

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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AUGUST 1, 2025

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Oxford MP launches national consultation on bail reform

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Conservative Member of Parliament for Oxford is launching a nationwide consultation to gather feedback from Canadians on urgent reforms needed for Canada's bail system and broader criminal justice laws.

Arpan Khanna is engaging front-line police officers, Crown prosecutors, judges, social workers, victims' advocacy groups, all levels of government, and members of the private sector. The goal is to gather insight and shape a Private Member's Bill (PMB) aimed at strengthening public safety, and rebalancing a criminal justice system that has, under the Liberal government, tipped in favour of repeat offenders.

"Canadians are becoming afraid to walk in their neighbourhoods," said MP Khanna. "Every day, we hear of another violent crime committed by someone who was already out on bail. Enough is enough; Canadians deserve better. They deserve safe communities."

At the beginning of each new Parliament, all MPs who are not ministers or parliamentary secretaries, are put in a draw to earn the right to bring a bill forward at the next sitting.

"I was lucky number 13 meaning in September during the first week back I have to present something and chances are it will be discussed during this session. It's entirely up to me what I want to bring forward."

He added working on a bail reform bill was an easy decision based on what he has been hearing from local residents and people across the country.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 4



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTO)

CHARITABLE WAREHOUSE OPENS

Members of the Ingersoll Rotary Club, volunteers and donors gathered for a photo before a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Charitable Warehouse, a space for local charities to help those experiencing food insecurity. Story on Page 8.

Woodstock YMCA closing its doors in September

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Woodstock YMCA is closing all operations in Woodstock other than its childcare centre. The Dundas Street location will shutter its doors in two months.

"After deep consideration, including extensive analysis, the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario has made the difficult decision to close their health and fitness branch located in Woodstock, effective September 30, 2025," according to a press release sent out on Tuesday.

"For the past year, the YMCA has extensively reviewed

the future of our health and fitness operations in Woodstock. This has included a focus on our community's needs, the suitability of the site in its current state and their responsibility as a charity to make the best use of resources, including donors' contributions, and to ensure sustainability for years to come. As part of this process, several community partners were engaged in hopes of finding a viable shared solution for this location. While encouraged by the level of interest, no formal commitments were made," it added.

The Echo reached out to the Y for more details and were given a written statement.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 6

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Streetfest brought crowds back to a hungry downtown Woodstock

The streets of Downtown Woodstock came alive once again as the much-anticipated Summer Streetfest returned for a vibrant two-day celebration on July 18 and 19.

The beloved event, hosted by the Downtown Woodstock BIA, drew thousands of residents and visitors to Dundas Street for a weekend packed with entertainment, shopping, and community connection. Kicking off Friday at 11:30 a.m., the festival featured live music across three downtown stages, with the energetic local group Josh Band Called Now What headlining the evening set. Attendees strolled the car-free streets enjoying the sights, sounds, and flavours of Woodstock's charming core. Local businesses offered sidewalk sales while patios and food vendors served up cold drinks and

delicious eats under sunny skies.

Families were treated to an array of free entertainment, including buskers, a magic show, circus-style hula hoop performers, rock climbing, games, and a wildly popular foam party. Children laughed and danced in bubbles, while adults relaxed and shopped or tapped their feet to the music echoing through the historic downtown.

Operations Manager Duane Kumala-Thomas emphasized the value of the long-standing tradition:

“From buskers to the foam party and rock-climbing wall—it's all free entertainment. There's been a lot of change in Woodstock over the years, and this event has been a constant. It's a great reason for people to come downtown and rediscover all it has to offer.”

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



A street view captured the large number of attendees filling Dundas Street for Summer Streetfest.



The Bubbleology show was performed by Miss T, the Bubble Queen, delighting audiences at Summer Streetfest.



Mom Alycia helped her daughter Leila blow bubbles during the fun at Summer Streetfest.

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Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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South Gate car show caps off Streetscape

Classic cars, community spirit, and summer days took centre stage on Sunday, July 20, as the annual South Gate Street Cruise Car Show once again rolled into downtown Woodstock to finish up Streetfest. Hosted by South Gate, the much-anticipated event drew car enthusiasts and families alike for a day of nostalgia, horsepower, and entertainment. Over one hundred vehicles lined

the street, their gleaming chrome and polished paint jobs attracting curious spectators and passionate collectors. Attendees strolled the strip, enjoying 50's music, food vendors, and patios filled with festivalgoers soaking in the festive atmosphere. Downtown businesses also benefited from the increased foot traffic, as visitors browsed local shops and dined on patios.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Terry stood proudly with his classic car on display.



Harry and Barbara admired a 1986 Zimmer.



Ralph and Yvonne browsed Black Betty, a custom hot rod at the event.

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www.cityofwoodstock.ca/streetscape

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Khanna working on Private Member's

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

"We've done surveys, consultations, meetings with folks here in Oxford County and I travel across Canada in my national role. Bail reform and crime in general has been a topic in every single meeting. People here don't feel safe going to the bank any more and there are security guards."

Khanna serves as the party's National Outreach Coordinator and is responsible for shaping the party's national outreach strategy, coordinating engagement with diverse communities, and supporting grassroots organization efforts across the country. He added Woodstock police have told him they are constantly arresting the same people over and over again and pointed to several recent tragic crimes.



Oxford MP Arpan Khanna.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

"We had a 71-year-old getting groceries (in Toronto) stabbed by a 14-year-old. We have had broad daylight shootings across the country. There was a gun fired at a home in Woodstock last fall. Mayors and premiers have been calling for this, victim advocacy groups are talking about it. There is a wide consensus across the county that we need some sort of bail reform."

Khanna pointed to recently released Statistics Canada data that shows violent crime has risen nearly 55 per cent 2015, gun crime is up 130 per cent and a 76 per cent increase in sexual assaults.

"Canadians are becoming afraid to walk in their neighbourhoods. Every day, we hear of another violent crime committed by someone who was already out on bail. Enough is enough. Canadians deserve better. They deserve safe communities."

The Oxford MP does admit the Liberals and new Prime Minister Marc Carney have talked about getting harder on crime and bail reform but so far, it has amounted to nothing.

"The solutions they bring to this are more ideological or fluff that don't actually work. They brought in C-75

and C-5 which have made the problem worse. When a judge is granting bail, it has to be the least restrictive possible. I am putting together about 10 different solutions based on what Canadians are telling me."

He added the Liberals are more than welcome to steal his ideas and pass their own bill to create a safer country. Khanna explained the daughter of a Woodstock Police officer sent him an Instagram message after the recent TD bank robbery in the city

"She said her dad was one of the officers who responded and it was a repeat offender out on bail multiple times. She said she fears for her father's safety."

Khanna said the country needs a criminal justice system that puts the safety of Canadians first.

"That's why I'm going to every corner of this country to hear what needs to change, so Conservatives can bring forward solutions that make our communities safer."

Khanna's office is inviting everyone in Oxford to contribute directly to the consultation. Feedback can be sent to arpan.khanna@parl.gc.ca with the subject line 'Bail Reform' or return the mailer arriving mailboxes soon with no postage necessary.

Harrington
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 Harrington Grist Mill Tours on the hour 11 - 1	 Little Hobby Hill Farm Petting Zoo 12 - 1:30 Adjacent to the Hall Free program courtesy of the Oxford County Library
 Harrington Hall 11-2 Historical displays 12-2pm Museum staff on site to advise on preserving artifacts	 11 - 2 Scavenger Hunt around the Conservation Area & Mill Pond
 Harrington Community Centre formerly SS #4 School photos on display	 11 - 2 Harrington Library branch, Story Walk, and Ox on the Run
 Food from Sunset Diner Food Truck	2:00 pm Follow the pipers to recreate the BIG PICTURE

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Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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1. Everyone has a story
2. The news should be free for all to enjoy
3. Good news beats bad news
4. A Newspaper should be a community effort (contribute to your local paper!)
5. Newspapers document history
6. Newspapers strengthen communities
7. Advertisers, big or small, should profit from their ads (meaning sensible ad rates)
8. Newspapers should be locally-owned and operated

Ingersoll's fourth annual Pizzafest brings in hundreds



Downtown Ingersoll was bustling with pizza lovers and shoppers alike.



The judges had a difficult time picking their favourite pies.

KYRAH SMITH

Echo Contributor

There was not a parking spot to be found downtown Ingersoll on July 24th. The town's fourth annual Pizzafest was in full swing with local vendors, music, and most importantly pizza. The event took place from 4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. with free admission.

Ingersoll Pipe Band gave a performance drawing a crowd while Ingersoll BIA Coordinator Virginia Armstrong and volunteers set up for the Pizza Contest. Five local pizzerias (Tito's, Domino's, Pizza Hut, Little Caesars and Gino's) would compete for the title of Best Pepperoni Pizza and Best Creative Pizza.

The panel consisted of six judges including Brian Petrie Mayor of Ingersoll, Ingersoll Councillor Kristy Van Kooten-Bossence, town employee Kale Kruse, Oxford OPP Staff Sergeant Rafal Schubert, Marcie Culbert from Heart FM and our very own Lee Griffi, Editor of the Woodstock-Ingersoll Echo. After two rounds of the judges tasting pizzas and giving their scores, it was time to tally up the points.

"The truth is, it was very hard. It came down to the technical details. They were all absolutely fantastic," said Petrie. "When it came to pepperoni, Domino's took it home! And when it came to the Best Creative Pizza, Gino's," he added during the awards ceremony.

Petrie congratulated everyone involved and thanked Armstrong for her hard work. The winning pizzeria's were presented with trophies, but the evening didn't stop there. Returning from last year, Darren Bedford performed a new act, showing off his surprise bicycle and encouraging goers of the event to take it for a spin. Street performer Ben also entertained with his balancing/unicycle act. Local band Rated Blue performed throughout the evening, including covers from the Rolling Stones, ZZ Top and Bob Marley.

A Classic Car Show was newly added this year and JP from Hands on Exotics returned featuring new animals such as a Savannah Cat, an epileptic Sugar Glider, a Macaw and an Albino Ball Python. Attendees were able to grab a drink and slice from their favourite pizza place, have a seat and take in all the festivities. Various Pizza themed chalk artwork could be found scattered around the streets. Mario, Luigi and friends also made an appearance throughout the night. All proceeds from the event went to supporting local charities. Ingersoll's fourth annual Pizzafest clearly was a huge success and I look forward to attending next year.

To quote the Mayor Petrie, "You can't lose when it comes to Pizza."



Mayor Brian Petrie and Virginia Armstrong announced the event winners.



Hands on Exotics brought a sugar glider, a tree-dwelling marsupial native to Australia, Indonesia and Papa New Guinea.



The 188th Annual Woodstock Fair

August 21st - 24th, 2025

A timeless tradition that celebrates community, creativity, and culture. This upcoming fair promises to be more exciting than ever, with a vibrant lineup of events that cater to all ages.

Visitors can look forward to enjoying a diverse array of food vendors and engaging activities that capture the spirit of Woodstock. Whether you are a returning visitor or a first-time attendee, the 2025 Woodstock Fair will be your chance to experience the unmatched blend of fun, art, and camaraderie.

