

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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Illegal dumping in Woodstock results in council voting for staff report

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Woodstock City Council has voted to have staff compile a report on illegal garbage dumping in the city, but any changes to the system would need to be approved at the Oxford County level.

At that meeting, staff presented six potential strategies to improve waste-system compliance, public cleanliness and service coordination. The report, which was passed unanimously, will set out to summarize the issue of illegal dumping in the City of Woodstock, identify jurisdictional and operational considerations, and present potential strategies to improve waste system compliance, public cleanliness and service coordination.

Oxford County collects revenue from bag tags because the county fully funds the cost of curbside collection. There are three providers (Emterra, South-West Oxford and City of Woodstock) and illegal dumping and any by-law enforcement is handled by the lower-tier municipalities, or by the county if occurring along a county road. The county's Director of Public Works, Melissa Abercrombie, said tipping fees pay for the daily operation of the waste management facility site and reserve contributions.

"Reserve funds are to replace the landfill when required. Increasing waste diversion helps push off the need for a new landfill and does decrease the annual contribution required to reserve."

The city's director of public works said some of the strategies will take some time to flesh out and report back to council.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



POILIEVRE SPEAKS AT FARM SHOW

(ALIYAH HELSDON PHOTO)

Federal Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre speaks to a large crowd at Canada's Outdoor Farm Show on Saturday. Poilievre granted the Echo a 15-minute, one-on-one interview before the event. Read the interview and story on page 18.

Woodstock Y neighbours plead for safety as planning for Homelessness Centre continues

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Several neighbours of the former Woodstock YMCA have gone public about their fears over Oxford County choosing the site as a Homelessness Support Centre.

Curtis Nicholson, whose side yard borders on the back of the former Y, believes the county does not want to use the Dundas Street entrance for intake but rather utilize the former daycare entrance at the back of the building.

"They want the front to look squeaky clean at the expense of the safety of the neighbourhood, the immediate

neighbours and the children playing outside."

He made it quite clear what safety measures he would like to see installed to keep his family and others safe.

"I want this parking lot sealed off with fencing, and if people come in by vehicle, I'd like to see a gate with a secured entry. I'd also like to see staff back here. I don't think that's too much to ask. I am not saying no shelter. I am saying let's be sensible. If you have an open parking lot, that invites disaster."

The Woodstock Police Service has a pair of Crime Prevention and Design Officers, one of whom will be involved in the building's safety setup.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3



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County has final say on any proposed garbage changes in Friendly City

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

"We see value in that so we can detail out more of what's proposed. We can continue to engage with the county and with other stakeholders and the process and report back to council with those solutions," explained Jeff Molenhuis.

Coun. Kate Leatherbarrow, council's representative on the Downtown BIA, said that organization has played a role in cleaning up the core over the summer.

"There was a partnership with the Women's Employment Centre where the BIA received a grant of \$2,000 so they now have a woman joining Gary (the BIA's current cleanup employee) with cleaning and waste removal."

She added there has been a noticeable difference in the cleanliness of the downtown core as a result, and the issue is a high priority for the BIA.

Coun. Bernia Martin said she supported the multi-prong approach of the report.

"We can't just do education. We can't just do enforcement. We can't just enhance the level of service. I believe we have to go at this from as many possible angles to curb the behaviour."

She added the strategies did seem to be focused on the city's downtown and doesn't want to lose focus on parks, trailheads and public spaces where there is also a dumping problem.

Coun. Deb Tait wanted to make it very clear the city can make all the recommendations it wants, but the county is in charge of the garbage system. She added the illegal dumping problem is getting out of control, even outside of the downtown core, something she blames on the \$3 bag tag cost.

"I am on the trails so much and all the dumping down there is really unfortunate. All the dumping down there, it is disgusting. We have beautiful trails, and our parks department is phenomenal. There are a lot of people who volunteer, and they do pick it up,

but it is costing us a lot of money. I still think it goes back to the bag tags."



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTO)

The alley behind the former Hakim Optical store is a regular spot for illegal dumping in the downtown core. This photo was taken on Aug. 25.

Mayor Jerry Acchione revealed some alarming statistics on the seriousness of the dumping issue.

"There was a three-week audit with 1,900 total data points collected and 880 of those were untagged bags, just to show you the extent of the issue."

A report by Oxford County staff does not support enhancing the level of service in the Woodstock Downtown at this time. Instead, staff recommend first implementing an enhanced promotion and education program and focused bylaw enforcement, to help address the identified issues and assess their effectiveness.

"Should a future increase in service levels be contemplated, it would require Oxford County Council consideration and approval. As previously noted, any associated costs could be accommodated within the existing annual waste collection budget or

funded through an area-specific rate," the report said.

Council directed staff to report back on six strategies, including the associated cost implications. The Downtown Woodstock BIA had also submitted correspondence supporting some of the proposed strategies.

They are:

1. Ask Oxford County to restore the higher level of downtown waste service previously provided.
2. Work with Oxford County on waste-related bylaw enforcement and updating the bylaw regarding improper disposal.
3. Explore a joint rapid-cleanup program with the Downtown Woodstock BIA.
4. Examine options and costs for improving public garbage cans and private waste bins.
5. Partner with Oxford County on education and outreach regarding downtown waste rules.
6. Clarify responsibilities and service levels with Oxford County and secure appropriate funding for waste-management costs.

theecho.ca

Wellbeing of residents and children primary concern

CONTINUED FROM FRONT



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTO)

Residents living behind the former YMCA want the county to take their safety concerns seriously.

Nicholson added he was disappointed at the format of the July 15 public meeting held at the South Gate Centre where questions were either sent in electronically or on paper.

"We went to the meeting to try and get answers. We tried to scan the code, but it didn't work on everyone's phone. There were a lot of softball questions and scripted answers, and I wonder if that wasn't done on purpose. It seemed everyone who asked a real question was kind of shunned."

Nicholson and a few others walked out of the meeting in protest after he said their questions were not answered.

Andrea Miles, another neighbour who spoke at a recent Oxford County council meeting shortly after the initial announcement, lives close to the site with her partner, Jerone Burke. She said it was disappointing that neighbours weren't consulted before the purchase but hopes that improves going forward.

"Initially we were opposed to the centre because there was no consultation with any of us. It was only after the building was sold that anyone became aware of it. We came to the realization there is nothing we could do to stop it."

She added people in need deserve to be helped, but if the back door is used for admissions, she is concerned.

"Two things can be true at the same time. We can want help for them, and we can also not want it in our front yard. We've only been in this house for two years, and one of the main reasons we bought it is because there was a daycare across the street. How wonderful. We would open the door and hear kids playing and laughing."

Miles' family lives in the Greater Toronto Area and is encouraging the couple to move.

"But we love Woodstock and have made it our home. I have sat in my living room and cried because I love my house. I don't want to leave my house, but I feel like I am being forced out of it. We just don't know what's going to happen with this situation."

The couple are also concerned about their home's property value.

"We feel like we've been given the short end of the stick. No one has even come around to talk to us. I emailed a bunch of elected officials, and the only one who responded was (City/County) Councillor Deb Tait."

She added she was very nervous presenting to county council and was disappointed no elected officials asked any questions and the lack of answers in general.

"(Warden Marcus Ryan) attempted to address some of my concerns, but anyone who voiced their concerns at the South Gate meeting was spoken to condescendingly, looked down on like we were these evil people who don't want to help the community, and that's really not the case. We think it's fine to help, but why put it in someone's front yard?"

She added it is disappointing no one has any desire to hear from those who will be most affected by the centre. Nicholson explained the only way he feels he can have his voice heard is through the media but was able to speak to a pair of county staff involved in the project.

"I said I would like an ornamental fence put up around the entire property and a staff-only gated parking lot. If we are going to be safe here, we can not have foot traffic through the parking lot. We can have a facility here and coexist if everything is done facing Dundas – the intake, the lineups. They are saying they will have extra waiting rooms so people aren't standing outside. That would not compromise the neighbourhood."

Nicholson said he has sent official objections to elected officials and county staff. He hopes the safest possible plan will be implemented.

"Please take the danger of the intake away from us, our children, our community. We don't deserve this. We are trying to be reasonable. None of us are saying no shelter. We are saying be responsible and plan responsibly."

Miles pleaded with the county to allow their voices to be heard.

"Talk to us. Just come and talk to us. They haven't yet."

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Oxford County looking for feedback on road safety strategy

Goal is to reduce collisions, injuries and fatalities

LEE GRIFFI
Editor

Municipalities in Oxford County are looking for feedback on how to improve road safety.

The Road Safety Strategy survey is online now at Speak Up, Oxford! until Sept. 8. The survey invites Oxford residents and businesses to share their thoughts and experiences as the county builds a detailed plan to improve safety for all road users and reduce collisions, injuries and fatalities.

Residents can also mark areas of concern for driving, walking or cycling on an interactive map, or fill out an online feedback form to submit a comment or question.

“This is the first time we have done this,” explained Frank Gross, the county’s senior manager of transportation. “We were directed by county council in 2025 to proceed with the development of a road safety framework in collaboration with municipalities, police and paramedic services. A big part of it is to find out what the public’s main concerns are.”

Work to improve road safety begins this year with the development of a Road Safety Framework that will lay the groundwork for future planning. This will be followed by the development of a Road Safety Strategy in 2027 that will include detailed countermeasures and guidance to address road safety concerns.

Gross said the survey includes an interactive map where the public is able to drop pins on locations of concern, but anything is on the table.

“We want to hear what the greatest concerns are – is it speeding, pedestrian safety, careless driving, the roads themselves and so on. The framework will be focused on

Vision Zero principles.”

Vision Zero is an approach to road safety that aims to eliminate deaths and serious injuries by designing roads and transportation systems around the fact that people make mistakes and that those mistakes should not result in fatal or life-altering crashes. That distinction is often at the heart of Vision Zero: the goal isn't perfect drivers; it's a transportation system that is forgiving of human error.

“We realize humans make mistakes, so how do we design roads and intersections poor decisions made by drivers. If a driver does make a mistake, we want the impact to be less severe, like in a roundabout, for instance, where drivers are forced to slow down. If they make an incorrect move, the result is a minor collision as opposed to a serious injury or even death.”

Short-term recommendations under a new road safety strategy could include greater use of illumination at rural intersections, speed feedback signs, acoustical rumble strips, and flashing beacons at stop control intersections. Longer-term actions would focus on roadway design and expanded use of data-driven transportation planning.

The idea of truck routes in Oxford County has been a hot topic for years as the amount of transport traffic continues to rise. Gross explained implementing one isn't easy since it would involve a great deal of financial resources to ensure appropriate infrastructure.

“Every community would like to see trucks rerouted, but we have to look at what’s practical. The county has actually identified a good movement strategy which is essentially identifying preferred truck routes. I think it’s more about restricting trucks in specified areas where you don’t want to see large trucks through residential ar-

eas or where vulnerable populations exist.”

Gross added once priority truck routes are identified, the next steps are to ensure the appropriate infrastructure is in place and then promote the routes.

The development of Oxford County’s Road Safety Strategy was approved by County Council in October 2025. As part of the strategy, the County adopted the Ontario Road Safety Audit (RSA) Guideline, which assesses existing road infrastructure and future transportation capital projects to identify safety hazards, assign risk ratings and recommend mitigation measures.

