did you know you can have documents notarized or an affidavit sworn free of charge by the County of Brant? Now you do.
- Blue Box Replacement: If you need a new blue box, head to the County office and buy one for just \$10. Better yet, if yours was damaged by the collection truck, you can get a free replacement.
- The Big Bill: Just a reminder that a \$200 million plus waste plant expansion (estimated for Paris) is on the horizon. While there is some provincial funding, the rest falls on the taxpayers. Regardless of where you live in the County, you're paying for it. Take care of each other, folks. All the information is out there—you just have to ask your councillor the right questions. *Stones*

Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. What countries were banned from the 2026 Winter Olympics? | 6. What is the longest muscle in the human body? |
| 2. True or False. Hamsters are nocturnal. | 7. Are sea cucumbers plants or animals? |
| 3. What is the mascot for Wilfred Laurier University? | 8. What three things did Jack steal from the giant? |
| 4. What mathematician had an apple fall on his head? | 9. When was the last time the USA won Gold in Men's Olympic Hockey? |
| 5. Who came up with the "Modern Olympics"? | 10. What country invented the saltine cracker? |

This week's answers are found on pg. 19

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Riddles

What can brighten your evening in March without making the day longer?

Daylight Saving Time

What begins winter's end, wakes sleeping ground, but never makes a sound?

The thaw

What hides all winter, rises in March, and follows the sun without walking?

A flower

What grows in March but isn't alive?

The daylight

What can be green, lucky, and found in threes, yet isn't a traffic light?

A shamrock

What wears white in the morning and green by afternoon?

Your lawn

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 19

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PET OF THE WEEK

FRANK

Meet our Pet of the Week:

Dr. Aine Pattison and her family welcomed a new addition- Frank the 8 week old French bulldog/ Boston terrier puppy. Big brother, Percy the black lab is very patient but still wondering when this little creature will be going back home.

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



Word Search

THINGS WE PRETEND WE DIDN'T DO

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

- Procrastinated
- Misinterpreted
- Screenshotting
- Eavesdropping
- Miscalculated
- Overcommitted
- Doomscrolling
- Overanalyzed
- Secondguessed
- Reconsidered
- Panicbought
- Overreacted
- Exaggerated
- Overshared
- Ghosted
- Overslept
- Deflected
- Snoozed
- Deleted
- Micromanaged



WEEKLY Horoscope

March 4 - March 10, 2026

ARIES

Mar 21 - Apr 20



Motivation builds steadily, Aries. A confident choice sparks progress and reveals direction. Stay proactive—it strengthens momentum and drives advancement.

TAURUS

Apr 21 - May 21



Calm determination steadies you, Taurus. Practical efforts restore balance and quiet uncertainty. Trust consistency—it reinforces security and keeps your goals within reach.

GEMINI

May 22 - Jun 21



Conversation energizes you, Gemini. A surprising insight refreshes perspective and creative drive. Follow curiosity—it opens pathways toward growth and shared discovery.

CANCER

Jun 22 - Jul 22



Emotional clarity settles in, Cancer. Small comforts restore strength and confidence. Move gently forward and trust yourself.

LEO

Jul 23 - Aug 23



Creative energy surges. Recognition follows when you lead with passion, warmth, and conviction. Accept praise—it reflects your genuine ability to motivate others.

VIRGO

Aug 24 - Sept 22



Practical focus supports progress, Virgo. Completing lingering tasks restores order and reassurance. Depend on diligence—it guides transitions with clarity and composed confidence throughout the week ahead.

LIBRA

Sept 23 - Oct 23



Balance feels attainable, Libra. Open dialogue resolves confusion and strengthens connection. Choose diplomacy—it restores harmony and builds lasting cooperation.

SCORPIO

Oct 24 - Nov 23



Determination sharpens now, Scorpio. A private realization empowers necessary change. Follow instinct—it reveals strength beneath the surface.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23 - Dec 21



Optimism rises steadily. Fresh experiences expand awareness and renew enthusiasm. Say yes—it invites growth that reshapes perspective.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22 - Jan 20



Responsibility brings reward. Strategic planning results in visible progress. Stay committed—the foundations you reinforce promise dependable achievement.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21 - Feb 18



Original thinking benefits you, Aquarius. A bold idea sparks collaborative potential and progress. Trust innovation—it amplifies your unique voice and vision.