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Child Care will continue onsite until new school opens next year

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

“The decision to close...was not made lightly...This has included the suitability of the site in its current state and our responsibility as a charity to make the best use of resources to ensure our long-term sustainability.”

It added that as part of the review, they took a close look at current and projected membership levels, did an analysis of what could reasonably be expected if the pool were reopened, and conducted an assessment of the significant capital reinvestment required for the aging facility, originally built in 1961.

Memberships dropped below 500 in 2021 and sit at just under 300 today.

“There may be various reasons for this. Ultimately, we recognize that the communities we serve are evolving and are committed to evolving alongside them, while upholding responsibility as a charity to make the best use of our resources to ensure our sustainability for years to come,” added the statement.

Woodstock Mayor Jerry Acchione said it’s sad to see the facility go, but paid tribute to its accomplishments over the years.

“The YMCA has been a cornerstone of health, wellness, and community connection in Woodstock for over 60 years. While today’s announcement is difficult news for many residents, I want to acknowledge the countless contributions the YMCA has made to our city and the positive impact it has had on generations of families, mine included.”

He added the city is prepared to work with anyone interested in filling the hole created by the closure.

“The City of Woodstock remains committed to supporting community health and recreation opportunities for all residents. We will continue working with local organizations and stakeholders to explore future possibilities for this site and ensure that the spirit of connection and well-being fostered by the YMCA remains alive in our community.”

What is clear is an aging building with fewer users has reached the end of its usefulness. The indoor pool was also closed during COVID and was never reopened.

“This decision was not taken lightly and follows several years of financial challenges at this branch due to declining memberships, increased maintenance costs, and capital demands on an aging 64-year-old facility. The Y is committed to being a strong and viable organization for the long-term so we can continue to best serve the communities that rely on them, including Woodstock.”

The childcare centre will continue to operate onsite until the spring of 2026 when a new site opens.

“Childcare services will continue, uninterrupted, as they transition to the new Turtle Island Child Care Centre located nearby at 717 Knights Lane. Childcare will remain at the YMCA branch until Turtle Island opens in March 2026 to minimize any disruption. This new, larger facility will serve 88 children, an increase of 50 children over our current space, in a welcoming, modern environment.”

Woodstock City Coun. Mark Schadenberg said it is disappointing to see the Y close its doors.

“The YMCA has been a long-time important community facility, so it’s a sad day indeed to hear the Woodstock location will be closing down its fitness gym. The actual gymnasium there, I understand, has been quite popular for floor hockey, volleyball and also youth programming such as basketball. About 10 years ago, the city made a five-year grant commitment to assist with YMCA renovations and programming, which could in-turn help membership numbers.”

The city did in fact award the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario a five-year municipal grant of \$500,000 to help fund approximately \$3 million in renovations. Those upgrades were to include significant improvements to the pool, gymnasium and fitness center and the money came from OLG casino revenue.

“We are deeply grateful for the support the YMCA’s work in Woodstock has received over the years, including from City of Woodstock with a \$500,000 grant pledged in 2010 as a contribution to an overall \$3 million project to renovate the facility. This project was focused on completing renovations throughout the facility, including in the pool, change rooms, and lobby, as well as electrical and mechanical system updates.”

Some jobs will be lost in the move but the organization said they are hoping to find new work for affected staff.

“The majority of employees at the YMCA branch in Woodstock are childcare staff and will continue to work in that capacity at that site until we move to our new and expanded Woodstock childcare facility in early 2026. We will work with the remaining employees (2 full-time and 7 part-time) to find other, suitable roles within our association.”

The Y said it knows the news is difficult and welcome your questions and concerns at communications@swo.ymca.ca.

Mitchell woman hoping farm fresh app will increase in popularity

LEE GRIFFI
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Pamela Morgan is a big fan of anything fresh from the farm in Ontario, and she hopes the app she created will reach more farmers and members of the public.

Farm Fresh Finder is available for download Apple and Android devices and it allows users to search for everything from markets to butcher shops and beyond. Morgan said the idea for the app came from family trips during her younger years.

“We used to go camping quite a bit across Ontario and we would always look for farm stands, fresh produce, pick-your-own farms, that kind of stuff. I have a passion for agriculture and a love of fresh food.”

The app went live in 2023 and was developed by a company from London. Morgan, a Stratford native, explained over 600 vendors have signed up for the free marketing opportunity.

“My goal is to get as many as I can from Perth, Oxford and the surrounding counties and then grow it outward. I do have a lot of places up north and Ottawa way, but it’s just connecting consumers to fresh, local foods.”

Categories include meat, cheese and eggs; beer, wine, cider and spirits; syrup, honey and baking; flower farms and nurseries; experiences and farmers’ markets. Morgan said the easiest way to search for what’s near you is to use the map feature within the app.

“Whatever location you are in you can find what’s close to you, bakeries, flower farms, all that stuff. When you click on the map you will see all the different icons representing what is available nearby.”

The app cost \$10,000 and Morgan explained she hopes to be able to make at least some of that money back once there is enough traffic on it. The app is listed on the Foodland Ontario website.

She added it’s more important than ever to support local these days.

“We’re in such a rich agricultural area and there’s so much to be found and so



(FARM FRESH FINDER APP SCREENSHOT)
The Farm Fresh Finder app is available free on Apple and Android platforms and is also free for farm fresh businesses in the province.

many hidden gems people don’t know about. This is a good way to find them. It’s growing quickly.”

Morgan works as a library programmer at the West Perth Public Library in Mitchell but explained growing the app is almost a full-time job.

“I’m doing this on the side but it’s a lot of work trying to keep up with it. A vendor interested in signing up can go to the website and select ‘add a listing’. They can post their address, hours of operation, contact information and any other relevant details. Pictures can also be posted and again, everything is free.”

More information on the app is available at <https://www.farmfreshfinder.ca/>.

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Folklore, true crime, heroes and Elvis

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Was he there, or wasn't he?

As Oxford County Archives prepares for a book launch next week, one of the most interesting stories told in 'Growing Stronger Together: A Celebration of Oxford County's Past' is whether Elvis Presley signed his name on a wall.

"In the tower of the courthouse are hundreds of names written on the walls, including Elvis' with the date 1957," explained county archivist Liz Dommasch. "Urban legend claims he stopped in Woodstock (and he did perform in Toronto that year) and visited the courthouse. I've heard even farther claims he was in his pink Cadillac and had even been arrested for speeding, but is it true?"

That's one of more than 100 stories being told in a book that was released on Wednesday at Woodstock's Oxford County Archives. Oxford County is celebrating the 175th anniversary of its incorporation as a county this year and the 50th anniversary of the restructuring of the county into its eight area municipalities.

A collection of stories about local people, events and communities, the book has its origins in an Archives blog started during the COVID-19 pandemic to share interesting stories about the County's past. It features articles and historical research from multiple contributors and was curated by Oxford County Archivist Liz Dommasch.

Dommasch said the organization began writing historical blog posts during the pandemic which is when they noticed they had the makings of a book, but at the same time, knew they needed help.

"We also realized that although we know a lot about the county, we're not exactly experts about every community. We did reach out to a number of other museums, heritage groups and individuals who were willing to contribute."

Staff involved did the best they could to cover the entire geography of the county and Dommasch explained the book contains a mix of stories, some people may know, along with many they won't.

"A lot of people may know some of the larger stories, like the murder trial of Reginald Birchall, or some history on our county council, but we delve into so many stories from every-

thing about community events to folklore."

Birchall, a British con artist traveling under the alias Lord Somerset, lured Frederick Cornwallis Benwell, the son of a wealthy English gentleman, to Ontario on the pretext of joining him in a bogus Canadian farm investment scheme. Near Woodstock, Birchall led Benwell into the Blenheim Swamp, shot him twice in the back of the head, and attempted to conceal his identity by tampering with the body's clothing.

Detective John Wilson Murray utilized photography of the victim's body and widely circulated it in newspapers to aid identification. Witnesses then came forward, and Birchall himself eventually identified the body, though he claimed he had left Benwell in the swamp with another male known only as the Colonel. Birchall was hanged on November 14, 1890, at the Woodstock jail and buried within the jail yard, following contemporary English tradition.

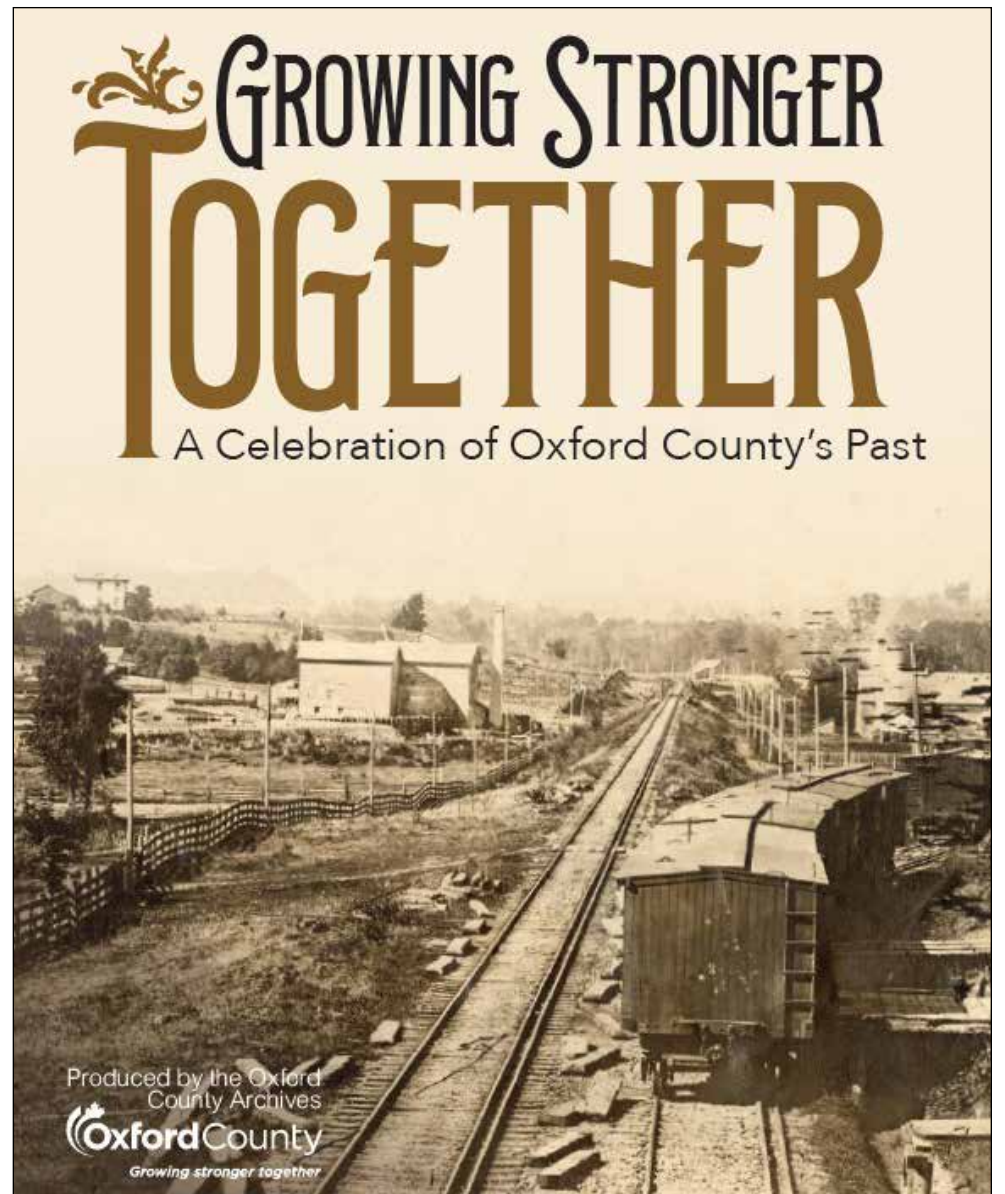
Dommasch explained much of the content surrounding Woodstock involves crime, court cases and the general history of the county.