Public input and feedback will be sought throughout the process of developing the road safety strategy. The survey is a first step in getting public feedback and takes only 3 to 5 minutes to complete. Visit www.oxfordcounty.ca/speakup to learn more and take the survey.

The county will use public feedback, the analysis of collision and other data and staff comments to bring back a framework to the next County Council in 2026.

“It will identify priority areas, next steps, and where the county and area municipalities need to work together on improvements. From the county’s perspective, rural areas might be the priority areas to address.”

In 2025, Oxford County Council directed County staff to explore implementing a long-term Vision Zero Plan and adopting the Good Roads Rural Road Safety Strategy following requests from the Blandford-Blenheim, Zorra, and East Zorra-Tavistock townships.

The Good Roads Rural Road Safety Strategy focuses on improving safety on rural roads, which have a disproportionately high number of collisions compared with urban roads, through advocacy for provincial funding and consistent road safety design standards.

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Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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**Voting is important...be informed...
exercise your franchise**

The next municipal election is only two months away.

Everyone has a civic duty to vote, especially in this year's municipal election for Woodstock. The present council, as well as past, have been notably absent when it comes to dealing with the most severe issues that Woodstock faces.

Namely the issues of the homeless, the mentally ill, the addicts and dealers that occupy Woodstock's downtown along with the city's crumbling infrastructure. Also tax increases that have spiraled upward for the past six to eight years. Which has brought less services, more and higher user fees for an already overburdened residential tax base.

When seniors can only put out their garbage every third or fourth weeks because they cannot afford Oxford County's bag tax, then something has to change.

However, Woodstock City Council finds \$60-plus million for a multi-year downtown facelift after the last one and without the social ills being addressed. Giving nearly \$9 million to South Gate's \$10 million expansion, the city cannot renovate or replace an outdoor pool for the city's youth.

Woodstock currently has three candidates for Mayor, three for Deputy Mayor/County Councilor, two for City/Councilor and eight for City Councilor.

Now I am not going to write about each position and candidate until later, but this article will deal with perhaps what voters should look for in a good candidate and what warning signs to look for in candidates who are not suitable.

There are two mayoral candidates, the incumbent, a challenger who ran four years ago and another challenger.

The incumbent mayor and his record, or lack of one, must be carefully scrutinized. Ask yourself this question: Is your situation (services, taxation and a safer downtown) better after four years of the incum-

bent Mayor? Or is it the same or worse? And vote accordingly.

The Deputy Mayor/County Councilor has two incumbent candidates and a challenger. One incumbent has only been on council one term and the other is a long-term councilor.

One phrase comes to mind, and I will be revisiting this repeatedly is that Woodstock City Council desperately needs new blood and fresh ideas. Councilors who sit for 10, 20 or more years become stale in terms of ideas, preferring to maintain the status quo.

There are some City Council candidates who have already carved out a social media position and are making various statements.

I have noticed that at least two City Council candidates are making bold statements that Woodstock desperately needs a \$70-plus million multi-use recreational center for Woodstock. Never mind that Cowan Park is there.

But what concerns me most is following that statement for an expensive recreation centre is they say that the taxpayers' ability to fund these grand schemes "must be respected." Taxpayers should look very closely at any candidates who "talk out of both sides of their mouth" in both their speeches and campaign literature.

Again, what Woodstock City Council desperately needs is new blood and fresh ideas.

Woodstock needs City Councilors, County Councilors, Deputy Mayor/County Councilor and a Mayor who will address the most pressing needs but hold the line at the demands of a myopic provincial government, egregious tax increases and shelve grandiose ideas until those projects can be safely afforded.

This year's municipal election is a watershed, but you can only make a change if you vote.

Allison Gowling

A concerned resident of Woodstock

PUBLIC NOTICE

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21 Reeve Street, P.O Box 1614,
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County of Oxford
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Original signed by: Lindsey A. Mansbridge, Clerk

This notice issued on
August 28, 2026

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MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

CANDIDATE PROFILES

D'Orazio throws his hat in the ring for an Ingersoll council spot

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Louie D'Orazio has lived in Ingersoll since 2002 with his wife Paula. The couple have six children and 14 grandchildren. He is a retired engineering professional with four degrees, including a Ph.D., and is the author of several published works.

"I have been to more than 1,000 classic rock concerts and was even an extra in the movie Detroit Rock City. My wife and I spend as much time as possible with our family and my parents. We also enjoy travelling whenever we can, and by September of this year, we will have visited all 10 Canadian provinces, with our 30th anniversary celebration taking place in Newfoundland."

D'Orazio said he feels he has a lot to offer the community with his engineering knowledge as

the town looks to improve and modify.

"I am very familiar with items like the building code and feel I can help work through some of our expansion and maintenance issues. Being a town councillor provides a unique opportunity to influence local decisions and improve the quality of life for residents. Councillors play a crucial role in addressing community issues, representing the views of local people, and ensuring that essential services are delivered effectively. This role allows you to shape policies that directly affect your community, from public safety to infrastructure improvements."

He added that he would like to see downtown become more visually attractive, with every applicable business having some type of patio or a "meet-and-greet" concept.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Louie D'Orazio.

"I want our BIA to become the top BIA among small towns, and I would like to help promote the group. The other issue is homelessness and hunger. As an avid supporter of STICH and

the Food Project, along with my wife, Paula, I want Ingersoll to become known provincially as the most caring community when it comes to helping others. I really believe I can accomplish this as a start by gathering as much feedback as possible from the citizens of the town."

When it comes to why the people of Ingersoll should vote for him, D'Orazio said a lot of people know who he is and they know he has a strong belief in helping people.

"As a town councillor, I would be able to do more on making these things happen with 100 per cent dedication to the citizens. I would use some of my experience and knowledge towards improving Ingersoll. Serving as a councillor is not just about responsibilities; it also offers significant personal growth. I will develop new skills in lead-

ership, decision-making, and teamwork. Engaging with diverse community members and tackling local challenges can enhance your confidence and broaden your understanding of governance."

He added he loves Ingersoll and has enjoyed living in the town for two-plus decades.

"I have no regrets living here, especially within our little subdivision. I am asking all citizens to give me a chance to help take Ingersoll to the next level. In summary, becoming a town councillor is a rewarding endeavour that allows me to contribute positively to my community while also growing personally and professionally. I am passionate about making a difference and representing the interests of my fellow residents. I believe that this role is a perfect fit for me."

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MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

CANDIDATE PROFILES

Sutherland running for Woodstock City Council spot

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Kurt Sutherland was born and raised in Woodstock and works as a Quality Assurance & Fleet Specialist at Execulink Telecom, a local Internet Service Provider. On the home front, he is blessed with a wonderful blended family of five children and eight grandchildren—all of whom live in Oxford County.

“Giving back to the community has always been a core part of who I am. I proudly serve as Treasurer and League Web and Schedule Coordinator for the Woodstock Men's Old Timers League and volunteer with the Woodstock Minor Basketball Association as a Director, League Registrar, and Web and Schedule Coordinator. I am a member of the Woodstock Navy Club, and when I'm not working

or volunteering, you can usually find me designing and printing 3D files as a hobby,” he said.

Sutherland said he is running because he believes it's time for some fresh perspectives and new energy on city council.

“Woodstock is becoming far too expensive for people to live comfortably, and I want to ensure my children and grandchildren have genuine opportunities to build their futures right here at home. For that to happen, things need to change.”

He added he cares deeply about our vulnerable community members.

“I feel strongly for our unhoused population and am committed to working toward compassionate solutions that restore their dignity and respect. Finally, I want to ensure that as our city grows, our infrastructure is managed respon-

sibly and taxpayer money is spent wisely.”

He explained the most pressing issues facing Woodstock right now are rising property taxes, overall affordability, and homelessness.

“Affordability is hitting households hard, and the dream of homeownership is slipping out of reach for too many working families and young people—a problem heavily compounded by rising property taxes. Everyone deserves affordable housing options and proper access to the support services they need, including mental health care. When our residents are squeezed financially and vulnerable neighbours are left behind, the whole community feels the strain.”

Sutherland said the city needs a fresh breath of life on council, paired with true accountability



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Kurt Sutherland.

and transparency.

“I am committed to delivering that accountability. I ask for your vote so we can work together to build a more sustainable, afford-

able future for our city.”

He explained he brings decades of lived experience as a long-time homeowner and property tax-paying resident who has watched the city evolve.

“I've seen our taxes and garbage bag tag fees rise consistently without a proportional increase in value for residents. We need fresh leadership that will look for creative, new avenues for economic growth—growth that doesn't automatically place the heaviest burden on the backs of local taxpayers.”

Sutherland said he wanted to remind everyone this election features online voting, making it easier than ever to make your voice heard.

“Please exercise your democratic right, vote for positive change, and support Kurt Sutherland for Woodstock City Council.”

Gorlick makes it three in the race for Woodstock mayor

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Aaron Gorlick is turning 54 this year. He has three children, two dogs and a few cats, and he wants to be the next mayor of Woodstock.

“We live in the historic northwest corner of Woodstock in a beautiful old Queen Anne replica built nearly 150 years ago. Interestingly, I wouldn't be the first, or even the second mayor to live in this house.”

The two mayors who lived in his house were John White in 1903, and then Michael Harding exactly 100 years later in 2003.

“I'm definitely a multi-hyphenate. I started in the service industry as a host, server and bartender, and quickly worked my way into management roles. Working in the service industry taught me a lot about listening and understanding what people need and want.

From there, Gorlick moved into the corporate retail world, where he held several key management positions.

“I've directed large teams through projects, and budgeted business worth well over \$1 billion annually. For the last 10 years, I've spent designing and delivering intuitive software solutions that span multiple in-

dustries.”

He added he loves music and theatre and plays several instruments.

“I even taught piano lessons for a time, and I've been on stage in theatres across western Ontario. Supporting local arts is very close to my heart.”

Gorlick explained he has always wanted to run for local office since as long as he can remember.

“I've watched as federal and provincial levels of government polarized people into opposing camps, and words my great-grandfather told me as a child remain with me, more relevant now than ever before: you can't create paradise on earth. Nobody can. But you can create it within your own acre, with the help of your neighbours.”

He added he wants to show everybody there's a better way.

“A way that listens to what residents want and need without pitting them against each other. As mayor, I would use my experience in software delivery to give all registered voters access to a polling tool. It will be a way for the people to speak directly to city council, so the top issues on people's minds are never ignored.”

Gorlick said as he speaks to constituents across the city, there are a few standout issues

he would investigate right out of the gate.

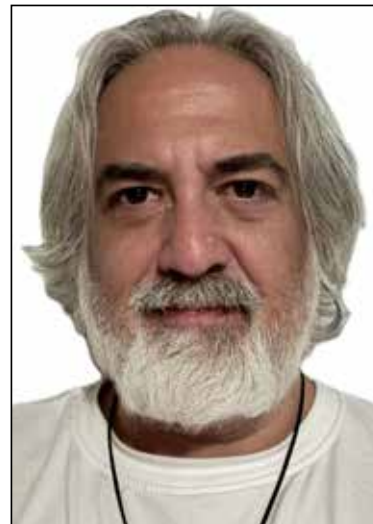
“Event spaces and public facilities have come up a lot. When elected, I promise to conduct a deep dive into the budgets and allocations for facilities such as swimming pools, which currently lack the breadth to serve our population.”

