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Council approves clock tower repairs

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Tillsonburg's Rotary Clock Tower will get a much-needed facelift this year.

At the April 13 council meeting, council learned that the clock tower was in worse shape than originally thought, based on a study approved in November. Completed by Pow Peterman Consulting Engineers and Hazen Masonry and Restoration, the study found the exterior brick on the south and west sides to be in poor shape. It also noted "saturation of both the exterior brick and interior concrete block, with signs of deterioration showing on the interior block as well. The lack of moisture barrier and internal climate control results in water intrusion and the inability to evaporate that water, causing deterioration of the masonry due to expansion from freezing."

Replacement of the roof, as well as windows and doors, was also recommended within the next one to two years. The total estimated cost of all the work was \$394,000.

Although metal cladding and stucco were also looked into as alternate finishes, it was recommended to stick with brick. Reconstruction would be with an air space and vapour barrier between the new brick and concrete blocks.

An application was made to the Rural Ontario Development Program for the entire project, which, if successful, will cover up to 35 per cent of the costs.

The recommendation in the report, which council endorsed, was to proceed with the entire project if the grant was successful, and if not, to proceed with brick replacement, which is budgeted in the 2026 budget at \$200,000. If the grant application isn't successful, then the roof, windows and doors would be referred to the 2027 budget.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy asked with the freeze-thaw cycles and whether there would continue to be a problem.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

DANCING WITH THE STARS ON ICE

Tillsonburg Skating Club dazzled the crowd with the skating, lights and sets at its Ice Show 2026 with the theme of Dancing with the Stars on Ice on Friday and Saturday. Amongst the local stars were guest skaters Tillsonburg native Summer Homick and her partner Nicholas Buelow, who were silver medalists at the nationals in junior ice dance. See Page 18-19 for more photos.

Organizers planning for bigger, better TurtleFest

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Organizers are planning for a bigger and better TurtleFest on Friday, June 19, and Saturday, June 20.

The largest festival in town, which sees Broadway shut down, the event attracted an estimated 30,000 people last year.

"Coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2023, we wanted to make sure that TurtleFest was able to resume its position as Tillsonburg's signature event, but we realized that sponsorship support would be difficult as many local businesses struggled during the shutdown," said TurtleFest chair Mark Renaud. "Consequently, we had to be conservative in our planning. However, we have been able to be able to add more to the event every year."

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

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At the least, tower brick will be replaced this year

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

“Is there any guarantee this just isn’t going to happen again,” she asked.

Adam Kannawin, Manager of Parks and Facilities, answered that there was no guarantee, but the intent was to look at the interior of the building in the future to address this. He added that the original brick was used, and the new brick will help.

“This addition will give us a few years

to add an HVAC system,” he added.

Coun. Chris Rosehart pointed out the town inherited the clock tower, and the brick was never sealed. She asked if the intention is to seal it after replacement.

Kannawin said the intention is to follow the contractor’s maintenance instructions, saying he believes it needs to be sealed every five years.



(FILE PHOTO)

Council approved moving ahead with repairs to Tillsonburg’s clock towers at its last meeting. The bricks will be redone this year, and if a grant is successful, the roof and windows may also be replaced.

Organizers planning for bigger, better TurtleFest

CONTINUED FROM FRONT



(FILE PHOTO)

Organizers are working for a larger, better TurtleFest this year after record-breaking crowds filled the streets last year.

Tillsonburg Farmer’s Market is a new partner for the event on Saturday as TurtleFest expands with the closure of Bridge Street to the west of Broadway. Additional pop-up vendors are planned for the farmers’s market, including bouncy castle for children, horse and buggy rides for a fee, and musical entertainment. Plans are underway to add a food truck to serve breakfast items to morning market shoppers.

Vanessa Fortner, events and marketing coordinator for the Downtown Tillsonburg BIA, discussed plans to move the Station Arts Centre’s Creative Impact Zone for Kids to that area, as well as artisans.

“It will connect the farmers’ market to the downtown zone through Bridge Street,” she said.

However, the largest change will be moving Food Truck Alley from Brock Street to the Tillsonburg Town Centre parking lot adjacent to CIBC.

“It was crammed in that area, and there wasn’t enough seating,” said Renaud, BIA executive director. “We took the criticism from the public and moved it.”