"There are a number of articles about some of the buildings on the County Courthouse Square, not just the courthouse standing now, but the one we had previously not many people may be aware of. There are stories about history of our jail and three registry offices that were on the Courthouse Square as well as some information on the cannons."

The County of Oxford, formerly called the District of Brock, was incorporated in 1850 under the Municipal Corporations Act, more commonly known as the Baldwin Act. It included adjustments to boundaries with Middlesex County and Brant County.

Oxford County had its own Act, the County of Oxford Act, 1974, which restructured regional government and consolidated services while merging the historic townships into new area municipalities. The Special Inaugural Meeting of the Municipal Council of the County of Oxford was held on January 21, 1975, and was a historic moment as Oxford became the first restructured County in the Province of Ontario.

"Oxford's 175th Anniversary reminds us that we have a story that is worth sharing, in fact, multiple stories worth sharing, more than 150 in this publication alone," said Warden Marcus Ryan. "The story of how Oxford grew to be-



(CONTRIBUTED IMAGE)

Oxford County Archives is set to release a book next week to celebrate the county's 175th anniversary. A book launch was held on July 30 in Woodstock and the public is now able to purchase a copy.

come Oxford shows a vibrant past and a love of community that continues today. Thank you to the many contributors who devoted their time and passion to keeping these stories alive."

Other celebrations of the county's 175th anniversary include an exhibit at the Woodstock Art Gallery, a display at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, a video series this fall sharing the genealogical stories of some of Oxford's cur-

rent county councillors and displays at the Oxford County Administration Building (OCAB).

Copies of the book will be on sale at the event for \$45.00 each, and it will also be available for purchase online at www.oxfordcounty.ca/archives, at the Ingersoll and Tillsonburg branches of Oxford County Library, Oxford County Archives, and at the Customer Service desk at OCAB.

Woodstock Police Service briefs

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Drug Investigation Leads to Arrest

Members of the Woodstock Police Service (WPS) Criminal Intelligence and Drugs Unit, with support from the Emergency Response Unit and Uniform Patrol, executed a search warrant at a residence on Perry Street on July 18.

Police say ten people were located at the home and taken into custody. Nine of them were released unconditionally but a 37-year-old Woodstock woman was arrested and charged with possession of a Schedule I Substance for the purpose of trafficking. She was released on an undertaking with conditions.

"A quantity of suspected controlled substances was seized at the scene. The substanc-

es have been sent for analysis to confirm their composition. Additional charges may be pending based on the results of that analysis," said a WPS press release.

Woodstock Police charge male following drug-impaired collision at Roth Park

A Woodstock man is facing an impaired driving charge following a single-vehicle collision at the Roth Park parking lot on the morning of July 22.

At approximately 6:30 a.m., police responded to a report of a vehicle that had collided with a guardrail. Based on the investigation, the driver was arrested, and a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) evaluation was conducted.

As a result, a 50-year-old Woodstock resident has been charged with impaired driving - alcohol and drugs. The individual was released

on an undertaking with a future court date. In accordance with Ontario's impaired driving laws, a 90-day licence suspension and a seven-day vehicle impoundment were issued.

"Drug-impaired driving poses a serious threat to public safety. The Woodstock Police Service maintains specially trained Drug Recognition Experts (DREs) who are certified to detect and evaluate impairment caused by drugs. These officers play a vital role in holding impaired drivers accountable and keeping our roads safe," said a press release.

Woodstock teen faces charges after impaired driving collision

A 19-year-old Woodstock male is facing four charges following a collision in the early morning hours of July 19.

Woodstock Police Service responded to a ve-

hicle collision in the area of Nellis Street just before 3 a.m. The incident resulted in a power outage and significant property damage. Officers located a heavily damaged vehicle that had struck multiple parked vehicles and roadside property.

A 19-year-old Woodstock male was arrested and charged with dangerous operation, impaired driving - alcohol and drugs, operation while impaired and having a blood alcohol level above zero as an impaired driver.

The accused was released with a future court date and was served a 90-day Administrative Driver's Licence Suspension and a 7-day vehicle impoundment under Ontario's impaired driving laws.

Police are encouraging anyone who witnessed the incident to contact the Woodstock Police Service.

Ingersoll Rotary Club opens warehouse to fight food insecurity

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The building still needs a bit more work before its tenants can move in, but club's Charitable Warehouse opened last Monday following a ribbon-cutting ceremony with Rotary member, donors and local dignitaries.

The renovated building on Ingersoll Street South was made possible with donations from local businesses and volunteers and it will eventually serve as the permanent home of The FOOD Project, a coalition of 10 charitable organizations. The project is the first of its kind anywhere in the area.

Former Ingersoll Mayor and Rotary member Ted Comiskey came up with an idea to create a common space where charities had a permanent space to work together to decrease food insecurity. He explained the building has undergone a huge transformation.

"I don't know how to express it. When we took the plywood off the doors and we in, we said oh boy. We had such a hill to climb but I can only express my thanks to the people of Ingersoll who stepped up to the plate and made it possible through the funds required to put this building back into useful shape."

The Rotary Club signed a ten-year lease with General Motors Canada to retrofit

what used to be a CAMI gymnasium into a 6,000-square-foot warehouse.

"I can't thank GM enough for letting us use this building. I think it was slated for demolition but now it's got a use again, it's got a life that is more useful than most buildings in this town. I don't think there will be an issue at the end of 10 years, unless they need the land, we'll likely have a home here."

A total of \$120,000 was raised to make the necessary renovations and Comiskey explained local people are well ware of need in the community.

"I guess it's recognizing the need and that's what they've done. If the need isn't out there then it isn't on the hearts and minds of many people. But it is out there and Ingersoll is great for helping their fellow man and this proves it."

Having as many as 10 charities with the same goal under one roof has many advantages, not the least of which is breaking down silos where people in need can come and get food from any one of the groups.

"That's my can of beans here, that's your can over there. No, there's two cans of beans for whoever needs them and that's the whole thing. We have a lot of volunteers but we never have enough and we don't want to burn them out. If you can make the job easier you are going to have more people step up to the plate and have them for a longer period of time. Because



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTO)

Rotary Club members Adam Funnell and President John Pettit hold the ribbon for Doug Yates while Ted Comiskey cuts the ribbon.

they are all under the same roof they can help each other," said Comiskey.

He added the Ingersoll facility will be there for anyone across Oxford who needs help.

"You don't turn anybody away and I'm sure the FOOD Project will recognize that."

Paula D'Orazio is chair of The FOOD Project, said the facility will house several charitable groups working together to expand their reach.

"We have so many charities who are going to be joining the coalition here and so many of us helping one another instead of working in separate silos which we do currently. We are going to be coming together and giving everything we can to those in need. We're pretty excited about this and me, I'm over the moon!"

D'Orazio explained they will be able to

contact farmers and grocery stores and stockpile groceries in one central location.

"Send it to the warehouse. Keep it out of the landfills. Let's get it into people's bellies instead. Along that wall we are going to put the freezers and over there we'll have a three-compartment sink along with racking in all the isles where we can put produce. We are going to have everything you can get at a grocery store including toiletries and sanitary supplies."

A back door still needs to be installed and a concrete pad poured being the building for trucks to unload goods, but D'Orazio expects to be operational in the very near future.

"I think this is going to put Ingersoll on the map. It's going to be huge for Oxford County and everyone should get involved. We're definitely going to need more volunteers."

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An owling experience in Woodstock

Nature enthusiasts gathered at Pittock Conservation Area on the evening of July 24 for an engaging and educational Owl Prowl led by staff from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA). The 90-minute nighttime program offered attendees a unique opportunity to learn about local owl species and experience the forest under moonlight. Participants began the evening learning about the incredible hunting adaptations of owls and had the chance to dissect owl pellets to gain insight into the birds' diets. As night settled in, the group extinguished their lights to enhance their night vision and ventured into the forest on a guided hike. Using audio recordings of owl calls, UTRCA educators encouraged owls such as the Eastern Screech Owl and the Great Horned Owl to respond. With only 40 spots available on a first-come, first-served basis, attendees arrived ear-

ly to ensure participation. The event welcomed families and individuals with a shared passion for birds, wildlife, and outdoor exploration. While no live owls were guaranteed, the atmosphere, forest sounds, and knowledgeable guidance provided an unforgettable nature experience. The Owl Prowl, part of UTRCA's summer environmental education programming, emphasized safe, inclusive, and interactive outdoor learning. Staff, all certified in First Aid and screened to collaborate with vulnerable persons, ensured a welcoming environment for all ages. The evening walk spanned approximately 2 kilometers over gently sloped, unpaved trails. Guests were advised to bring flashlights, dress appropriately, and leave pets at home for the safety and success of the hike. For updates on future UTRCA nature programs, follow the organization on social media or visit <http://www.thamesriver.on.ca>.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Meghan, Phil, Henry and Pippa were eager to learn more about local owls in their habitat.



Caroline and Matt from Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) guided the attendees in learning about local owl species and experience the forest under moonlight.

Local Victoria Quilts chapter looking to provide comfort to even more cancer patients

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

The Woodstock/Oxford Branch of Victoria Quilts Canada will reach its 10-year milestone this August.

Victoria Quilts Canada is a non-profit organization that provides free handmade quilts to cancer patients. The movement began in the United States in 1998 after Deborah Rogers decided to make quilts for cancer patients in honour of her late sister-in-law Victoria Ann Morrison, who mentioned she was cold in the waiting room waiting for treatment. Victoria Quilts Canada was formed by Betty Giffin and her friends a year later in 1999.

The Woodstock/Oxford Branch started in 2015 by Diane Roberts, who was new to the area at the time and was previously involved with the Sudbury Branch. As of August 2025, Victoria Quilts Canada's Woodstock/Oxford Branch distributed a total of 31,000 quilts to cancer patients in Woodstock and area over the past decade, with 279 of those delivered in the past year. The local branch has more than

60 volunteers and between 15 to 20 quilt requests a month and counting.

"By providing these quilts, we hope to provide physical comfort to those dealing with cancer," said Andrea Aikenhead, publicity coordinator for Victoria Quilts Woodstock/Oxford.

Each quilt costs about \$120 to \$140 to create with a 100 per cent cotton top layer and flannel bottom layer and can be made in the patient's favourite colour or reflect their interests such as hockey or fishing. The quilts are hand-delivered to patients so they can stay comfortable as they await cancer treatments.