He mentioned Beth Beaumont, who runs the Facebook group Oxford County - Community Events.

She notes Woodstock needs exciting events.

“This means having venues available that can support these events. Being in the theatre community, it's with firsthand experience that I tell you our venues are scarcer than most cities of our size and we're growing rapidly. I'll make sure to give this the lens it deserves.”

Gorlick said he would also look into cost of living, including some analysis on farm-to-table expansions.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Aaron Gorlick.

“Our grocery stores are filled with products that could be locally sourced but instead are trucked into town, damaging roads unnecessarily. The import costs alone should justify exploring better local options and a more robust and accessible farm-to-consumer marketplace.”

He added one of the hardest problems to solve in Woodstock is homelessness and drug addiction.

“The issues are complex, crossing the boundaries of mental health, community safety and the perception of social degradation. I'll give this the attention it deserves, as I believe there's a way to consolidate help for those who want it, creating a comprehensive housing and treatment initiative that in the end would free up valuable downtown property and decrease our business vacancy rates dramatically, which in turn puts more dollars into the city coffers.”

Gorlick said he is the right person for the job because he is part of the community, not part of a party.

“I'm ready to represent all of the disenfranchised and unheard citizens who want nothing more than to be listened to, and to live within their own one acre of paradise.”



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MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

CANDIDATE PROFILES

Lauder seeking another term on Woodstock council

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Connie Lauder has served the people of the Friendly City for nearly 18 years, and she's hoping to make it 22. She has served on many Boards and Committees, including approximately 10 months last term performing mayoral duties.

"This term I have served as an alternate at county council. Before being successfully elected to council, I was employed by the city as the tax collector, where I had an in-depth knowledge of what is involved in the operation of the municipality of Woodstock. In addition to my position on council, I was invited to work part-time for the Town of Tillsonburg in the tax department for a period of 6 years," explained Lauder.

She grew up on a farm in Zorra Township with her parents and five brothers, and after getting married she moved to Woodstock where she and her husband raised their two children. She now has four grandchildren.

"My husband and I enjoyed travelling, which I still do. I love to get out on all our wonderful trails for long walks as time permits, exercise at South Gate, theatre and bridge."

Lauder said during her first council term, she served on the boundary adjustment committee bringing the land into

the city for Toyota.

"This city has experienced exceptional growth ever since. Since then, I have served on at least 4 more boundary adjustment committees."

She believes in vision forward; issues facing citizens are ever-increasing taxes, homelessness and affordable housing.

"With the growth the city has experienced over the years the next term of council will have many decisions to make recreation facilities, library expansion, servicing the next tract of industrial lands owned by the city, looking at fire and police department expansions, (affordable housing and social services both county responsibilities), all while figuring how any or all of these will be paid for, it cannot be done solely by tax increases. Determining wants and needs will be important. I want to be there to help responsibly make these decisions."

Lauder said one top priority is maintaining the city's capital assets such as buildings, vehicles, infrastructure and recreational facilities to ensure they are in a good state of repair. She added the city has had the good fortune of selling most of its serviced industrial land, which will result in additional revenue and generate employment as these builds come on stream.

"The city is now in the position of servicing its next parcel of industrial and

commercial owned land, approximately 230 acres, which comes at a great cost. This servicing is important for growth, new tax dollars going forward and providing employment and good-paying jobs in our city to entice our young people to make their home in Woodstock."

Lauder pointed to decisions she made during this council term, including voting no to Dundas Streetscape Phases 1, 2 and 3.

"As city councillor alternate for county council, I voted against the \$3 garbage bag fee; I voted against the bylaw approving the 2026 budget, for which we pay approximately 36 per cent. I have voted against planning matters regarding reduced parking. It is important as a member of council in a two-tier system to know the obligations of the city and the responsibilities of the county."

During the current council term, she has served on the Woodstock Police Board, South Gate Centre Board, Art Gallery Board, Woodstock Hospital Board of Trust, Boundary Adjustment Committee, Alternate at County Council as required, and apart from those duties, as a Director for the Woodstock Non-Profit Housing Board. Previously, she served on the city's Accessibility Committee and spent nine years on the Woodstock Hospital Foundation Board.

"Having a tried and proven track record serving on municipal council for 18 years following my city employment as the tax collector, I feel I have the necessary decision-making and leadership skills to serve my community for yet another term. I am aware of being fiscally responsible when budgeting, determining wants and needs. I am approachable,



Connie Lauder.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

a listener, trustworthy, financially responsible, accountable, transparent, and I serve the public with no hidden agenda."

Lauder said her knowledge is current, and her commitment strong.

"My track record speaks for itself. We live in a progressive city, and I want to work together to see its potential. I want to continue to serve, helping to move Woodstock forward into an exciting future."

I am proud of our city and want to do the best for its growth."

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MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

CANDIDATE PROFILES

Ralph brings previous political experience to her bid for a seat in Woodstock

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Maureen Ralph served as a municipal councillor and deputy mayor for the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock (EZT) for 27 years but was born and raised in Woodstock.

"I spent a lifetime caring for people and serving the community I call home. After completing my nursing degree (RN) in Woodstock, I began a career grounded in compassion, active listening and practical problem-solving- the same values that have guided me throughout my years in public service."

Ralph said she worked tirelessly to ensure residents' voices were heard, tax dollars were spent wisely, and decisions were made with fairness and transparency.

"My leadership style has always been steady, values-based and focused on results that truly matter to people. With a deep commitment to community service, I bring extensive experience to my campaign for municipal councillor, as I gained deep experience in budgets, infrastructure and long-term community

planning."

She added she helped guide major projects, including the planning and construction of a new arena, the transition of local police services, and significant community development, carefully balancing community needs with financial responsibility.

"Over the years, I served on a wide range of committees, including the EZT Police Service Board, Erie Thames Hydro Board, Recreation Board and the Ingersoll/Tillsonburg Hospital Board, just to name a few. My collaborative approach and dedication strengthened local programs and policy."

Ralph also represented EZT for three years on Oxford County Council, gaining county-level governance experience and a broad perspective of municipal operations.

"My record reflects a proven ability to listen, collaborate, and deliver results for residents," she explained.

Now retired and living back in Woodstock, Ralph said she is ready to bring her experience, enthusiasm and commitment to public service home to serve as a

strong, caring and approachable voice on Woodstock City Council.

"My priorities reflect what I have always stood for - transparent, accountable representation so residents can easily understand and engage with their local government. I will strive to bring compassionate leadership to address homelessness and mental health issues through collaboration and community partnerships, and practical, results-driven decision-making that ensures Woodstock continues to grow responsibly while maintaining the small-city character and connectedness that makes it special."

Ralph said she is seeking a seat on council because the Friendly City needs experienced, calm voices at the table — people who understand how city hall works and who focus on finding real solutions rather than politics and drama.

"I believe leadership starts with listening. I am dedicated to building a city where every resident feels supported, respected and heard - because caring for our community isn't just my background; it is who I am."

"Woodstock has given me so much



Maureen Ralph.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

throughout my life. I am running for Council because I believe in giving back - through honesty, experience and genuine care for people."

Sidhu running for Woodstock council seat

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Sandeep Sidhu has been a proud resident of Woodstock for nearly a decade, where he and his wife are raising their two young children.

"My educational background is in Police Foundations from Sheridan College, and my professional journey spans over two decades in logistics, security operations, and small business ownership as the operator of Woodstock Duct & Carpet Cleaning."

Outside of business, he has a passion for community sports and youth development.

"I founded the Oxford Youth Cricket Academy to provide structured local sports opportunities for young people, the Oxford County Cricket Association league for adults where 12 teams participate (six local and six from surrounding areas) and one of the local teams, Woodstock Royals Cricket Club, which I play myself in and manage. I worked with the city to bring a cricket ground, which recently opened up at Cowan Fields Sports Complex, along with basketball and pickleball courts. My vision is to keep youth and adults connected to on-field playing sports to stay fit rather than being on screens at home."

As a first-time candidate running for Woodstock City Council, he is seeking a council spot to serve as a strong, accessible voice for our community.

"I am running because our city is growing rapidly, and we need grounded, practical leadership that keeps residents first. Woodstock isn't just where I live—it is where my family, my business, and my heart are. I want to ensure that as our city expands, we maintain a safe, affordable, and vibrant environment where families can thrive and young people have every opportunity to succeed."

He added housing and fair taxes are two key issues for council to deal with along with responsible fiscal management.

"Balancing growth while keeping property taxes fair and ensuring attainable housing options for local families. Financial sustainability by expanding our local commercial and industrial tax base, specifically through tech and light industry attraction, to ease the burden on residential taxpayers."

Sidhu added other issues facing the city is public safety and healthcare access by modernizing local policing and security tools, while advocating for county and provincial partnerships to recruit family doctors and expand healthcare incentives.

"Youth infrastructure and senior care are also critical. Investing in youth development, recreation spaces, and accessible senior programming to support all generations living in Woodstock."

He added he brings a diverse combination of hands-on community service, business operation experience, and practical knowledge in logistics and public safety.

"My commitment to voters is straightforward: to listen, represent, and focus on delivering practical solutions rather than political rhetoric. Whether working with local government to establish new community recreation facilities or operating a local business, I have proven that I know how to turn ideas into tangible results for Woodstock."

Sidhu invites all residents to reach out, share their ideas, and discuss how "we can build a better Woodstock together."

You can connect with him at 519-710-6555, by email at info@iamsandepsidhu.com, or visit his website at iam-sandepsidhu.com.



Sandeep Sidhu.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

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MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

CANDIDATE PROFILES

Tait running for newly created position on Woodstock council

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Tait was first elected to Woodstock City Council in 2003 and has served continuously for more than two decades. Now, she is running for the Deputy Mayor/County Councillor role.

"I have two adult sons, Alex and Will, and like most families in this economy, they live at home but both work. I work full time at Cowan Insurance Brokers in Commercial Insurance. It's a very challenging and sometimes stressful career, but I really enjoy the job, and I have great clients. In any spare time, I have three dogs; two are rescues and their puppy, so I spend a lot of time walking. I also like to garden."

Tait said she is seeking re-election because she is very concerned about the direction Woodstock and Oxford County have been going regarding taxes.

"When first elected, the councils I was on were very careful about adding new programs and buildings without adding a large increase to the taxpayer. We were able to expand the trail system, adding numerous parks with equipment, splash pads, a water park, and increasing the funds for repairs to roads and infrastruc-

ture. The public needs to understand that anything we add gets added to their tax bill."

She added tax increases at the county level are not sustainable going forward.

"I am only one vote, and at county it has only been myself, the Woodstock mayor and Tillsonburg mayor voting against all these increases. The three of us also voted against the increase in bag tags. There seems to be a lack of understanding among some elected officials that the public can not sustain constant increases. The cost of everyday groceries, utilities and gas is hard enough in this economy, and the property tax increases need to stop."

Tait said that instead of spending millions of dollars on Streetscape, the city could have had a new outdoor pool and Sunday bus service and put money into reserves for an ice pad.