PISCES

Feb 19 - Mar 20



Sensitivity strengthens insight, Pisces. Meaningful reflection renews empathy and direction. Welcome intuition—it gently leads you toward clarity, renewal, and peaceful confidence.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

MARCH 4

Patricia Heaton, Actress (68)

MARCH 5

Bo Bichette, Baseball Player (28)

MARCH 6

Shaquille O'Neal, Athlete (54)

MARCH 7

Bryan Cranston, Actor (70)

MARCH 8

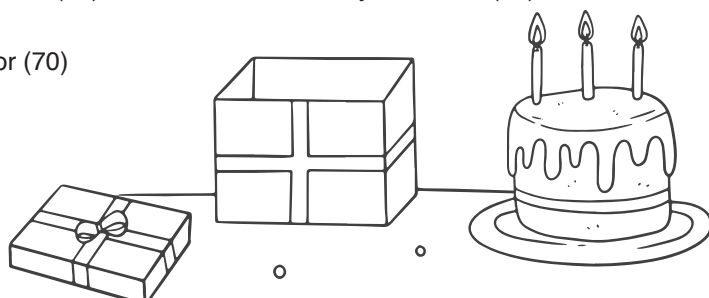
Freddie Prinze Jr., Actor (50)

MARCH 9

Matthew Gray Gubler, Actor (46)

MARCH 10

Bad Bunny, Musician (32)



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OBITUARY

Farmer



Farmer, Kenneth Wilfred "Ken"

At Park Lane Terrace, on Sun Feb 22, 2026, formerly of Canning and Paris, in his 84th year.

Beloved husband to Theresa (nee Carrier); loved dad to Don (Linda); cherished Poppa to Emilee (Nic), Julee (Aaron), and Natalee (Curtis); and their children Rylee, and Henry and 2 more special additions in March and May; dear brother to Brenda Coombs (the late Art) and Bryan (Alexandra); and brother in law to Sandi Carrier and Lois Carrier. Also survived by several nieces and nephews.

Cremation has taken place. Friends may call at the Wm. Kipp Funeral Home, 184 Grand River St. N. Paris, on Wednesday March 4, 2026 from 7-9 PM. A Memorial Service will be held in the funeral home chapel on Thursday at 11:00 AM. Interment Later Paris Cemetery.

Donations Alzheimer Society would be appreciated. Online condolences and donations may be arranged through www.wmkipffuneralhome.com or by contacting Wm. Kipp 519 442 3061. Thank you to the entire staff of Park Lane who treated Ken like family, we are sad he wasn't able to enjoy his new home for a lot longer

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EMAIL TO INQUIRE INFO@THEPARISINDEPENDENT.COM

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Free Drop-in Dodgeball - Dodgeball at North Ward School (Paris) from 6:30–7:30 pm, for ages 7–12.

The Brant County OPP is hosting a Community Safety Information Session - From 6:00 to 8:00 pm at the Cainsville Community Centre (15 Ewart Avenue, Cainsville) in the half hall WEST room. This session will provide valuable information to help keep you and your property safe. Representatives from several OPP units will be presenting on key community safety topics. This event is open to all members of the community. Questions and concerns are welcome and encouraged.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4

Paris Horticultural Society Monthly Meeting - Our General Meeting is March 4th at the Paris Fairgrounds, social time at 7 pm. We welcome Catherine McGill as our guest speaker, Catherine is a trained Horticultural and Design judge, so yes, she knows a little about a whole bunch of plants, past Director of District 6, back on the board as 2nd Vice President. Her program for the evening is "Weeds, Friend, or Foe". The program will start at 7:30 pm. Be our guest and join us for a very informative evening. You may decide to become a member of PHS.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6

The Paris Optimist Club Monthly Youth Dance - Friday March 6, 2026, from 7 pm to 10 pm. The Dance is held at the Syl Apps Community Centre, 51 William Street in Paris with adult chaperones to make sure everyone has a great time. The theme for this dance is St. Patrick's Day (wear green!). The dance is for students in grades 5 to 8 only. Grade 9 and older students are welcome to attend as volunteers. Entry fee is \$5.00 with a concession booth for pop, chips, candy and pizza. Tap payment is now available. Please note we have a no re entry policy. All proceeds support the Paris Optimist Club and its projects for the youth of our community. For any further information and to volunteer as a chaperone or as a high school student, please call 519.757.5020.

World Day of Prayer Service - to be held at Mt. Pleasant United Church at 11:00am, followed by a time of fellowship with potluck finger foods. Everyone is welcome.

TUESDAY, MARCH 10

The Brant County Men's Probus Club Meeting - is on Tuesday, March 10th, 2026 at 10 AM at the Sherwood Restaurant 799 Colborne Street in Brantford. The guest speaker will be John Gilmore who will talk about Military History. New members are always welcome.

TUESDAY, MARCH 10TH, 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.

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.

gmail.com.

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 Bachamania - 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.

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.

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.

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! January 16 & 30, February 13 & 27, March 6 & 20, April 10 & 17, May 1, 15 & 29, June 5 & 19.



HOMES OF HEROES:

If you have a story about a Paris Veteran, please email the committee at info@homesofheroes.ca. Let's work together to give all our veterans, living and fallen, in war and in peace, the recognition and honour they deserve. If you have any questions about the project, please email Neil Edwards at neiledwards51@gmail.com.

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SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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- Baron Pierre de Coubertin
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