"It's just an extra layer of letting people know that we really care about them, that they're not alone on the trip," Aikenhead said.

Although the organization has grown over the years, Aikenhead is looking to spread more awareness about Victoria Quilts Woodstock/Oxford's chapter. She said the organization will attend community events and quilting shows to get the name out there and provide more comfort



(ANDREA AIKENHEAD PHOTO)

Victoria Quilts Canada, including the Woodstock/Oxford branch, is a non-profit organization providing quilts for cancer patients.

to cancer patients.

"It's very hard to get the word out, to let people know, because a lot of times people don't believe that we would give away a quilt," Aikenhead said.

To find out more information about Victoria Quilts Woodstock/Oxford Branch,

including requesting a quilt, send an email to vqwoodstock330@gmail.com. The group can also be found on the Victoria Quilts Woodstock/Oxford Branch Facebook page. Requests for quilts can also be made online via <https://victoriasquiltsCanada.com>.

Throwback with Retro Games at Ingersoll Public Library

KYRAH SMITH

Echo Contributor

The Ingersoll Public Library took a blast from the past with Retro Video Gaming Night on July 22.

The event was hosted by Operandi Gaming Community (OGC) from Cambridge, and it featured a variety of classic consoles and games. Such as Atari, Sega Genesis, Nintendo 64, NES (Nintendo Entertainment System), and Commodore 64.

"It really brings a community together," Laszlo Alt says owner of OGC. "Especially around COVID, people really connected through gaming." He added even though the world has opened back up, everything's stayed online and we've lost that in person connection.

"I wanted to host an event that brings that (connection) back," Laszlo said.

One of the event goers chimed in while pointing out a Nintendo 64, "This was the first system I had when I was little."

I personally got to try my hand at Super Mario Bros. 3 on the NES system which was an absolute joy.

OGC hosts monthly events in the surrounding areas including Woodstock, Cambridge and Tillsonburg. Events are always free and open to everyone.

If you missed this past event and wanted to attend one yourself, the next Retro Video Gaming Night coming up is August 5 in Woodstock at Reel Treats.

For more information you can visit OGC's website at <https://www.operandigaming.org>.



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'Haunting of Woodstock' documentary dives into local history and ghost stories of Thomas Cook

EMILY STEWART

Echo Contributor

A short documentary explores one of Woodstock's infamous ghost stories.

Director Corey M. Slager and his team's documentary *The Haunting of Woodstock* looks into the history behind the 1862 hanging of Thomas Cook and the folklore surrounding his death. Cook was a blind man who killed his wife and his death was the first of five hangings at the Oxford County Jail. He was accidentally decapitated and his death mask is carved into stone at the front entrance of what is now a public health building. There is folklore surrounding Cook indicating he now wanders around as a headless ghost at the old jailhouse.

The documentary explores the history and ghost stories with Woodstock residents, the Oxford County Archives, and paranormal expert Shane McLaren. The team also had an eerie experience on-camera at a gravesite where Cook is rumoured to be buried, although it is not proven. The crew captured some odd audio signals during the visit that one of the microphones picked up that sounds



(YOUTUBE SCREENSHOT)

like muffled, distorted static.

Slager has had the story of Cook stick with him from his childhood and beyond. For the Advanced Filmmaking Program at Fanshawe College, he de-

cided to explore the story further in the documentary.

"As a child, I used to be told about ghost stories about Thomas Cook just to freak me out by my stepfather and he

actually took me to the building one day, thinking it was still a jailhouse. I realized it is a health building now but it was kind of interesting seeing the mask that's still plastered on the building," he said.

The *Haunting of Woodstock* documentary received more than 1,000 views on YouTube as of July 28. Several Woodstock residents and Facebook groups are giving the documentary praise. Slager grew up in Woodstock for 15 years and is happy with the positive feedback.

"It's kind of nice, my hometown showing me some love," he said.

Slager said the documentary provides an accessible way to learn more about local history.

"It's great to keep the history alive and keep the stories of interesting and unique things bubbling still and keep the rumblings going in the town and I think this kind of format of sharing these stories is more available to people and it's a better way of doing these sort of stories and passing it along."

You can watch the documentary *The Haunting of Woodstock* online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_RYKW-wYJ3no.

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Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. What instrument does Lizzo famously play?
2. What is the tallest mammal on Earth?
3. In which country is it illegal to step on money with the King's face on it?
4. How many squares make up a game of snakes and ladders?
5. Who was the Prime Minister of Canada during WW1?
6. What social media platform introduced "Threads" in 2024?
7. What is the first rule of Fight Club?
8. The process of splitting an atom in two is called what?
9. Who shot the United Healthcare CEO in late 2024?
10. What is the most common type of genetic disorder?

This week's answers are found on pg. 27

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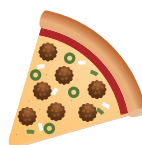
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Woodstock Ingersoll Echo SPORTS

Stallions B strike like lightning, thunder off with 4-0 First Division victory

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

Woodstock Stallions B thundered onto the Cowan Park's Guarantee field, struck like lightning, and retired in good order before an oncoming storm threatened more than the team's victorious mood.

"The boys stuck to their plan, played well and were in full control for the whole game," summed up Stallions coach Sean Gannon following a 4-0 Western Ontario Soccer League (WOSL) First Division shut-out victory over the visiting Tillsonburg Poultry Specialties, Thursday, July 24th.

Woodstock striker Logan Dunlop's natural hat-trick provided ample offence for the Stallions, counted at the five, 15 and 30-minute marks of the opening half. He opened scoring via a 'tap-around' of the Tillsonburg keeper, working hard to find open space.

"Fifteen-yard poke around," said Dunlop.

His second and third markers were 'cheeky chips' lofted over an onrushing keeper, extending the Stallions lead to a comfortable three goals by halftime.

"Gotta love those cheeky chips," smiled Woodstock centre fullback Adam McDonald, whose position allowed him full vantage of a quality defensive effort.

"We moved the ball really well," he said. "Pretty quick and pretty intentional."

"One of our best performances this season," Dunlop agreed.

Ilyas Umar rounded the 4-0 final in the second half, finding a chink in Tillsonburg's defensive wall on a free kick awarded just outside the 18-yard box. Stallions keeper Zach Mann recorded the shutout.

The victory lifted Woodstock's record to 7-1-2 (W/T/L) in WOSL First Division standings, good for third place behind Chatham (9-0-1) and Strathroy United (7-2-1). Tillsonburg dropped to 1-0-11.

Although a result Woodstock should have achieved given the teams' relative positions in the standings, the Stallions had stayed focussed throughout agreed McDonald and Logan.

"Kept our heads in the game," summed up the latter.

The Stallions are within striking distance of the division's top two positions and resultant promotion to the Premier Division, however due to the fact Woodstock Stallions A are in that loop, they are unable to advance. As a result, the team's goal heading into the season was 'trophies' said McDonald.

"Trophies, good results and hard, dedicated work in the field," Dunlop added.

Gannon has been pleased with the



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Woodstock Stallions' Humayun Umar (right) tries to cut off a Tillsonburg pass.

effort in that direction, as well as unselfish play, displayed again against Tillsonburg.

"The boys do a lot of work for each other on and off the ball."

With league and division cup play concluded, the last remaining trophy the Stallions can aspire to is the First Division regular season championship. The Stallions have four games remaining, trailing league-leading Chatham by five points, an improbable but not impossible task.

"It might not be the case this year, so our goal is to finish as strong as we can," Gannon concluded, heading off the pitch as dark thunderclouds passing roughly over Hickson, continued approaching. "We'll just keep fighting every minute and see where we end up."

Ontario Masters Cup Semi-Final Gannon is excited to announce that the other team he coaches, the Woodstock Stallions Masters, are hosting a 2025 Masters Provincial Championship semi-final match Saturday, August 9th at Cowan Field.

The local masters (over-35) team opened playdowns with a 3-0 shutout victory over the Toronto SPG Red Devils, advancing to semi-finals with a 2-1 win over London Jagiellonia. The Stallions will play the winner between Thornhill NextArt Madrid and Windsor Croatia.

Although the game's start time is

yet to be officially finalized, Gannon expects it will be 5 p.m. Hosting a provincial cup semi-final is a rare event for Woodstock continued the coach, looking forward for the

chance for his team to create history.

"I'm asking the people of Woodstock and area to get out and back the boys with the biggest crowd Cowan Park has ever seen," he concluded.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Woodstock Stallions' Ryan Iza (left) covers Tillsonburg's O'Shane Stewart.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Woodstock Stallions' Humayun Umar (left) strives to bring the ball under control in the Tillsonburg zone.

Southwestern Ontario Outdoors: King Crusher lures provides quality, Canadian spoons

JEFF HELSDON

Echo Contributor

As I reeled in the first walleye on Long Point Bay's elbow and looked around the boat, it amazed me how many things were coming together.

The lure responsible for catching the fish was a King Crusher lure in vibrant pinks known as the Sundowner pattern. I was fishing with Ty Earle, owner of King Crusher lures, his cousin Alec McLellan and Captain Allen Carroll of Jimmy Rigin' Fishing Charters, a member of the King Crusher pro team who tests the lures. On the distant horizon I could see the water tower of Port Dover, the home of the company.

With the current emphasis on buying Canadian, why not look at domestic fishing lures as the success on our recent fishing trip proved?

Canadian fishing lures are not a new thing. The Canadian Wiggler is an obvious example as the name is a giveaway. Now owned by Lucky Strike Bait Works, I, and many anglers, have caught many fish with this hollow brass lure over the years. Lucky Strike also manufactures a variety of spoons, spinners and other tackle. Many anglers may not know the popular Williams spoons are made by Brecks in Quebec. Len Thomson spoons are another that is made

north of the 49th parallel, as are Gibb's from British Columbia. In addition, there are many smaller manufacturers scattered across Ontario.

King Crusher is the most recent addition to Canadian tackle manufacturers, starting last summer.

The 21-year-old entrepreneur has been fishing Lake Erie since he was young. He bought an air brush last year and started painting his own lures.

"I wanted to come up with the highest-quality lures with my favourite colour combinations," he said, in between fish as we worked on our four-person limit with Carroll.

With experience in business while he went to school in Nova Scotia for aviation, Earle decided to sell his lures.

"It got so big we sold over 500 last year," he said. "I needed to find a way into retail stores."

Searching for a solution, he found a company in the Philippines that had the rights to Nasty Boy spoon blanks. This former company was famous for its spoons with holes to create noise, but the blanks used for King Crusher have the shape of a Nasty Boy spoon, but no holes.

Earle has complete control over the manufacturing, dictating the colour combinations and finish. The lures have an automotive grade clear coat on them.

"That's the best way to ensure the lure lasts as long as possible," he said.

There is also a unique process used to put the tape on the lures that the competitors don't use.

"It's the clear coat process how we put the tape on the lure," Earle said. "We have a technique that allows the tape to stay on the lure."

Carroll pointed to a pile of lures on his dash from a competitor, and picking up one, showed how the tape comes loose with constant use. He said this doesn't occur nearly as fast with King Crusher Lures.

His father, Jimmy Carroll, who has operated R and R Outdoors the past 20 years, said he was impressed with the quality when Earle walked in the store last summer.