"We had a price of \$500,000 to replace all the interlocking bricks downtown, which would have gone a long way instead of what was done. Given the state of the economy, expanded bus service will be needed, but we could not do it before because too much was spent on other items. As the swim group pointed out, having another pool is very important to



Deb Tait.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

the citizens of Woodstock. We live near a large body of water, and children need to have access to swimming lessons and what better option than to have an outdoor pool in the summer months."

She added the current pool is at capacity, but the city doesn't have the population numbers to be able to afford another one. Tait pointed out the need for a third fire hall due to population growth, but her biggest concern is the future homelessness centre at the former YMCA.

"It is going to cost millions to renovate and move the current 50 beds to the new location. It needs to be completely reevaluated with the new faces who will be at the county table. We have a wait list of more than 1,000 people for affordable housing. We need to focus on how money can best be spent and the number of peo-

ple we can help."

Tait said if elected, voters can be sure she will be cautious with their hard-earned money.

"I have always said it should be just as hard to spend it as it is to earn it. I am only one vote, but I do my homework and am always ready to stand behind my vote and debate why I am voting the way I am. All councils should have healthy debate on issues. The public elects seven different people with seven different views. I will be the first to admit I am not always right, and through debate, it allows everyone to hear other views."

She said there have been issues she has brought to council where, through debate, she has realized there is another way to look at them and changed her mind.

"I live in Woodstock, raised my family in Woodstock, and my family is still here. I am concerned about the direction we are headed in and want a city where we have affordable recreation facilities and great public spaces, all at an affordable cost to the residents who live here."

Tait added economic tough times aren't going away anytime soon.

"It hurts everyone from the young to the old, and as elected officials we have a role to play in making sure we look out for everyone and tax money is spent responsibly. Look at voting records and study those running. This level of politics always has the lowest turnout for voting-it is the level that has the most impact on day-to-day lives."

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Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. What bird is a universal symbol of peace?
2. Who invented the airplane?
3. Which body part has the most bones?
4. What is the square root of 49?
5. How many legs does a crab have?
6. What three colors are on Estonia's flag?
7. Which gas do plants absorb from the atmosphere?
8. Who wrote the adventures of Tom Sawyer?
9. What are the five stages of grief?
10. Who sings the 1998 song Closing Time?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

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VRO Freestyle offers relaxed environment, opportunity to perform with Oxford Winds

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

Two local musical ensembles will come together to celebrate a milestone anniversary for one and launch a new program with the other.

Vocal Rhythm Oxford's newest program for adults, VRO Freestyle, will offer a low-pressure singing environment for its participants. Singers can keep the music in their hands as they perform with Oxford Winds, and there are no auditions or choreography involved.

"This opportunity will allow Vocal Rhythm and Oxford Winds to sing and play together and what this means for Vocal Rhythm as an opportunity is it gives us a chance now to allow performers to come forward and sing in an environment that is a little bit lower-stakes but allows us to focus on the fun side of things a little bit more," said Mike Crabbe, program director for Vocal Rhythm Oxford.

The partnership will be the first time Oxford Winds and Vocal Rhythm Oxford will be working together. Oxford Winds is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year and reached out to Vocal Rhythm Oxford to collaborate for their fall concert.

"Personally, I've seen the Oxford Winds over the past few years, and they've always quite inspired me when I've heard their outdoor concerts where

they're playing music from some of my favourite movies, really well-known songs, and they do it beautifully," explained Crabbe.

"I've always had an opportunity to admire them, so for them to reach out and invite us to partner on something like this has been a really exciting treat, and I think what they bring to the table is something we're not going to be able to find anywhere else here in Woodstock."

There will be a concert featuring Vocal Rhythm Oxford and Oxford Winds on Nov. 27 at Knox Presbyterian Church in Woodstock. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with the concert beginning at 7:30 p.m. All proceeds from the show will support Oxford Winds and its programming.

"Featuring a local choir with our band was a beloved tradition we held in past years, and we are looking forward to bringing this back to our community this year, during our 30th season," said Stephanie Riehl, Music Director of Oxford Winds.

"There is something special about playing and singing music together during the holiday season, and we know this will be a very memorable musical event for the musicians, singers, and audience members this year."

Rehearsals for VRO Freestyle begin in September on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon, and registration costs \$125 per person. To sign up online, visit <https://vocalrhythm.ca>.

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Find the four differences between the two pictures.

A



B



Answers: 1. Letters missing on wall 2. Drum in front
 3. Recorder different colour 4. Missing watch

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Woodstock 13U ‘wrangle’ their way into National Championship medal round

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

Woodstock wrangled its way into the medal round of the 2026 13U National Championship baseball tournament, facing both inclement weather and a pair of strong teams.

The 13U Wranglers opened semi-final play with an 11-4 loss to eventual champion British Columbia #1 Sunday, Aug. 23 at Woodstock’s Southside East diamond, before dropping a 16-2 decision to Quebec #2 in the bronze medal final on Southside West. Rain delays pushed the medal games to 9:55 p.m. British Columbia #1 would beat Quebec #1 by an 11-2 margin on Southside’s East diamond in the gold final.

Woodstock had opened round-robin play Thursday morning with a tough 2-1 loss to Quebec #2. Quebec scored both its runs in the bottom of the fifth, back-to-back singles by Liam Giroux and Knoxx Dubord coming home on a groundout to short and a sacrifice fly to right, respectively. Woodstock’s Ryker Freeman was hit by a pitch to lead off the top of the sixth, stole second and scored on an error at third, pulling the Wranglers within one. Woodstock’s Liam Collette stroked a leadoff double in the top of the seventh, but Quebec closer Matthew Ciamarro kept him there with back-to-back strikeouts and a game-ending ground ball to second.

The Wranglers rebounded with a 15-1 romp over Newfoundland and Labrador in their second outing Thursday, exploding for 10 runs in the fourth and adding five more in the fifth. The fourth-inning outburst was highlighted by a three-run Jack Lisk home run with Collette adding a double and a triple, Charlotte Roy a double, Luca Di Nardo two singles and Oliver Howard a run-scoring single.

Woodstock’s Will Winchester was both the Alpha and Omega in a pivotal round-robin-closing 6-3 win over British Columbia #2, sparking a four-run rally in the home third and closing it out with a four-out save.

The Wranglers were trailing 3-0 when Winchester stepped to the plate, driving a leadoff double over BC right fielder Ethan Shuel’s head.

“Just dialled in on the pitcher,” said Win-



Woodstock’s Charlotte Roy (left) takes off from first on a Caiden Stashands-Alavaro base hit, advancing to third on the play, as watched by BC #2 first baseman Oaklee Neufeld.

chester. “Waited for my pitch and got it.”

He took third on a slide on a passed ball. Jack Oliver followed with a base on balls and Charlotte Roy loaded the bases, hit by a pitch that encouraged rather than discouraged her.

“Felt good, felt great,” she said. “Made me feel, like pumped up.”

Winchester and Oliver scored on Caiden Stashands-Alvarado’s two-RBI single, leaving runners at first and third. Roy plated the tying run on a gutsy double-steal, the strategy anticipated by B.C. Shortstop Parker Erickson took catcher Jay Enns’ throw 15 feet in front of second base and returned it home. Roy, catching a glimpse of her opponents’ successful reading of the play, was still able to score.

“I just focused on home plate, just be there,”

she said, uncertain if she’d gotten under or around Enns’ tag attempt. “As long as I was safe.”

Collette doubled into the right field corner to plate Stashands-Alvarado with the go-ahead run.

“Felt good, being able to get the boys back with some good energy,” said Winchester. “Got that four-run and stayed on top.”

The Wranglers added insurance runs in the fifth (solo Jack Borg home run over the fence just right of centre) and sixth, (one-out Kingston Li single and RBI Di Nardo base hit between third and short).

Winchester was called on in relief with two out in the top of the sixth.

“I said ‘All right, let’s go.’ Bit of a surprise, but I was ready.”

He exited the sixth with a comebacker to the mound. Woodstock recorded the first out of the seventh on a first-pitch ground ball to Borg at short, before back-to-back singles brought the tying run to home plate.

“There were some nerves,” Winchester admitted. “Just quiet their dugout, all the fans screaming, just me and my catcher playing catch.”

He got the second out, striking out swinging on a low curveball, both runners advancing, before Borg’s second flawless chance on a ground-er to short helped lock up a four-out save.

“Defence held it down for me,” Winchester credited.

The win qualified Woodstock for championship quarterfinals, the Wranglers advancing to semis with a 5-2 win over Ontario beginning Saturday at noon on Southside East. Woodstock broke a 2-2 tie with a three-run top of the sixth, fuelled by Borg reaching base on a passed ball



Woodstock Wrangler Will Winchester (right) slides safely into third base, eluding BC #2’s Liam Vander Ende’s tag.

2026 13U NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP	
GOLD MEDAL FINAL	
BRITISH COLUMBIA	11
QUEBEC #2	2
BRONZE MEDAL FINAL	
QUEBEC	16
WOODSTOCK (ONTARIO HOST)	2
SEMI-FINALS	
QUEBEC #2	12
QUEBEC	11
BRITISH COLUMBIA	11
WOODSTOCK	4
CHAMPIONSHIP QUARTERFINALS	
WOODSTOCK	5
ONTARIO	2
QUEBEC	14
ALBERTA	2
QUEBEC #2	10
BRITISH COLUMBIA #2	0
BRITISH COLUMBIA	4
NOVA SCOTIA	0
CONSOLATION	
ONTARIO #2	8
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR	4
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	15
NEW BRUNSWICK	0
NOVA SCOTIA	9
ONTARIO	5
BRITISH COLUMBIA #2	14
ALBERTA	6
5/6	
ONTARIO	15
BRITISH COLUMBIA #2	5
7/8	
ALBERTA VERSUS NOVA SCOTIA	
9/10	
ONTARIO #2	3
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	1
11/12	
NEW BRUNSWICK	13
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR	4

following a leadoff strikeout, singles from Collette and Li and a two-out Andrew Jantzi triple to right, cut down at home plate as he tried to stretch it into an inside-the-park home run.

Woodstock area golfer wins Optimist tourney, qualifies for Florida championships

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

"I am pumped!"

Those were the first words out of 14-year-old Grant Hamulecki's mouth when asked about how he feels about winning the 2026 Midwestern District Optimist Junior Golf Tournament at the St. Marys Golf and Country Club.

Not only did the Sweaburg resident win the 14 and 15-year-old division, but he also shot the best round of the day with a 2-over 73, one better than 16 to 18-year-old division winner. As a result, he qualifies for the 2026 Optimist International Junior Golf Championship held at the Trump Doral course in Miami next summer.

"This will be the best tournament I have played in at arguably the nicest course I have ever played. Being able to go down there, have fun, and go on a vacation for a sport I love sounds awesome to me."

The left-swinging Hamulecki has spent most of his young sporting career on the ice playing hockey and on the diamond playing baseball but has recently focused his attention to the links.

"I started playing golf when I was three, but I didn't like it that much. I picked it up again in the summer of 2024 and loved it. This is my first year playing in tournaments. The satisfaction of hitting a good shot keeps me coming back. If I'm not hitting the ball well, then I might not want to play for a while, but if I am playing great, I could play all day."

While he doesn't have a regular instructor, he credits his dad and three of his golf buddies for helping him improve his game. Hamulecki said he is well aware of the strongest aspects of his game, as well as those that need more work.

"My short irons and wedges are pretty good. With a wedge in my hand, I'm pretty confident most of the time. I used to three-putt so much a few months ago, about three or four times a round on average, but I have gotten really good at lag putting, so I wouldn't call it a weakness anymore. My driver is probably a weakness right now."

The family has had a golf simulator since last winter, something he takes full advantage of on a regular basis.

"I'm always in there trying to get better. In reality, it's pretty much all I want to do. Not that a normal job would be bad, but the thought of playing golf for a liv-



(SEPNCEY SEYMOUR PHOTO)

14-year-old Sweaburg resident Grant Hamulecki will be heading to Florida next summer after winning the Midwestern District Optimist Junior Golf Tournament at the St. Marys Golf and Country Club.

ing is amazing, even though I know it would be really hard."

Another advantage of the simulator is getting to play virtual golf on the Trump Doral course.

As for the possibility of signing up with a recruiting company to pursue a U.S. golf scholarship, Hamulecki said he and his family haven't gone down that road, but it is something he would potentially be open to.

Hamulecki will be playing in the junior club championship tournament this weekend at Craigowan, and he thinks he has a good shot of winning.

"Most guys my age don't take the game as seriously as I do or love it as much. I think I can get it done."

He is also preparing for the 2026-27 minor hockey season with the A/AA Woodstock Navy Vets U15 team.

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Authorized by Connie Lauder

Poilievre talks agriculture and housing during Oxford County visit

Conservative leader wants less taxes and red tape on farmers and homebuilding

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Federal Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre made a rare stop in Oxford County at Canada's Outdoor Farm Show on Saturday as the guest of Oxford MP Arpan Khanna.

Grant Haven Media was given an exclusive interview with Poilievre before his speaking engagement and before trade talks with the Americans broke down.

One of the topics covered was agriculture and how we as a country can become more self-sustainable in the sector.

"What we need to do is lower the cost burden on farmers to make them more competitive. In Canada today, we have a lot of government costs that other farmers do not face. The industrial carbon tax on fertilizer, farm equipment and food processing drives up the inputs to grow the food we eat."

He added taxes on fuel make it more expensive to grow and ship food, as Canadians spend about 20 cents per litre more for gas and diesel compared to our American counterparts.

"We need to get rid of all those taxes, that's the starting point. That would allow us to produce not just more food, but more fertilizer and more farm equipment at a lower price. There is also a lot of red tape CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency)

has imposed that really doesn't help food safety."

Poilievre also explained there are dozens of regulations that apply to our producers but don't apply to their foreign counterparts.

"If these things were really necessary for safe food consumption, we wouldn't let foreign farms and food processors go around the rules."

Homelessness and the related issues of mental health and drug abuse may not be a direct federal issue, but the Conservative leader said there are two main reasons why they are such a problem in Canada.

"One is the cost of housing, the other is the drugs. The number one cost-driver of housing in Canada is government. It's taxes, development charges, fees, delays, permitting, zoning, land restrictions, then all of the consultants, lobbyists, lawyers and accountants you have to hire to comply with an endless list of rules and regulations that do absolutely nothing to protect our safety or our environment."

He added Canada has the second-lowest rate of building permits of all 38 countries in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and has among the highest building taxes.

"We need to get rid of all taxes on homebuilding. That includes no sales tax, no carbon tax on housing materials, and lower taxes on the workers and companies

who build the homes. Second, we need to incentivize municipalities through infrastructure dollars to speed up permits, free up land and collect development charges."

Poilievre also wants to see the federal building code changed to emphasize affordability. When it comes to illegal drugs, he wants to see much stiffer punishments for dealers.

"Right now, when someone gets caught for trafficking meth or fentanyl, they get a slap on the wrist. I want life sentences for fentanyl dealers who sell more than 40 milligrams. That's enough to kill 20 people... You might as well take a gun and fire it into a stadium full of people because that's how likely you are to kill somebody. It can stop someone's breathing in three seconds."

He also wants to see an end to safe supply programs across the country, calling them "hard production" rather than harm reduction.

"They call it safe supply; it's unsafe supply. I want to scrap all those programs and put people in treatment and recovery programs. Conservatives are going to push a bill for mandatory drug treatment for people who are arrested on possession of illegal substances. Not the dealers; they are going to go to the slammer and never get out. The victims should be put into treatment programs to get them off drugs and turn their lives around."

Poilievre added no other country in the world is providing safe supply.

"If you go to Europe, you don't see this. You don't see people folded over on fentanyl in Spain, France or Germany. It doesn't exist. They don't do this kind of insanity. Our government is doing it to us, and we can stop it, and I will."

When asked what he enjoys most about his job as federal opposition leader, he

said he loves meeting with the incredible Canadian people as often as he can, including many young employees at Stubbe's Precast plant in Hickson.

"They have a lineup of people on that floor, 18 years old, who are building moulds for beautiful new homes, working with rebar and cranking out six million square feet of housing every single year. These kids are just unbelievable. Their work ethic, their brain power."

Poilievre said the most frustrating part of his job is having a government in power not worthy of the people it represents.

"We have the most impressive population in the world in terms of our values, our education. Yet the government is just not living up to their standards. It frustrates the hell out of me when I see the government screwing things up, preventing our kids from owning homes and letting crime run rampant in our streets. If it weren't so obvious what to do, I wouldn't be so frustrated."

Over 3,000 people attended the party's community BBQ with Poilievre and other Conservative MPs.

"I was humbled by the tremendous support, energy and enthusiasm... in Woodstock on Saturday," explained Oxford MP Arpan Khanna.

"It was an honour to speak with so many people about the challenges facing our country, including the ongoing trade dispute with the United States, the rising cost of living and the need to make our communities safer. We discussed our Conservative plan to lower costs, strengthen our economy, restore safe streets and put Canada first."

He added the party will never stop fighting for the families, seniors, farmers, workers and small business owners who are the backbone of our country.



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Another Woodstock Fair in the books



Face Painting by Valentine was a big draw for the youngsters.



Luciano gives the final touches on grooming his entry.



Moments of pure joy were captured as children circled the merry go round together.



Camp 31 BBQ's Jake and Ella offer tasty samples of their sauce to fairgoers.

The three day Woodstock Fair and Ribfest wrapped up on Aug. 23, closing out a weekend marked by both strong community turnout and challenging weather conditions. Friday provided the only rain free day, allowing families to enjoy the midway, food vendors, and evening entertainment without interruption. Crowds

were steady throughout the day, giving the weekend a solid start before conditions shifted. By Saturday, heavy rain and fast moving storms swept through Woodstock, leaving wet grounds, scattered debris, and temporary delays at the Fairgrounds. City crews spent much of the weekend clearing fallen branches and stabilizing walk-

ways, which slowed early day attendance and forced adjustments to outdoor setups. Sunday brought continued cleanup efforts as organizers and crews worked around saturated areas and storm related debris. While the weather again reduced morning turnout, visitors gradually returned as conditions improved, helping both events

finish on a positive note. Despite the storms, the Woodstock Fair and Ribfest completed their full three day run, demonstrating the resilience of organizers, volunteers, and the community. The weekend delivered a mix of entertainment, food, and tradition — proving once again that Woodstock shows up, rain or shine.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



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Downtown Woodstock café highlights writing and music

Blueink Bookstore café welcomed poets, writers, musicians, and storytellers last evening for its monthly Artists Open Mic Night, transforming the cozy Dundas Street venue into a lively hub of grassroots creativity and community connection. Held from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at 491 Dundas St., the event invited performers of all experience levels to share original work, test new material, and connect with fellow creatives. Attendees filled the café's warm, book-lined space, creating an intimate listening room atmosphere that encouraged both artistic expression and attentive engagement. The evening

featured a diverse lineup of performances, including acoustic music sets, spoken word poetry, short storytelling, and comedic readings. PÉZO The Poet guided the flow of the night, ensuring each artist had time to shine while keeping the energy welcoming and relaxed. This was the second official Artists Open Mic event, with plans to embed this gathering within the arts community. Many participants stayed after the performances to mingle, share ideas, and enjoy the café's drinks and pastries. This free community event runs on the third Thursday of every month, continuing through Dec. 17. (RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Welcoming guests and participants were Janine, PÉZO The Poet and owner Shahla.



Maiah read a poem she wrote about her family life.



PÉZO The Poet, MC for the evening, lays out the evening's agenda to the enthusiastic guests and participants.

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POLICE BRIEFS

Woodstock Police Service briefs

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Police combating open-air drug use in downtown core

The Woodstock Police Service (WPS) continues to respond to community concerns regarding open-air drug use in the downtown core.

Members of the WPS Street Crime Unit and uniform patrol conducted targeted enforcement in the downtown area on Aug. 19 in response to concerns from residents, businesses and community members.

Just before 10:30 a.m., officers observed a female consuming drugs in a public area. A 45-year-old Woodstock woman was arrested and charged with Possession of a Schedule I Substance. Drug paraphernalia was seized, and the accused was released on an Appearance Notice with a future court date.

About 15 minutes later, police arrested a 45-year-old man after observing him engaged in drug consumption. He was charged with Possession of a Schedule I Substance – Other Drugs. Drug paraphernalia was also seized, and the accused was released on an Appearance Notice.

20 minutes after that arrest, officers observed another male actively using drugs in the area. A 44-year-old man was arrested, and a subsequent search resulted in the seizure of suspected drugs. He was charged with Possession of a Schedule I Substance

for the Purpose of Trafficking – Opioid. The accused was released on an Undertaking.

As a result of the enforcement initiative, officers seized approximately 33.1 grams of suspected fentanyl, \$467.60 in Canadian currency, and multiple pipes and other drug paraphernalia.

“The Woodstock Police Service recognizes that substance use and addiction are complex issues that require both enforcement and community-based supports. However, open-air drug use can create significant public safety concerns, particularly in areas frequented by residents, businesses, families and vulnerable members of the community,” said a WPS news release.

“WPS will continue to respond to complaints involving public drug consumption and drug trafficking and will take appropriate enforcement action where grounds exist. Enforcement efforts are focused on maintaining safe and accessible public spaces while disrupting the trafficking and distribution of illegal drugs,” it added.

Woodstock Police lay multiple impaired driving charges

Police received a report of a transport truck stuck in a field at 2 a.m. on Aug. 21. Officers arrived and located a vehicle on an embankment near Oxford Road 4 and found a male inside the transport truck.

As a result of the investigation, a 53-year-old Woodstock male was arrested and charged

with impaired driving by alcohol and drugs. The accused was released on an undertaking.

On the afternoon of Saturday, Aug. 22, an officer on patrol observed a vehicle on James Street fail to stop at stop signs. A traffic stop was conducted, and the driver was subsequently arrested. A 79-year-old Woodstock male of Woodstock has been charged with impaired driving and dangerous driving.

On the evening of Aug. 22, an officer observed a vehicle travelling at a speed inconsistent with the posted speed limit. A traffic stop was conducted, and the driver was eventually arrested. Police say they located a small amount of suspected cocaine.

A 39-year-old Woodstock male was arrested and charged with impaired driving and Possession of a Schedule I Substance – Cocaine. The accused was released from custody with a future court date.