"I've never had a spoon with as good a quality paint as those ones," he said. "We've had some (King Crusher) spoons that have taken over 100 fish and never had a scratch. With some other spoons, we've had the paint peel after 15 or 20 fish."

Carroll said King Crusher is the best-selling spoon he has had. He mentioned the quality and the fact they are Canadian-made and have a good quality hook as selling points.

"Guys are coming in and buying one or two, and then they're coming back and buying 10 or 15," Jimmy said.

Amongst the 70 colours are standard Lake

Erie colours like Greasy Chicken, Nascar, Pink Panties and Mixed Veggies. Earle said his takes on the standard colours have small improvements he has made. There are even glow-in-the-dark options in some colours.

But then there are his custom-designed colours. The Sundowner in its pastel pinks, which was the colour the walleye preferred most the day we were fishing, is one, and is amongst the hottest patterns of the year. Gin and tonic -a multi-colour spoon with green and orange - and tequila sunrise - a orange, green and yellow spoon - round out the list of the top three.

The King Crusher designs have unique names. Chernobyl shad, Area 51, Toxic Tadpole and Stelco were mentioned to illustrate the point.

"It's making funny names so people will associate it with my lures," Earle said.

The quality of the lures is gaining a solid reputation amongst anglers, with Earle selling out of most of his run of lures this year. The plan is for more next year.

King Crusher Lures are available at R and R Outdoors, Old Cut Marina, Angling Outfitters, Erie Tracker and Port Burwell Marina. The lures can also be ordered online at <https://www.kingcrusherlures.ca>

Jeff Helsdon is an award-winning outdoor writer, a columnist for Ontario Out of Doors and writes for several other outdoor publications.

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Ingersoll hosts baseball bonanza

The Ingersoll Minor Baseball Association (IMBA) once again hit it out of the park with their annual Bat and Bash BBQ Sunday, July 27 at Victoria Park in Ingersoll.

From 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., nearly 250 attendees (players, families, community members, and supporters) came together for a full day of baseball fun, food, and team spirit. This year's event built on the success of last year's, continuing to offer IMBA house league players a day filled with camaraderie and baseball-themed activities. Teams from across the T-Ball, 7U, 9U, 11U, 13U, and 15U divisions were represented.

Highlights of the day included friendly ball games, interactive stations, and a community barbecue that kept families well-fed and socializing. The Ontario Provincial Police were also on hand to support the event, adding to the com-

munity atmosphere and helping to celebrate local youth sports.

In keeping with tradition, raffle prize winners, announced earlier this year, were celebrated during the event. The draws added excitement to the day and helped support fundraising efforts for IMBA's programming and equipment needs. The event is a key part of IMBA's mission to promote baseball skills, sportsmanship, and a love of the game for youth of all ages. The association continues to develop both local league and representative teams and is proud of the strong community engagement that makes events like this one possible. The IMBA extends its thanks to the many volunteers, sponsors, and families who contributed to another successful event.

For more information, visit <http://www.ingersollminorbaseball.ca>. (RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Attendees were entertained by the ball games played throughout the day.

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Saul received his Sports Medal, held by his proud father Max.



Members of the Kiwanis Club organized the Pop Flies and High Fives event and supported teams from across the T-Ball, U7U, U9, U11, U13 and U15 divisions.

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Route to the Past – Honour the Pipe Major

SCOTT GILLIES

Contributor

What's the difference between a brass band and a pipe band? One of them can play in the dark.

Because most brass bands carry their music with them on their instruments, if you turn the lights off, they have to stop playing because they can no longer read the music!

Over the years the citizens of Ingersoll hosted events sponsored by the local Caledonian Society, and the Galt Kiltie Band was often a featured guest at community gatherings and parades, but in 1910 all that changed when a local pipe band was formed.

The story is told that a number of young Scots emigrated to Canada and found work in Ingersoll at the Noxon Company – that major manufacturer of farm machinery. Most of these young lads found welcome in their cousin's home on King Hiram Street.

James Vance was plant foreman for the Noxon operation and he, like so many others, enjoyed listening to his young "re-lies" play their pipes. He encouraged them to form a band; he was certain that the Noxon Company would sponsor it. They agreed, but they realized that they needed a leader too, so with Vance's encouragement they wrote to their friend in Dumfries Scotland.

The letter went something like this: "Tom. We need you to be our pipe major. Will you nae pack up your wife an' five bairns, and come to Canada? Come to Ingersoll. We'll find you a place to live. We'll find you a job. Nae bother."

And so it happened that Thomas Gordon Johnston and his wife, the former Eliza Farrow, and their five children moved to Ingersoll. Tom found work as a plumber/pipe fitter, and the Noxon Pipe Band was formed in 1910. The original members included Johnston, Bill Collins, Jack Little and his brother Jamie as pipers and George McQueen as bass drummer.

By 1914 the band had grown in numbers with the addition of John Fleischer, James Candlish, Lorne Lee, William Woods, Pat Weeks and Gordon Cline. It had also changed its name to the Ingersoll Pipe Band.

In 1916, band members all enlisted with the 168th Battalion Oxford's Own and their services would have been immediately put to use.

The sound of the pipes has a tendency to boost morale especially while on extended marches, let alone on the battlefield. Throughout history bagpipes have been identified as a weapon of war because of their uncanny ability to stir the blood, to set the heart racing, to prime the footstep after footstep ever onward down the road.

The Beachville Museum has some wonderful photographs of the Battalion marching through the village in 1916. The pipers are seen playing as they lead the long line of recruits. In another picture, the members of the brass band have given up; they have slung their instruments under their arms!



Pipe Band, 1922.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

In the fall of 1916, the 168th shipped out to England. They arrived in late October and were then dispersed to provide reinforcements to various units being decimated on the front lines. Many of the bandsmen were sent to the 21st Battalion, an Eastern Ontario regiment based in Kingston. This particular battalion saw much of the heavy fighting throughout the war and Ingersoll drummer Gordon Cline was one of the many fatalities.

When not playing the pipes, bandsmen were often used as stretcher bearers sent out onto the battlefield to recover the dead and the wounded. Bill Collins was one such member of the 21st.

Pipe Major Johnston however was not sent to the 21st. Instead, he was ultimately appointed to the 42nd Battalion, the famed Black Watch of Canada.

It was Tom Johnston who played a significant role in Canadian history on the final morning of the Great War.

In the early hours of November 11, 1918, the 42nd Battalion, the Canadian Black Watch, captured the City of Mons Belgium. In September of 1914, the Black Watch – the original highland regiment in the British Army - lost the very first battle of the First World War, but four years later, it was their Canadian counterpart which won the final battle.

As fighting continued, as rifle fire no doubt continued to ring across the outskirts of the city, as imminent peace was in the offing and a ceasefire would come into effect at 11:00am, Pipe Major Tom Johnston of Ingersoll decided that at 0700 hours his band should play their way through the city, to wake up the Belgians and let them know that the Canucks had been victorious over the Hun.

The streets of Mons filled with jubilant,

joyful citizens. Young children and old men and women waved flags, hats and handkerchiefs in celebration and in respect for the Canadian heroes. Photos taken during the impromptu parade show a mass of humanity cheering and gleefully celebrating in the streets. Notable in the front rank is Pipe Major Johnston of Ingersoll, Oxford County, Ontario Canada.

Fighting and dying would continue for another four hours until the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918.

Members of the Ingersoll Pipe Band eventually returned home to their loved ones, and while memories of the horrors they faced no doubt haunted them forever, the band resumed performances and competitions across the province. A tradition that continues to this day.

As Canada's oldest non-military pipe

band, which owns its own building, the Ingersoll Pipe Band continues to be an outstanding ambassador for the Town of Ingersoll locally and internationally.

In all of its 115 years there have only been a handful of Pipe Majors, with Doug Collins as the 3rd generation member currently at the helm. The original leader of the band, Thomas Gordon Johnston, was feted during the King and Queen's visit to Ingersoll on June 7, 1939, but before the end of the month he was lowered into his grave. He was only 65.

Next time you see the Ingersoll Pipe Band and hear them play, or any pipe band, take some advice passed on to me from the grandson of Tom's youngest son Gordon who was born in 1916. "Stand up and honour the Pipe Major".

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OFA Viewpoint: In a pivotal moment for Canada, collaboration across agriculture has never mattered more

ETHAN WALLACE

Vice President, Ontario Federation of Agriculture

For farm leaders, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture's (CFA) annual summer meeting is always a highlight on the calendar. It's a chance to gather with other sector leaders from across the country, take stock of the current landscape, and work on charting a united path forward.

This year, the gathering held even more significance than usual.

With a new federal government in place and major challenges ahead, it's clear that Canada is at a pivotal moment in its history – and that includes agriculture. The choices we make now will shape the future of our farms, our food system, and rural communities for decades to come.

My family and I farm just outside of Seaforth near Lake Huron. I'm also a Vice President with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) and I'm proud that our organization continues to play a leading role in uniting voices in our sector.

Earlier this year, we spearheaded a coordinated communications effort among Ontario's agricultural organizations to draw attention to both the challenges and the growth potential tied to trade, tariffs, and domestic policy. It was a proactive push to ensure government is not only hearing from us—but hearing a consistent, united message.

We've encouraged CFA to carry that same spirit of collaboration across the national stage. The message to the federal government is clear: agriculture is one of the country's greatest economic powerhouses. With the right tools—smart policy, modern infrastructure, and thoughtful regulation—we can unlock even more potential. Farm leaders across the country are ready to partner with decision-makers to build that future, together.

This meeting also marked the return of the Canadian Pork Council to the CFA table, adding another vital voice to our message. In a diverse industry like ours, every sector brings unique insights and strengthening those cross-commodity relationships is essential for building resilience, reducing red tape, and speaking with a stronger voice on national issues.

The meeting itself covered a wide array of key topics. From mental health initiatives to changes at the Canadian Grain Commission, and updates on Senate activity—including Bill S-230, which seeks to develop a national soil health strategy—there was no shortage of pressing mat-



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

ters to discuss.

CFA also provided updates on its international engagement, such as the North America-European Union Farm Leaders Conference in Italy later this year. It will offer a valuable opportunity to explore bilateral and multilateral trade, sustainability, and innovation—areas where Canada must continue to lead and start strengthening relationships outside of North America.

One of the highlights was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between CFA and the National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture and Food (NCIAF). This agreement sets the stage for deeper collaboration and mutual understanding. There is enormous opportunity to grow agriculture in new territories and support Indigenous food sovereignty—and building these relationships is a meaningful and necessary step forward.

Manitoba's Minister of Agriculture Ron Kostyshyn shared compelling insights on cutting red tape, addressing outdated regulations, and seizing what he called a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" to finally tackle inter-

provincial trade barriers—issues that are also top of mind with farmers here in Ontario. The minister was candid in his remarks that agriculture is often taken for granted by Canadians and why it's important that this must change.

The presence of Senators Rob Black, Mary Robinson and Todd Lewis at the meeting did highlight how far agriculture has come in raising its profile in Ottawa in recent years. A decade ago, agriculture was barely mentioned in the Senate. Today, it's part of nearly every conversation. That's the result of steady, relationship-focused advocacy and being a trusted resource before legislation hits the floor, not just after.