Police received a report of a possible impaired driver in a parking lot in the area of Dundas Street early in the morning of Aug. 23.

Officers located the vehicle, observed a woman enter the driver's seat, and conducted a traffic stop. During the investigation, an alert occurred, and a 34-year-old Port Loring woman was issued a seven-day driver's licence suspension.

“The Woodstock Police Service reminds motorists that impaired driving remains a serious public safety concern. Approved



(WPS PHOTO)

Woodstock Police made three arrests and confiscated a quantity of illegal drugs on Aug. 22.

Screening Devices are an important roadside tool used by police to detect the presence of alcohol in a driver's body,” said a WPS press release.

“Drivers who register a fail may face arrest and further testing, while an alert reading can result in an immediate roadside driver's licence suspension,” it added.

Police say if you consume alcohol or drugs, plan ahead for a safe ride and never drive impaired. Anyone who observes a suspected impaired driver is encouraged to call 9-1-1.

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OCCA hold annual family BBQ at Pittock

The Oxford Caribbean Community Association (OCCA) welcomed families, friends, and supporters to its 6th Annual Family BBQ, held Saturday, Aug. 22, 2026, from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Pittock Conservation Area. The event once again delivered a lively celebration of Caribbean culture, community connection, and summertime enjoyment. Guests arrived throughout the afternoon to take in the relaxed, family friendly atmosphere. Attendees set up lawn chairs, shared food, and enjoyed the warm weather as the event unfolded. DJ Fyre kept the energy high with a mix of Caribbean rhythms and crowd pleasing favourites, creating a vibrant soundtrack for the day. Families

took part in new games and activities introduced for this year's event, giving children and adults plenty of ways to join in the fun. Organizers emphasized the BBQ's role in strengthening community ties and celebrating cultural diversity across Oxford County. Donations collected during the event supported OCCA's ongoing cultural programming and outreach initiatives. The afternoon offered a blend of great food, music, and social connection, with guests mingling, relaxing, and enjoying the easygoing summer vibe. As the event wrapped up, OCCA volunteers expressed gratitude to the community for its continued support and participation.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Linda welcomed guests to OCCA's sixth annual BBQ at its booth.



Guests filled their plates with a blend of great Caribbean food.



Toney, Verol, Rohan and Raymond had a friendly game of traditional Dominos.

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First responders welcome the public to open event in Friendly City

Woodstock families gathered at Victoria Park on Aug. 20 for a lively morning celebrating community safety and teamwork. The First Responders Meet and Greet, hosted by EarlyON Child and Family Centre, brought together members of the Woodstock Police Department, Woodstock Fire Department, and Oxford County Paramedic Services for an engaging, educational event. Children and parents met uniformed first responders, explored emergency vehicles, and learned practical safety tips in a friendly, hands on environment. The park buzzed

with excitement as youngsters tried on helmets, sounded sirens, and discovered how police officers, firefighters, and paramedics work together to keep the community safe. Organizers said the event aimed to strengthen trust and awareness between families and emergency personnel. "It was wonderful to see kids interacting with our local heroes and understanding the importance of safety," one EarlyON representative shared. The morning concluded with smiles, photos, and heartfelt thanks to the dedicated teams who serve Woodstock and Oxford County every day.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Brian from Oxford Paramedics, along with Katie of EarlyON, demonstrated the mechanics of a stretcher from the Ambulance.



Sparky, along with Lisa and Chris, posed with the Sehmbi family.



Suited for fighting a fire, there was a demonstration by one of the firefighters.

Barkin Boujee Celebrates Three Years in Ingersoll

KYRAH SMITH

Echo Correspondent

On August 14, 2026, local pet store Barkin Boujee celebrated its three-year anniversary in the heart of Downtown Ingersoll.

Specializing in raw dog food and pet products, Barkin Boujee marked the occasion with a two-day anniversary sale, complete with giveaways and complimentary grab bags. Both local pet owners and their furry friends were encouraged to stop by and join in the celebration.

When reflecting on the store's three years in Ingersoll, owner Chantelle Lack-

enbauer had only positive things to say about the community.

"We just really love being here," Lackenbauer says. "We believe in this downtown, and I think more businesses should know how great it is to come here."

Since opening its doors, Barkin Boujee has become a familiar spot for local pet owners, and the team says they are grateful for the continued support from the community.

The Barkin Boujee staff would also like to thank the locals for every purchase, visit, share and recommendation that has helped keep their shop boujee and thriving.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

Outside view of Barkin Boujee in the heart of downtown Ingersoll as the store celebrated its third anniversary with giveaways, raffles and store-wide sales.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

Barkin Boujee Owner Chantelle Lackenbauer and husband Joel Lackenbauer with their adorable boujee pup, Prada.

ROUTE TO THE PAST

HISTORY

Trials and Trails of Twins

SCOTT GILLIES

Echo Contributor

Born in the Mohawk Valley of upper New York state in 1770, Henry and his twin brother, Mark Schell were the sons of Christian and Maria Schell. During the waning years of the American Revolution there were skirmishes and brutal raids by British troops and Native Americans upon the settlers of this valley. Some of these raids were led by Colonel John Butler while others were directed by Sir John Johnson.

Sometime around 1780, when the twin boys were nearly eleven years old, they were captured and taken to Canada by the British and their native allies.

It appears that the boys and their native captors got along very well together and became quite attached to each other; the lads learned the indigenous language. According to family lore, they were, and remained, the friends of the Mohawk and Seneca during the rest of their lives.

During their captivity

in Canada, they lived for the first two years under the direction of General James Murray, the first British governor of Quebec following the end of the Seven Years War.

The twins, showing themselves to be bright young men, attracted the notice of Captain Laws, an officer in the British army. They were placed under his own supervision and care for the next six years.

Mark was farmed out as an apprentice to learn the tailoring trade – an important role in a far-off distant colony, far from fashionable fops of England; a colony where clothing made from luxurious linens had to be imported. On the other hand, homespun and handwoven textiles were still being made on the seigneuries (farms) in the French colony. While such items as men's shirts, which formed the basis of today's lumberjack shirts, were being produced for the common man, flax was also being grown and processed into linen for a gentleman's shirt complete with cuffs and lace trimming while fulling

mills turned raw wool into fine firm broadcloth. A tailor's apprentice was a respectable position for a young boy to pursue.

Henry however became the favorite of the Captain and was his companion on various journeys. At one point in his career, Captain Laws received a commission to establish and lay out a town site at Bay Chaleur on the Gaspé Peninsula. He selected his party of sturdy young men for this arduous task, which included young Henry Schell.

The tale is told that they started from Quebec by ship in the fall of 1784 or 1785. The weather had been fine that year so they made a late start, thinking that they would be able to reach their destination before the winter set in. They had not been out many days, when the weather changed; it rained, then turned colder, then it snowed and froze hard enough to form vast sheets of ice on the St. Lawrence River. They drifted about for weeks. Then near Christmas Day the weather improved, and their gift was to finally reach land and erect shelters for the coming winter months.

The Captain had a great affection for the teen and wanted him to remain, but once reunited in Quebec City, Henry and Mark both grew more homesick as they continued to grow up. It had been some eight years since they had last seen their family. It seems that the more the twins conversed with each other about their family and friends, reliving in their minds the good times and the bad, the more they longed to return home.

They decided to undertake the journey, and bid farewell to their Canadian friends. To defray the expenses of their long journey, they furnished themselves with pins, needles, and trinkets from Mark's tailor trade to sell along the way.

The journey, which had to be made entirely on foot, did not take long.

It is said that the attractions of Schell's Bush – the family farmstead--furnished them speed on their march.

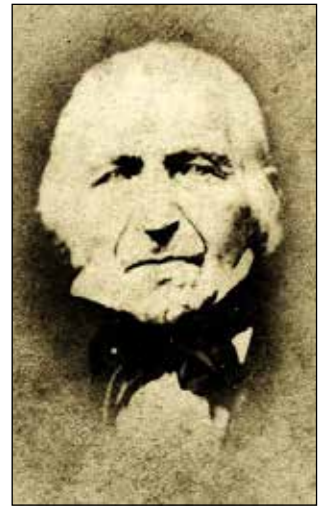
But what a change! The old home was not the same – the large stone and wood blockhouse which their father had erected for protection was not there. Their mother had grown older; and their father was dead. Unbeknownst to the twins, their brother Denis had been killed in the same raid that had seen them captured. Fred, another of their brothers, had been grievously wounded which left him lame for the rest of his days, and their sister Eve had been left with life-altering deformities.

Nevertheless, the Schell family rejoiced at the return of their prodigal sons. Given up for dead, the twins had returned!

The two young men settled down and began to raise their own families. Henry married Mary

Moyer in 1794; Mark married Delia Casler the same year, and a division of goods was made. Henry retained the homestead. Several of the family, including Fred and Mark moved to Canada. In the spring of 1798, Henry sold the homestead in New York State and moved to Canada; first at Grimsby, then a year or two later he moved to Markham – near the home of his brothers, especially his twin. Like most other twins, they always sought each other's company.

Henry and his wife Mary had raised a family of three daughters and five sons. One of those sons, Daniel, had married and started his own family business in Ingersoll. It was here that the adventuresome Henry Schell passed away in 1859 at the age of 88. He was buried in the graveyard of the West Oxford Methodist Church. He had outlived his twin brother by four-

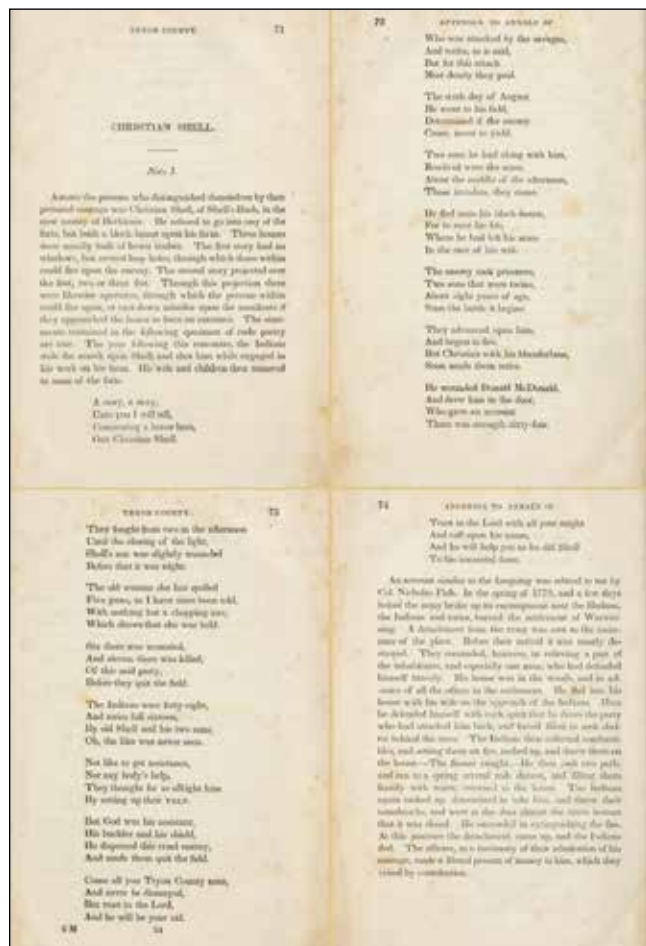


(CONTRIBUTED IMAGE)

Henry Schell.

teen years. Mark had been living with family members in Michigan when he was badly injured in an accidental fall which proved to be, in the end, fatal. Upon hearing of Mark's injury, 75-year-old Henry had walked from Ingersoll to Michigan to see his dying brother. After all their trials and tribulations and trails across eastern North America, their devotion remained to each other.

route2thepast@gmail.com



(CONTRIBUTED IMAGE)

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Riddles

What do you call a bear with no teeth?
A gummy bear!

What has a thousand needles, but cannot sew?
A porcupine.

Why do bees have sticky hair?
Because they use honeycombs!

What animal can jump higher than a building?
Any animal that can jump—buildings can't jump!

The alphabet goes from A to Z, but I go Z to A. What am I?
A zebra.

What two keys cannot open any doors?
Monkey and donkey.

Why are teddy bears never hungry?
Because they are always stuffed!

What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary?
A thesaurus.

What kind of lion never roars?
A dandelion!

Which fish costs the most?
A goldfish!

Sudoku

by PeterS 2026

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

Solution found on page 31

Featured Pet



HAZEL

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

Word Search

FAIR DAYS

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

APPLES

BLUE RIBBON

CARNIVAL

CAROUSEL

CHURRO

COASTER

CONCERT

CORNDOG

COTTON CANDY

EXHIBIT

FERRIS WHEEL

FRIES

FUNNEL CAKE

GAMES

GRAND STAND

JUDGES

LEMONADE

LIVESTOCK

MIDWAY

POPCORN

PRIZE

QUILT

RACING

TRACTOR



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COMING EVENTS

AUGUST 30 | 10 AM - 3 PM

41ST ANNUAL ONTARIO TOY SHOW

Embro Community Centre, 355644 35th Line, Embro, ON

Awards presentation at 2:45 pm. Buy, sell, trade and view interesting diorama displays. Food truck on site. More details at: www.facebook.com/OntarioToyShowWoodstock or 519.808.2105.

AUGUST

AUGUST 29 | 10 AM - 2 PM

FIRST ANNUAL FAMILY FUN DAY St. David's United Church, 190 Springbank Ave, Woodstock

St. David's United Church and The Optimist Club of Oxford County have partnered up to host our "First Annual Family Fun Day" to raise money for the Breakfast Programs at Eastdale Public School and Central Public School. Games, Dunk Tank, BBQ, Kids Corner, Silent Auction, Vendors and more! Vendors welcome, call 519-539-3161. Come join us for a fun day!

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 1, 15 & 29 | 1 PM

SACRED HEART PARISH EUCHRE Christ Church, 595815 Oxford 59, Huntingford

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

SEPTEMBER 2 | 2 PM

STRATFORD MISSION DEPOT Christ Church, 595815 Oxford 59, Huntingford

Learn about the Stratford Mission Depot with founder Jean Aitcheson. This Reaching Ontario Sharing Education (ROSE) program is co-hosted by the Braemar W.I. and the ACW of Christ Church. It is a wheelchair accessible building and all are welcome. Refreshments will be served. Questions contact lauracgreen77@gmail.com

SEPTEMBER 6 | MEMORIAL SERVICE AT 2:30 PM

INNERKIP CEMETERY DECORATION DAY & MEMORIAL SERVICE

We welcome you to decorate your family gravesite. (No glass containers please)

SEPTEMBER 12 | 3 PM

INGERSOLL DISTRICT NATURE CLUB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND NATURE WALK WITH BBQ

Join us at the LAWSON NATURE RESERVE on McBeath Rd south of Ingersoll N0J 1W0 for a guided walk on the trail followed by a meeting and BBQ. Both members and nonmembers are

welcome. Call Sheila 519 485 2645.

SEPTEMBER 12 | 9 AM - 4 PM

(Rain Date: Sunday, September 13) OPEN HOUSE AND FAMILY FUN DAY Tillsonburg Regional Airport, 244411 Airport Road, Tillsonburg

Join the Canadian Harvard Aircraft Association for its biggest event of the year, their Wings & Wheels Family Fun Day, September 13. (Rain date: Sept 14). World War II Harvard aircraft, along with hundreds of classic cars will be on display in one location. Bring your classic car or peruse those brought by others. Harvard flights will be available all day long. A great day's outing. Activities:

- Opportunities for Harvard flight experiences (While pre-booking flights is not necessary, it is recommended. Contact crewflights@harvards.com to ensure your seat)
- Hangar tours and aircraft displays
- Fundraising garage sale & book sale
- Food trucks

All types of vehicles are welcome. If you are bringing a vehicle for display, registering your vehicle upon arrival on-site is highly recommended.

In case of inclement weather, check their Facebook page for RAIN DATE updates. Cost: Cash donation, Contact: info@harvards.com / 519-842-9922, For more info: www.harvards.com

SEPTEMBER 13 | 1:30 - 5 PM

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR COMMUNITIES PORCH MUSIC FEST Starts at The Waterlot, downtown New Hamburg

Live music, local food and drinks, and fun for the family hosted at Puddicombe House; Imperial Market Patio; The Waterlot and the LYNC Station downtown New Hamburg. Ten local and award winning musicians will keep you singing and dancing. Come for the music stay for the food and take a picture with some classic police cars. Porch Music is in support of the Mill Block Community Development. Free limited tickets are available at Eventbrite: eventbrite.ca/e/lync-porch-music-fest-tickets-1996113255481?aff=oddtcreator

SEPTEMBER 13 | 2 PM

DECORATION DAY SERVICE Burgessville Baptist Cemetery,

Speaker Pastor Nick Mitchell, soloist Lola Mather-Dyer.

SEPTEMBER 14 | 7 PM

INGERSOLL CHORAL SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!

Ingersoll Christian Reformed Church

Like to sing? We'd love to have you join us. No experience required! Rehearsals begin Sept. 14, preparing for our November show at ITOPA –

ICS Lights Up Broadway. Find us on Facebook or email holly.langohr@gmail.com for more info.

SEPTEMBER 19 | 2 - 4 PM

OPEN HOUSE AND FAMILY FUN DAY St. John's Church, Eastwood, 685860 Oxford Rd 2 (Hwy2)

Visit our historic church and learn about our Celtic traditions.

Games and refreshments.

SEPTEMBER 10 | 1:30 PM

KC AND THE SUNSHINE BAND TRIBUTE WITH THE GIRLS FROM CELEBRITY PRODUCTIONS Old St Paul's Church, 723 Dundas Street, Woodstock

Refreshments to follow. Tickets only \$20.00. Available by calling 519-537-3921, at www.oldstpauls.com or at the door. It's time to get on your Boogie Shoes!

SEPTEMBER 19 & 20 | 10 AM - 4 PM

ALPACA FARM DAYS

Carol & Jim Harrison, 335358 Line 33, R.R.4, Embro

Meet alpacas! Learn! Play! Shop! Relax! New this year: alpaca pellets & beans for your gardens. Fee: Donation to Big Brothers, Big Sisters Oxford in lieu of admission charge.

This is an outdoor event, rain or shine. Find us on Facebook: Harrison's Alpacas. Our farm is in the heart of Oxford County's rural community.

SEPTEMBER 30 | 7 PM

OXFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY ALTADORE

Chartwell Oxford Gardens, 423 Devonshire Ave, Woodstock (Main Entrance)

The only home fine enough to entertain the Prince of Wales in 1860. Come join Thomas Ryerson as he takes us through the rich history of the house on the "Round Hill" and its former occupants. Free Event, No Registration, Parking, Donations Welcome! www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.ca or email us at info@oxhs.ca

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 24 | 10 AM - 3 PM

OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY CIRCUIT BOOK (STAMP) FAIR Church of the Epiphany, 560 Dundas Street, Woodstock Ontario N4S 1C7

Free Admission & Parking. Stop in and buy some stamps and meet fellow stamp collectors. About 8 participating stamp clubs. Contact: dheaton3e3@gmail.com. Website: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>

ONGOING CLASSES, CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

EVERY 3RD THURSDAY | 5 - 7 PM

ARTISTS OPEN MIC | POETRY, PROSE, MUSIC & MORE

Blueink Bookstore & Cafe, 491 Dundas Street, Woodstock, ON

www.blueinkbookstore.com. Go to "Events" Tab for information and to register

FOOD TRUCKS AT GRACE UNITED CHURCH TAVISTOCK

116 Woodstock St. S. Tavistock

AUGUST 31 | 4:30 - 7:30 PM

Born2Eat, Los Rolling Tacos, Fo'Cheezy
Donations to Tavistock Agricultural Society

EVERY OTHER FRIDAY | 1 - 4 PM

BE FALL-ISH AND COME TO THE INGERSOLL COUNTRY MUSIC JAMBOREE

Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St. S. Ingersoll

Join us, walk ins welcome. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Perform, listen, dance & enjoy! September 4 & 18, October 2, 16 & 30, November 6 & 20, and December 4.

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

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

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

EVERY FRIDAY | 1 PM

TILLSONBURG DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB

Tillsonbur Senior Centre, 45 Hardy Ave, Tillsonburg

Don't have a partner? Come anyway and we will match you up with someone. For more information, visit their Facebook page: [TburgBridge](https://www.facebook.com/TburgBridge).

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

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

OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY

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

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

LAST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH | 10 AM - 12 PM

MONTHLY VON BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC

Ingersoll Pharmasave, 19 King St. E., Ingersoll

Last Tuesday of every Month.

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

PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

21 Wellington St., Woodstock (Virtual options available)

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

VON OXFORD SUPPORTIVE CARE PROGRAMS

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

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

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

OXFORD COUNTY DIABETES EDUCATION PROGRAM

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

**Here's to a great start
and a successful
school year!**

ERNIE HARDEMAN
MPP - Oxford

✉ ernie.hardemanco@pc.ola.org
☎ 519-537-5222 • 1-800-265-4046

COMING EVENTS

THE OPTIMIST CLUB OF OXFORD COUNTY

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

THE LIONS CLUB OF WOODSTOCK

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

OXFORD COUNTY BRANCH OF ONTARIO ANCESTORS

Are you looking to start a summer pastime? Are you interested in your family history? Oxford Branch has an extensive collection of family history and genealogical resources that can help you.
Come visit our Resource Centre at 82 Light Street, Courthouse Square, Woodstock. We are open Tuesdays to Thursdays 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Volunteers are ready to help you get started or help you research for missing information. You can also connect with us on the web at <https://oxford.ogs.on.ca>. We are dedicated to supporting and promoting genealogical research in Oxford County. Hope to see you through the summer!

BEACHVILLE LEGION EVENTS: 434852 Zorra Line, Beachville

BRANCH CLOSED LABOUR DAY WEEKEND

WEDNESDAYS | 7-8 PM GENTLE CHAIR YOGA

WEDNESDAYS | 7:30 PM HUMP DAY DARTS, FREE POOL

THURSDAYS | 7 PM EUCHRE

FRIDAYS | 8 PM DARTS, FREE POOL

SEPTEMBER 2, 16, 30 | 4:30 - 6 PM OX ON THE RUN MOBILE LIBRARY

THURSDAYS STARTING SEPT. 3 | 7 PM LINE DANCING

Salsa and West Coast Swing 8:15. No partner required.