Ultimately, this year's CFA meeting reminded us that collaboration isn't a buzzword—it's a strategy. And if we want Canadian agriculture to reach its full potential both here at home and globally, we need to keep showing up, speaking out, and working together.

The challenges are considerable, but so are the opportunities and pulling together in the same direction will help us realize their potential.

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Cowapolooza

S U M M E R F E S T I V A L

August 8 - 9 | Southside Park | Woodstock, ON

Friday Aug. 8

COWAPOLOOZA COUNTRY

6 - 10 p.m.

Music from headliners Outlaw Sate of Mind - Chris Stapleton
Tribute with guests Ryan Langdon and Coty Robinson.



Saturday Aug. 9

COWAPOLOOZA KIDS

2 - 6 p.m.

FREE family activities

Saturday Aug. 9

COWAPOLOOZA ROCKS

6 - 10 p.m.

Big Wreck will rock the park with guests
Harm & Ease and Joel Dupuis. Fronted by
Ian Thornley, Big Wreck's hit singles
include "That Song," "Blown Wide Open,"
"The Oaf," and "Albatross."

BIG WRECK



Free shuttle

Friday | 5 - 11 p.m. &
Saturday | 2 - 11 p.m.



Food vendors, Marketplace
vendors & beverage garden with
main stage views.

Events and activities are free.

See the full schedule, event FAQs and shuttle details at cowapolooza.ca



Toyota Motor
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Presents the Marketplace

Presents Cowapolooza Rocks

Presents Volunteer

Isaac Teige Atfield's Would You Like Some Tea? at London Fringe Festival explores mental illness in modern society

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

Theatre Woodstock's Isaac Teige Atfield is thrilled to be part of the London Fringe Festival this summer.

Atfield's drama play *Would You Like Some Tea?* will be featured in the festival between Aug. 12 and 16 at the Metropolitan United Church at 468 Wellington St. in London. The London Fringe Festival is a showcase of independent theatre productions by emerging artists within the region and around the world.

"I've been hoping for this opportunity for a very long time and it's so great to finally be a part of something that's not only historically relevant to the culture of London but has spread across all of Ontario and to be a small part of that is quite beautiful," they said.

Atfield is the production manager of Theatre Woodstock and has been involved in many on-stage and off-stage roles with Theatre Woodstock, STAGES, and K2K Productions. Since the announcement of *Would You Like Some Tea?* at the upcoming fringe festival, Atfield's received support from their theatre colleagues and many shared the news on social media.

The play explores mental illness and is

based on experiences Atfield faced with a friend who had a stress-induced psychosis episode. Atfield calls *Would You Like Some Tea?* a "mix of a love letter to a friend and a harsh look at how we view mental illness in our modern society." Atfield had the phrase "Would you like some tea?" repeating in their head constantly and they decided to make the saying terrifying.

With many conversations in the past few years about mental health, the production suits current affairs and sparks conversations about the different ways mental health is viewed.

"Not only is it so culturally relevant to Ontario right now with the housing crisis and all people struggling to find support in our current political climate, but we also found there was a lot of research into people with stress-induced psychosis or schizophrenia depending on how the culture treats the disorder changes how the people experience schizophrenia and stress-induced psychosis," said Atfield.

"For example, cultures that are viewing it more as a spirituality aspect tend to have nicer voices spoken back to them."

Atfield recommends checking out the London Fringe Festival for *Would You Like Some Tea?* and other productions.



(ISAAC ATFIELD PHOTO)

(Left to right) Fenn Hafey and Isaac Teige Atfield star in Atfield's drama *Would You Like Some Tea?* at the London Fringe Festival this August.

"This is an absolutely wonderful opportunity to experience culture that they can't really find elsewhere in the mainstream arts," they said.

More information about *Would You Like Some Tea?* and other London Fringe Festival productions can be found by visiting <https://palacetheatre.ca/london-fringe>.

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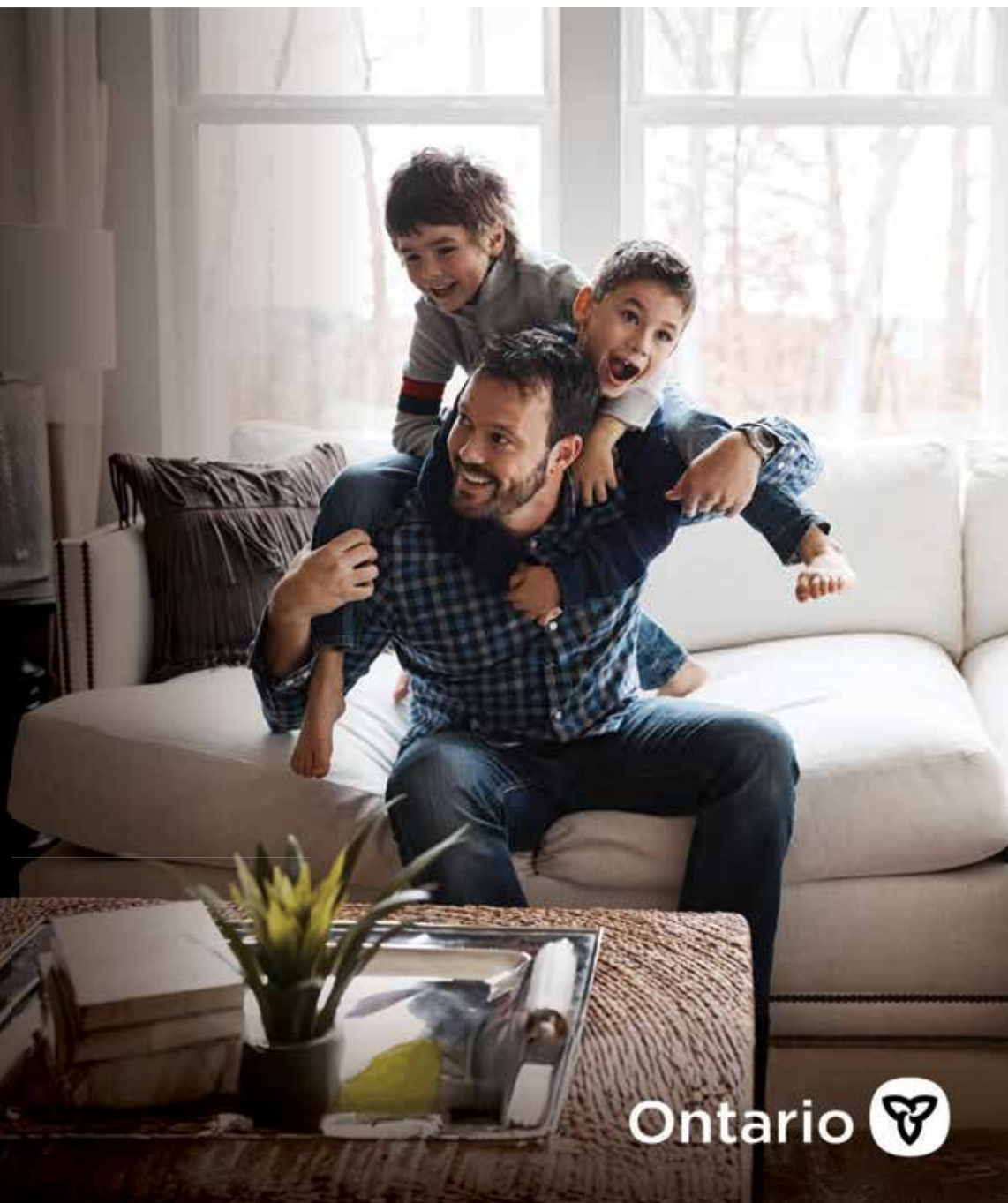
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Zorra Township News

Zorra Township Council briefs

CONNOR LUCZKA

Echo Correspondent

\$2M co-build between Zorra Township and TVDSB fails to net provincial funding

While the Township of Zorra was successful in receiving nearly \$260,000 from the province for repair, rehabilitation and upgrades for area arenas, it was unsuccessful in its \$1 million bid for a new co-build with the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB).

The funding would have come through the second stream of the Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund (CSRIF) to go towards a township-owned gymnasium and soccer field, aspects of a 479-pupil school with an 88-space child-care facility expected to begin construction later this year.

The gymnasium and sports field portion of the build is estimated to cost \$2 million, and the township's portion was expected to be funded over the next three years, from 2025 to 2027, if the application was successful.

As noted in a staff report presented to council at its July 16 meeting, the project will continue to be funded through the capital budget, with 90 per cent covered by development charges and the facilities reserve.

Although not totally successful, the report on the fund pointed out that over 500 applications were received and only 22 were approved. That means the previously announced repair and rehabilitation funding that came from the first stream of the CSRIF (as reported in the July 4 edition of the Echo) was one of the few successful applications in the province.

"We sincerely appreciate the government of Ontario's support and would like to thank MPP Ernie Hardeman for his strong advocacy on our behalf," the report reads.

Coun. Paul Mitchell praised staff for their work in beating the odds.

"Twenty-two out of 500 is about a four per cent success rate," Mitchell said. "That's pretty long odds that you beat, so the application must have been rock solid ... I think it's important that we keep going after these grants, and we have the staff capable of beating the odds and getting this money for us, so that's great."

He also indicated that his support of the co-build moving forward will be dependent on if the township can net governmental funding in the future.

The \$259,667 repair and rehabilitation grant will go towards upgrading aging refrigeration components and lighting at the Embro-Zorra Community Centre (EZCC) and Thamesford District Recreation Cen-

tre (TDRC).

Council approves zone change application for 22-unit apartment building, despite parking concerns

The balance between housing affordability and in-town parking pressures were at the heart of Zorra Township Council's decision to approve an Official Plan amendment and zone change for a proposed 22-unit apartment in Thamesford.

The proposed building is located at 225 Dundas St. W. where the Thamesford Lawn Bowling Club was previously located. It was zoned in 2022 for medium density meaning a three-storey, 18-unit apartment complex was permitted to be built there. The owner asked to rezone the property to allow for 22 units.

Parking issues were top of mind for some members of the public who spoke on the proposal. It was also why Coun. Kevin Stewart moved a motion to deny the Official Plan amendment and rezoning.

"I think at 18 units, this is already a substantial development for us. To increase it to 22, I think this further highlights some concerns of parking, and obviously we heard from residents on that as well. We're not saying no to housing here. We're saying no to 22 because it's just further exacerbating a problem, a potential problem, with parking."

While Coun. Katie Grigg did not support the changes, the other side of the horseshoe did. Both Mitchell and Coun. Crystal Finch said that the need for housing was great in the community and that the parking pressures should not get in the way of approving more units. Mayor Marcus Ryan concurred.

"At the risk of being offensive, the idea that we would prioritize providing a space for a car to park over providing a space for a person to live is really concerning to me. We might say that in the village of Thamesford, the township of Zorra, homeless people aren't as big an issue, but we did have a woman living under the bridge in the village of Thamesford a couple years ago.

Ryan added when he was first elected in 2014 there were very few homeless people across the county. There are now well over 150.

"If we're going to change that, if we're going to do different, if we want a different outcome, then we have to consider approving different things than the things that got us here. If we continue to prioritize things like parking the way we have historically, then we're going to continue to say we're not going to provide homes."

With Ryan's tiebreaking vote, Stewart's motion was defeated and the zoning changes were approved.

Mayor pushes for alternate structures in review of school board governance

CONNOR LUCZKA

Echo Correspondent

The Mayor of Zorra Township is pushing for alternate school governance structures to be investigated by the province as the Ministry of Education continues its

supervision of the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB).

On April 29, the province announced the appointment of Paul Boniferno as a financial and operational supervisor for the board due to the board's deteriorating finances.

Marcus Ryan said area municipalities like Zorra collect property taxes on behalf of the ministry that is re-allocated to the TVDSB.

"A board that has 'historically struggled to have a constructive relationship with. It is this imbalance that is at the centre of his motion, and for his position as the town's mayor in general."

Ryan first got involved in politics when the TVDSB wanted to close his children's school. Since then, his constituents have brought similar grievances to him over the years.

"And I've pointed out to them that, yes, sometimes the board isn't always making the best choices that we would like to make, but a lot of time they're making those choices because of the way they are funded, because of the way they are governed by the Education Act. Those things need to change if you want the outcomes to change."

Ryan added he's worried about the taxpayer.

"Whether it's covered through the education portion of the property tax bill, the municipal portion of the property tax bill, income tax, sales tax, there's a 19-point-something-billion-dollar backlog

in school infrastructure in this province. And to be clear, that school infrastructure is where our children go to school every day. And my biggest worry is I don't want somebody to just cut a cheque to do that without changing the governance that got us to a 19-point-something-billion-dollar infrastructure backlog."

According to a 2024 report by the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario, the backlog is even worse than Ryan believes. It would cost \$21.7 billion to clear the infrastructure backlog and maintain school buildings in good condition for the next 10 years.

While Ryan acknowledged the motion was toothless, he said that was intentional but wanted to politically support the province in reviewing how schools are governed. Ryan's motion was supported across the board by Zorra's town councillors.

"I think the public is well aware of the scandal that hit the news that publicly started some awareness around some of this dysfunction," said Coun. Katie Grigg. "But a lot of the issues were going on for quite some time behind the scenes. I think Mayor Ryan is well aware of those and has been tracking them and advocating for those for quite some time."

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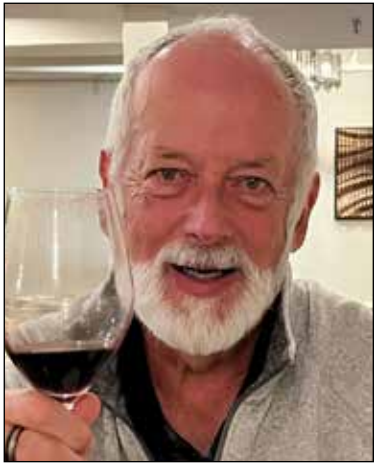
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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Discovering the amazing Winnipeg musical heritage



PAUL KNOWLES

Echo Contributor

My itinerary, set up by the tourism folks at Economic Development Winnipeg, simply read: “You’ll meet music historian John Einarson tomorrow, from 10–11 a.m. at Salisbury House Restaurant, 759 Pembina Hwy.” So I plugged that address into my GPS, and within a few minutes found myself at an address completely unrelated to Pembina Hwy. Which meant we were late for our meeting with John, and when we arrived, we rushed through the foyer looking for someone who might be named John Einarson.

I explained and apologized, he was more than gracious, and that launched one of the most interesting interviews I have ever done.

John Einarson is a leading Canadian music historian, a retired history professor, author of 24 (and one in the works) books about music history, and an accomplished guitarist who has shared the stage with the likes of Ran-

dy Bachman and Neil Young.

It’s unlikely that there is anything about Winnipeg’s musical heritage that he doesn’t know. And he’s glad to share it. He conducts corporate tours, he is an active author, and he has a very engaging Facebook page called “John Einarson Remembers”. He told me, “Music really defined my life – it’s my passion, my obsession, my religion.”

If you are going to visit Winnipeg, and you are a music lover, his books and his Facebook anecdotes are essential resources.

Now, back to rushing through the foyer at the Salisbury House restaurant, where I had completely failed to notice the floor-to-ceiling display cases, which hold musical treasures like a Randy Bachman guitar – long ago converted into a bass by his brother – Burton Cummings’ piano, a Neil Young guitar, and sundry other memorabilia – including a John Einarson guitar.

So, after we chatted over coffee in the restaurant, the first part of our tour got no farther than the lobby. It’s worth a visit. One intriguing item is a “Rockola” jukebox. Clever name, right? Turns out, it was invented by a Manitoban whose actual name was David C. Rockola!

John drove us around Winnipeg, pointing out homes, storefronts, hotels, and a mural that feature in the rich musical history of his city. And while as a music geek, I knew about Winnipeg’s connections with the Guess Who, Neil Young, and Bachman Turner Overdrive, that was the tiny tip of the iceberg. John says that “12 per cent of all working musicians in Canada claim to



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

The original Guess Who line-up – from left, Jim Kale, Burton Cummings, Garry Peterson, Randy Bachman.

be from, or to have gotten their start, in Manitoba.”

John revels in telling musical stories, especially those that might be less known. Such as the tale of Barbra Streisand getting fired from a gig at a high-end club in Winnipeg. Apparently, the young Barbra felt she was in the

presence of bumpkins, and her attitude was quickly noticed. Goodbye, Barbra!

Or the story of Winnipegger Bob Nolan, a long-time member of Roy Rogers’ “Sons of the Pioneers” who co-starred with Rogers in many movies. Nolan wrote songs including “Tumbling Tumbleweeds”, and “Cool Water”, allegedly the first song ever sung by John Lennon. This is the kind of deep-dive information you get from John Einarson, and it is entirely addictive.

We stopped for a photo at 152 Bannerman Avenue, and John shared stories about the Guess Who, including the tidbit that the group’s smash hit, “American Woman”, was created through a spontaneous jam during a concert at the Aud in Kitchener! I also learned that while Cummings lived at 152, he and Bachman collaborated on iconic hits like “No Time”.

The list of music stars with Winnipeg connections is longer than I had imagined: as well as the Guess Who, BTO and Young, John named Loreena McKennitt, Terry Jacks, Fred Penner, Lucille Starr, Lenny Breau, Gisele MacKenzie, Juliette, Tom Jackson... and then John took a breath!

We drove past 172 Oxford, one-time home of Terry Jacks, 160 Luxton, where Bachman lived (and wrote a song that eventually became “Taking Care of Business”), and 1123 Grosvenor Avenue, once home to Neil Young.

John could tell us exactly where each of these jukebox heroes were

in their musical development when they lived at those addresses. While we were stopped in front of Young’s home on Grosvenor, John talked about his role in the band, the Squires, and added that one visitor to Neil’s house was a guy named Bob Dylan. John also pointed out St. Ignatius church, the first venue where Young played with the Squires.

We drove past Memorial Park, where Janis Joplin performed. He told us about folkie Oscar Brand, Winnipeg-born, who hosted a long-time New York radio show called “Folksong Jubilee”. Brandt was also involved in the founding of Sesame Street – where his contribution (and personality) was commemorated when a certain “Grouch” was named for him.

Winnipeg’s music history isn’t all about rock – the genres range from Métis music through country to jazz to folk to classical.

Our last stop was at 1400 Main Street, the location of the last remaining Guess Who mural in the city. Did I take a selfie? Of course I did.

Music fans will delight in a self-guided tour of Winnipeg sites related to Canada’s amazing music scene. And John Einarson’s books and Facebook page are the perfect places to start.

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



A display cases at the Salisbury – behind an overly reflective glass, a treasure trove of musical memorabilia, including Bachman’s guitar and Cummings’ piano.

COMING EVENTS

SOUTH GATE'S ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

Thursday, September 18, Noon at Ingersoll Golf Club

www.southgatectr.com/golf. \$145/person. Best Ball, Scramble, 18 Holes. Includes: Lunch, cart, buffet dinner, prizes, fun games, a chance at \$10,000 hole-in-one prize, silent auction and more!

SACRED HEART PARISH EUCHRE

We invite everyone to join us for a Euchre afternoon.

It will be held in Henderson Hall 133 John Street Ingersoll.

Tuesday August 5 start at 1:00 pm.

Refreshments provided.

For more info call or text Martha 519-320-0785

TOWNLINE CEMETERY DECORATION DAY

Sunday, August 10

Everyone is welcome to visit this pleasant setting at **296246 - 29th Line, Zorra Township., (near corner with Road 88)**, to place flowers and remember their loved ones. Muterer Family Pipers will attend to provide their gift of music. Donations towards the continuing care of the cemetery are always appreciated and may be made there, or directed to: Townline Cemetery, c/o David Waud, 6 Norsworthy Lane, Ingersoll ON N5C 4G5

CANADIAN HARVARD AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION OPEN HOUSE & FLY DAYS

August 16 (Rain Date: August 17)

Sept 13 – Wings & Wheels

All event dates take place from 9am – 4pm Tillsonburg Regional Airport

Join us for our Open House & Fly Days during our special 40th anniversary season. These monthly family-friendly outdoor events are always FREE and offer the opportunity to see our collection of Harvard aircraft up close, tour our hangars, explore restoration projects, purchase souvenirs, and best of all, purchase a flight! Pre-booking your flight experience is recommended by contacting crewflights@harvards.com.

INGERSOLL PIPE BAND

115TH ANNIVERSARY TATTOO

Saturday August 16 2025 1 to 4 pm

Parade - Downtown Ingersoll 1 pm

Tattoo - Yvonne Holmes Mott Memorial Park Ingersoll - 2 to 4pm

Free Admission

The Ingersoll pipe Band will be hosting five additional area pipe bands that will converge upon the Town of Ingersoll.

The IPB is delighted to offer you this afternoon of free entertainment to help us celebrate this anniversary milestone.

This is your opportunity to see and hear the traditional sounds of bagpipes and drums!

Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/IngersollPipeBand>

Website - ingersollpipeband.com

DECORATION DAY AT THE PRINCETON CEMETERY

Sunday, August 17th at 2:30 p.m.

(if it is raining it will be held at the Centennial Hall in Princeton) Bring your own lawn chairs.

SACRED HEART PARISH EUCHRE

We invite everyone to join us for a Euchre afternoon.

It will be held in Henderson Hall 133 John Street Ingersoll.

Tuesday August 19 start at 1:00 pm.

Refreshments provided.

For more info call or text Martha 519-320-0785

LET'S FALL INTO COUNTRY MUSIC WITH THE INGERSOLL COUNTRY MUSIC JAMBOREE

at the Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St., Ingersoll, 1-4 p.m. every other Friday.

Join us. Walk ins welcome. Qualifications, love 50-70's country music, perform, listen, dance, and enjoy. September 5 & 19, October 3, 17 & 31, November 14 & 28, and December 5.

MODERN SQUARE DANCING IS FOR YOU!