SEPTEMBER 11 | DOORS OPEN 6 PM BINGO STARTS AT 7 PM OXFORD COUNTY FELINE WELLNESS BINGO

SEPTEMBER 13 | 1 - 4 PM THAMES VALLEY BLUEGRASS AND OLD TIME COUNTRY PICKERS

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

SEPTEMBER 19 | BRANCH OPENS 2 PM, CENOTAPH SERVICE 2:30 PM, BBQ 5 PM SATURDAY SEPT 19 100TH ANNIVERSARY/OPEN HOUSE/ STEAK BBQ

Social time follows. See the display of artifacts related to Beachville soldiers and their military service. Steak BBQ 5 pm. To order call 519-423-6363 or rcl495.suppers@gmail.com

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

MONDAYS (STARTING SEPT. 14) CADETS

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS (&WEDNESDAYS STARTING SEPTEMBER 2) DART LEAGUE

THURSDAYS (STARTING SEPT. 10) | 1:30 PM SHUFFLEBOARD

FRIDAYS CANTEEN IS CLOSED

Until sometime in October.

SATURDAYS | 7 - 11 PM EVENING ENTERTAINMENT:

AUGUST 29TH - CHUCK MOYER

SEPTEMBER 5TH - FLASHBACK

SEPTEMBER 12TH - DJ WOLFEMAN

SEPTEMBER 19TH - DJ KELLY (MUST HAVE A TICKET FOR THIS DANCE) 7-12AM

SEPTEMBER 26TH - NORTHSORE RAMBLERS

SEPTEMBER 1 | 7 PM EXECUTIVE MEETING

SEPTEMBER 3 | 11:30 AM - 12:45 PM SOUP N SANDWICH

SEPTEMBER 5 | 3 PM MEAT DRAW

SEPTEMBER 8 | 7:30 PM GENERAL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 19 | 12 - 4 PM OPEN HOUSE

BBQ, Music, History and much more. Bring your family and friends to learn more about this Branch. Followed that night with our Hawaii Dance 7-12am if you purchased a ticket.

SEPTEMBER 20 | 1:30 PM BATTLE OF BRITAIN IN INGERSOLL PARADE

SEPTEMBER 23 | 10 AM SERVICE OFFICER VISIT

SEPTEMBER 27 | 5 - 6 PM FAMILY DINNER FISH N CHIPS

Set price with dessert extra, per-order and pay no later September 23rd contact rclbranch55@rogers.com or 519-537-3112 to order.

OCTOBER 3 POPPY CAMPAIGN STARTS

Reminder that our Poppy campaign is coming up next month is starts October 24th and runs till November 10th, we will be needing as many volunteers as possible so please come out, have fun but most of all support your Legion and Veterans.

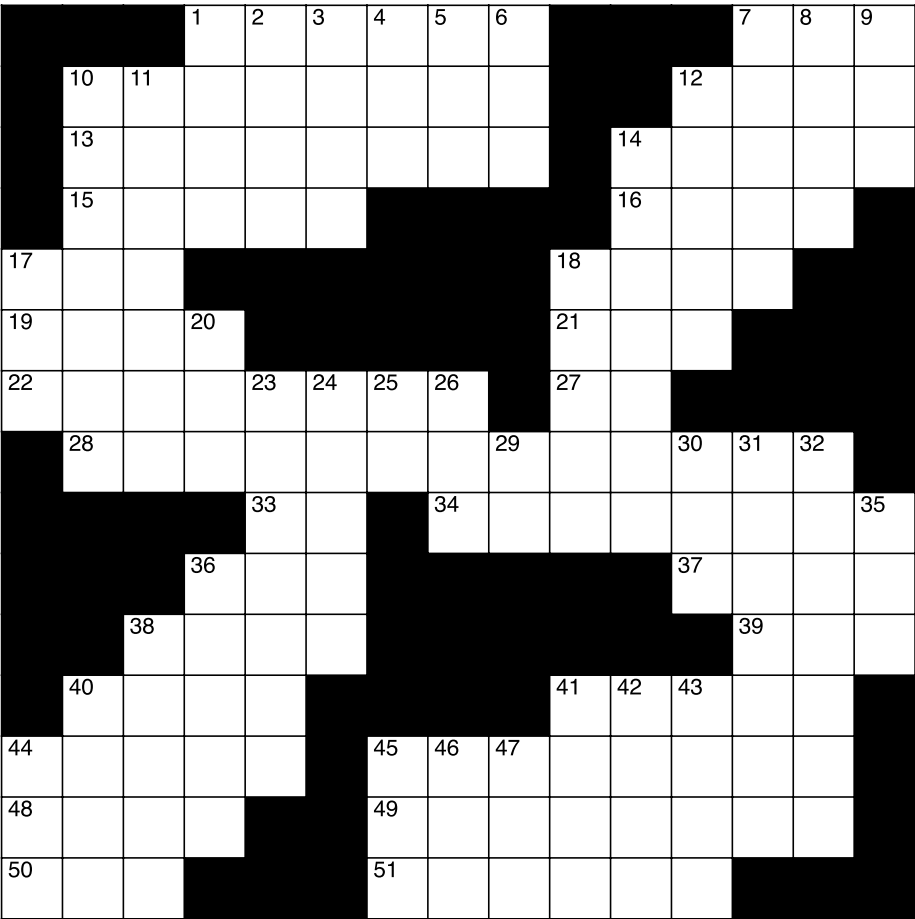
OCTOBER 24 BAKE SALE

Reminder about our Bake sale October 3rd we will need donations as well as baked goods for this event.

DECEMBER 18 100TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

Did you know it is the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Legion and Branch 55 Woodstock, Ontario? We provide support to cadets, Veterans and local youth among many other things. Support our 100th anniversary gala either with a prize donation or monetary donation. More details by emailing rclbranch55@rogers.com

CROSSWORD



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. A vast desert in Africa
- 7. Reciprocal of a sine
- 10. Type of phone
- 12. Biblical figure
- 13. One who renounces a religious belief
- 14. Warren and Monroe are two
- 15. Wild ox
- 16. Dismounted a horse
- 17. Cave dweller
- 18. Where infants sleep
- 19. Popular type of shoe
- 21. Clumsy large person
- 22. Evil-like
- 27. Integrated circuit
- 28. Austin-based athlete
- 33. Postscript
- 34. Follows 18
- 36. People of Gambia
- 37. Popular actor Nicolas
- 38. Platform for a lectern
- 39. Taxi
- 40. American songwriter Sammy
- 41. Iranian city
- 44. Heavy clubs
- 45. One who is expelled
- 48. In bed
- 49. Lifelessness
- 50. Former CIA
- 51. Most slick

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Slovenly person
- 2. In addition
- 3.hovels
- 4. Pie ___ mode
- 5. Subway rodent
- 6. They ___
- 7. Indigenous S. American people
- 8. Fine sand
- 9. Central nervous system
- 10. Nightclub entertainment
- 11. The perfect example of something
- 12. Supreme Islamic leader
- 14. Pain
- 17. Binary-coded decimal
- 18. Projecting corner of an angle
- 20. “Succession” actor Brian
- 23. Dinner table decor
- 24. Ancient settlement in modern Turkey
- 25. You can call Paul Simon this
- 26. Opposite of a pro
- 29. Atomic #28
- 30. Type of drug (abbr.)
- 31. Arrives at
- 32. Nullifies
- 35. Bird’s beak
- 36. Partner to “oohed”
- 38. Ray-finned fishes
- 40. Taxis
- 41. Sat on and controlled
- 42. Sea eagles
- 43. Remain as-is
- 44. Chinese revolutionary
- 45. Tooth caregiver
- 46. Snakelike fish
- 47. Compensate

Solution found on page 31

Summer's Surest Bet!



GUYS AND DOLLS



(out of 4)

“Jackpot”

Toronto Star

**CRITIC'S PICK
“A masterpiece”**

The Globe and Mail

**STRATFORD
FESTIVAL**

DEVON MICHAEL BROWN. PHOTO: DAVID HOU.

More Must-See Theatre

THE TEMPEST | GUYS AND DOLLS | SOMETHING ROTTEN! | DEATH OF A SALESMAN | THE HOBBIT
THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST | SATURDAY, SUNDAY, MONDAY | A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
OTHELLO | THE TAO OF THE WORLD | THE KING JAMES BIBLE PLAY

GUYS AND DOLLS A MUSICAL FABLE OF BROADWAY | BASED ON A STORY AND CHARACTERS OF DAMON RUNYON

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY FRANK LOESSER | BOOK BY JO SWERLING AND ABE BURROWS | 2026 SEASON SPONSOR: OPHELIA LAZARIDIS

PRODUCTION CO-SPONSORS:  ROBERT & MARY ANN GORLIN, SYLVIA SOYKA, RIKI TUROFSKY & CHARLES PETERSEN, PETER & CAROL WALTERS

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Reg Hours 7am- 6pm Mon-Sat at Martins Nursery c/o Emanuel Martin. 42661 Orangehill Rd., Wroxeter, ON

FOR SALE - BURIAL PLOTS

2 Burial plots with deed, 2 vaults, gold cross certificate & memorial bronze marker. Located in Forest Lawn, London. Today's prices \$13,000 - \$15,000. Priced at \$5,500.00 for quick sale. Please leave message or text at 519-670-7107.

IN MEMORIAM

In Loving Memory of



Brenda Conn
September 7, 2001

Robbie Conn
Chesney
September 12, 2001

25 Years

*We will remember you.
If you lived a 1,000 years
You'd still be gone too soon.*

*Remembrance has become thankfulness.
For all that was and is.*

*Rob, Maria, Alex/Nathan, Luke/Amy,
Grant & Ellen*

OBITUARY

ROBERT "ROB" WALLACE LEESON



Robert "Rob" Wallace Leeson, of Burford, passed away peacefully at home on August 20, 2026, in his 66th year. Beloved partner of Darlene for 12 years and cherished father of Kelly Ann (Derek) VanMarrum, Leslie (Rob) Greentree, and Billy (Tasha) Floyd. Proud grandfather of Kayle (Sean), Arran, Heyden (Brooklyn), Tyler, Ivy, and Cole, and great-grandfather of Nolan and

Sky. Dear brother of Mary Louise (Rick) Nadeau, Verne (Cindy), Joe (Deb), Murray (Cynthia), and Walter. Predeceased by his parents, Wallace and Louise Leeson. Rob will be remembered for his generous heart, love of family, golfing, fishing, and skeet shooting, and his lifelong commitment to his union and community. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and many nieces and nephews. A Celebration of Rob's Life will be held on Tuesday, September 1 from 2 to 6 pm at the Unifor Hall Local 636, 126 Beale St, Woodstock. If desired, memorial donations may be made to the Canadian Cancer Society, which may be arranged through the Brock & Visser Funeral Home (519-539-0004).

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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CROSSWORD SOLUTION

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

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Dove
2. Wright brothers
3. Hand
4. Seven
5. Ten
6. Blue, Black, White
7. Carbon dioxide
8. Mark Twain
9. Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance
10. Semisonic

SUDOKU SOLUTION

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

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