Looking for something to do in the evening or something new to try? Modern square dancing is a great way to learn something new, have fun, meet new friends, relieve stress, and get some exercise! **At Thames Valley Dance Club, we dance on Monday nights from 7:00-9:00pm.** All you need is comfortable shoes and casual clothing. No experience or partner is required and anyone over the age of 12 is welcome (children from 12-15 with an adult, please). **We will be starting our 2025-2026 season on Monday, Sept 8/25 at the Ingersoll Pipe Band Hall, 108 Wonham St. S. Ingersoll.** The first night is free, and after that the cost is \$7.50 per person each Monday, paid monthly at the start of the month. For more information, contact Julie at 519-535-3314. Hope to see you on Sept 8th at the Ingersoll Pipe Band Hall!

MONTHLY VON BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC

10 AM To Noon

At the Ingersoll Pharmasave

19 King St. E., Ingersoll

Last Tuesday of every Month

TILLSONBURG DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB

Interested in Bridge? Join us every Friday at the Tillsonburg Duplicate Bridge Club at 1 p.m. at The Senior Centre. Don't have a partner? Come anyway and we will match you up with someone. For more information, visit their Facebook page: TburgBridge.

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

REPAIR CAFÉ - TOSS IT? NO WAY!

1st Saturday of each month; 9:00 a.m. - Noon

St. John's Church 685860 Oxford Highway 2, Eastwood, ON N4S 7V9

St. John's, Eastwood, now affiliated with Repair Café International (look for us at repaircafe.org). Meets the first Saturday of every month 9am to noon at St. John's Church 685860 Oxford Highway 2, Eastwood, ON N4S 7V9. Repairs made to clothing, linens, household items, toys, musical instruments etc. Save money, learn how to make your own

repairs. Volunteers welcome. Payment by donation.

GRIEF SUPPORT FOR MAID RELATED LOSS

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

PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

Third Wednesday of each month; 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

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

LIVING WITH LOSS:

A SIX-WEEK GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Caring Hearts Support Network:

St. David's United Church,

190 Springbank Ave., Woodstock ON

The next 6-week Living with Loss Grief Support Group will begin on **Tuesday, September 2nd.** For more information please call 519-536-3370 or visit our website www.caringheartssupportnetwork.com

COLOURING THROUGH GRIEF

Caring Hearts Support Network:

St. David's United Church,

190 Springbank Ave., Woodstock ON

Third Wednesday monthly. One time fee of \$15. Registration is required.

Call 519-536-3370. Check out website

www.caringheartssupportnetwork.com

VON OXFORD GRIEF CARE:

FREE MONTHLY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Register at: oxford.griefsupport@von.ca or 519-539-1231 Ext 6299 or 6296

TILLSONBURG

WHEN: 2nd Tuesday of every month

WHERE: VON Oxford Office 24 Brock St.

W., Tillsonburg

TIME: 6:30PM-8:00PM

INGERSOLL

WHEN: 4th Tuesday of every month

WHERE: Ingersoll Public Library 130 Oxford St., Ingersoll

TIME: 10:30AM –12:00Noon

WOODSTOCK

WHEN: 3rd Saturday of every month

WHERE: Sakura House Hospice 715180 Oxford Rd.4, Woodstock

TIME: 10:30AM-12:00 Noon

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** where 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!

OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Meetings: 2nd Tuesday (2-4pm) and 4th Tuesday (7-9pm)

September to May

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>

FOOD TRUCKS AT GRACE UNITED CHURCH, TAVISTOCK

August 4, 2025 from 4:30-7:30

Wing Monster, Wild Boar, Ish n Chips

Donations to Camp Bimini

August 11, 2025 from 4:30-7:30

Pablas Street of India, Serial Griller,

S.W.A.T

Donations to Tavistock Medical Clinic

August 18, 2025 from 4:30-7:30

Crystal's Fries, Ish n Chips, Fo'Cheezy

Donations to Tavistock Agricultural Society

August 25, 2025 from 4:30-7:30

Berlin 95, Born2Eat, Los Rolling Tacos,

Beavertails

Donations to Grace United Church

BEACHVILLE LEGION EVENTS: 434852 ZorraLine, Beachville

JULY 19: KARAOKE - 7-11 PM

EUCHRE: THURSDAYS - 7 PM

DARTS: FRIDAYS - 8 PM

FREE POOL

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

WE ARE CLOSED ON MONDAY'S

COMING EVENTS

DARTS ON TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS

SHUFFLE BOARD EVERY THURSDAY AFTERNOON AT 3PM

OPEN AUGUST 8TH FOR DART LEAGUE
Or anyone that would like to use the canteen at 5pm.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON MATINEE
August 2nd: 2 of Kind, 2-4pm

SATURDAY EVENING ENTERTAINMENT
August 2nd: Mike Thrope, 7-11pm
August 9th: Jaime Morris, 7-11pm
August 16th: East Hill, 7-11pm
August 23rd: 50-60's, 7-11pm
August 30th: Randy Thomas, 7-11pm

SOUP N SANDWICH
August 7th 11:30-12:45pm

MEAT DRAW
August 16th at 3pm.

FISH N CHIP DINNER
& Coleslaw & Baked Beans, plus Dessert.
Must Pre-Order & be paid by August 19th.
Dinner on August 24th 5-6pm. Please contact the Office or Canteen for more details.

NO GENERAL MEETING THIS MONTH

EXECUTIVE MEETING
August 12th 7pm.

CANTEEN CLOSED
August 1st, 15th, 22nd, 29th
unless we have functions booked.

OFFICE OPEN IN THE MORNINGS ON:
August 1st, 15th, 22nd, 29th.

OFFICE IS OPEN:
Tuesday 9:30-12:30 Wednesday, Thursday
all day 9:30-12:30 1:30-4:30.

HURON PARK BAPTIST CHURCH EVENTS:

199 Berwick St, Woodstock
PANCAKES AT NIGHT
7 – 9 p.m., August 4, 11, 18
A youth Alpha program - discussions about faith, Jesus and Christianity. Please free to come to some or all of them.

COWAPALOOZA
August 9 – 2:00 p.m.
Come visit our tent at Cowapalooza in Southside Park.

BASKETBALL POWER CAMP
August 18-22 9 am-12:50 pm
Ages: 5-14
Call the church 519-421-4722 for Registration details.

DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK BIA
IMPORTANT DATES:

MUSIC IN THE SQUARE
Every Thursday Until August 28
Come to Museum Square for a little lunchtime concert. Music in the Square happens every Thursday from 12 pm to 2 pm during the Summer months.
Grab some lunch from one of the neighbouring businesses or bring your own and enjoy live bands and musicians.

DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK SHOPPING NIGHT
August 28, September 25, October 23, November 27, December 18 - 5pm-8pm
Our monthly shopping event, Woodstock Shopping Night, typically occurs every 4th Thursday of the month. Participating stores stay open late until 8 pm to facilitate late-night shopping. Enjoy a great night out in downtown Woodstock with extended store hours & exciting specials.

CHRISTMAS IN THE SQUARE
December 12/13 & December 19/20
Get ready for a festive family adventure in Downtown Woodstock! Join us for free festive fun in Museum Square; expect smiles, laughter, and a jolly good time. Bring the kids and snap a free photo with Santa at his house. Take the opportunity to do some last minute shopping for your loved ones at the wonderful downtown businesses.

SOUTH GATE CENTRE EVENTS:
www.southgatectr.com or 519-539-9817

FALLSVIEW CASINO
Friday, September 19: 9 am – 6 pm
South Gate Centre Bus Trip
Members pricing and non-members pricing.

DAY IN PORT DOVER
Wednesday, September 10: 10 am – 5:30 pm

South Gate Centre Bus Trip
Lunch at Erie Beach Hotel, Lighthouse Theatre's "Here on the Flight Path," travel by luxury motorcoach. Members pricing and non-members pricing.

BLUE JAYS VS. TAMPA BAY
Saturday, September 27: 11:30 am – 8 pm
South Gate Centre Bus Trip
Members pricing and non-members pricing.

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Riddles

I can fill a room but take up no space. What am I?
Light

The more you take from me, the more I grow. What am I?
Hole

I'm not alive, but I can die if you forget to charge me. What am I?
Phone

I'm easy to lift but hard to throw. What am I?
Feather

I go around and around but always stay in one spot. What am I?
Clock

I have a tail and bark, but I'm not a dog. What am I?
Tree

You can break me, even if you never pick me up or touch me. What am I?
Promise

I'm something you can catch but not throw. What am I?
Cold

I'm always in front of you, but you can never see me. What am I?
Future

I open and close, but I'm not a mouth. I help you get in and out of your house. What am I?
Door

Sudoku

by PeterS 2025

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

Solutions on page 27

Featured Pet



BATMAN

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

Word Search

SPACE EXPLORATION

B	I	A	B	O	B	D	U	V	D	G	V	Z	U	M	S	T	C	X	K		ROCKET
Y	K	A	S	P	A	C	E	S	U	I	T	A	S	A	M	D	C	O	Q		NEBULA
R	O	C	K	E	T	D	N	J	O	L	J	G	M	R	W	Y	O	S	J		TELESCOPE
Y	U	F	O	K	Z	S	H	Q	A	T	G	U	N	L	T	H	W	R	V		SATELLITE
E	R	D	A	S	T	R	O	N	A	U	T	U	D	Z	U	B	H	P	F		ORBIT
Z	X	M	A	M	F	T	L	F	B	L	Z	V	E	Z	K	H	M	F	E		COMET
G	N	Q	C	O	V	A	P	Y	Z	I	S	O	R	B	I	T	J	L	W		METEOR
D	P	P	L	I	L	S	H	W	X	I	K	M	V	B	F	Z	M	U	E		GRAVITY
J	S	L	H	L	A	U	N	C	H	P	A	D	J	D	K	I	H	N	Q		ASTRONAUT
M	M	E	E	S	V	A	B	W	S	C	K	F	R	C	J	V	K	A	A		SPACESUIT
G	R	A	V	I	T	Y	Y	S	Z	J	N	N	Q	Q	N	O	M	R	A		LAUNCHPAD
N	I	C	N	E	B	U	L	A	P	A	A	B	Q	M	C	T	M	G	M		GALAXY
J	H	F	R	F	K	A	G	T	E	L	E	S	C	O	P	E	G	F	O		LUNAR
A	W	J	J	T	I	Y	C	H	E	N	W	B	Z	C	T	V	N	M	O		COSMOS
I	G	A	L	A	X	Y	O	Y	G	H	O	S	S	O	O	W	Y	E	N		MOONWALK
D	S	Y	U	A	N	N	M	J	A	M	Q	N	V	S	Y	U	P	T	W		
B	Y	B	T	O	C	E	E	U	E	H	K	G	F	M	O	D	Z	E	A		
H	X	E	J	A	T	L	T	W	O	R	J	A	W	O	L	N	L	O	L		
I	T	M	S	S	A	T	E	L	L	I	T	E	A	S	D	C	D	R	K		
F	Z	K	I	K	T	S	R	H	S	A	Y	M	B	A	V	T	K	E	U		

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Deadline: Tuesday prior at 3 p.m.
Contact: info@theecho.ca

Coming Events are for non-profit organizations to promote their free admission events

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QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Flute
2. Giraffe
3. Thailand
4. 100
5. Sir Robert Borden
6. Instagram
7. "You do not talk about Fight Club"
8. Nuclear fission
9. Luigi Mangione
10. Down syndrome

SUDOKU

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

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