The plan is to have up to 16 food trucks in a circle, with seating for 200 people in the centre.

The mainstage activities at the south end of Broadway will include busker performers during the day and evening, as well as musical performers all day, with a headline country mu-

sic act in the evening. Renaud said the performer’s identity is a closely guarded secret and will be released in early May as part of a promotional campaign.

All of the favourite Broadway activities are returning, including more than 100 vendors, Young Entrepreneur Alley, bouncy castles, a petting zoo, and on-street patios.

Activities start Friday with the official ribbon cutting for the newly-renamed Tillson Family Parkette at Broadway and Oxford Street at 3 p.m., and opening ceremonies at the Station Arts Centre at 4 p.m. There will be a special musical performance at The Copper Mug and a movie on the lawn at Annandale House. Other Annandale House activities include carnival games, Lego turtle kits, turtles from Scales Nature Park from Peterborough, and wildlife conservation exhibits on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Another significant addition is My Broadcasting Corporation, the new owners of the Country 107.3 and Giant FM 101.3 Tillsonburg radio stations, joining the Town of Tillsonburg, Experience Ontario, TD Bank, Tim Hortons, Shaw’s Ice Cream, and Execulink as major sponsors of TurtleFest. Several other businesses have generously provided financial support and sponsorship of various activities. A full list of sponsors can be found on the TurtleFest.ca website.

Follow TurtleFest on the TurtleFest.ca website and on Facebook and Instagram.



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EDITORIAL

Saluting Tillsonburg's volunteers

April 19 to 25 is National Volunteer Week in Canada, the time to annually honour the many volunteers who make our communities a better place to live.

In the pages of today's Post, we tell the stories of a few volunteer groups in the town, but there are many more, ranging from large groups to individuals.

The main volunteer story in today's paper salutes the town's service clubs, those larger-profile groups that selflessly make many improvements around Tillsonburg. Many of these also support a national cause, such as vision, literacy, poverty, children's hospitals, and others.

Outside of the high-profile groups, there are countless other volunteers in town. Think of the many youth sports organizations that offer opportunities for the town's youth and adults to stay active. Not only are the coaching staff volunteers, but so too are the executive members who

keep these leagues running. An article in today's paper discusses the need for soccer coaches, but there is likely a need for coaches in all sports, as well as for executive members.

Tillsonburg's many churches have a variety of groups that help the community in many ways. The Knights of Columbus is a stellar example. Groups at both United Churches help the unhoused in town, the Anglican church provides meals for offshore workers, and Crosspoint tries to improve the lives of those in impoverished African countries. These are just a few examples of the many, many initiatives across multiple churches.

If you are a volunteer in town, this week is an opportunity to give yourself a pat on the back. If you aren't, use this week to look at the many opportunities to volunteer in Tillsonburg. There is something out there for everyone.

*Have something to say?
Submit your Letter to
the Editor here:
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Moon over Tillsonburg.

(LINDA SYS PHOTO)

Helping others drives dedication after trials and tribulation



**EVERYONE
HAS A
STORY
TO TELL**

ROBIN KRAFFT

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

When adversity strikes, it's natural to take time to grieve and regroup, but moving forward is sometimes easier when we have a sense of purpose.

Tillsonburg resident Ange Banks understands that process personally. She started out with an ideal childhood, growing up in Straffordville, the youngest of four.

"It was great," Banks said. "That's when you used to play outside until dark. Riding bikes, playing cops and robbers, hide and seek, marbles, hopscotch and skipping, and yes, we even drank from the garden hose. We weren't afraid of anything. Satur-

days, we'd weed the garden, cut the grass and whatever else dad told us to do. On Sundays, we usually had roast beef dinner at my grandparent's farm in Culloden."

The family moved to Courtland just before Ange started high school. She worked in tobacco and at the variety store. At 19, she moved to Tillsonburg, working at Fleck Manufacturing for \$6.25 an hour to start, on the factory floor.

She was back in Courtland helping her sister wrap the traditional pieces of fruit wedding cake for her guests when a friend called to invite her out to the Royal Hotel for last call. When two young men came in the back door, one of them caught her eye and he asked her to dance. His name was Bill.

"The following week he came to my sister's wedding reception," Banks said. "There wasn't a day, from that day on, that we didn't talk."

They were married in 1987, had two children together and had built a wonderful life when something changed. An x-ray revealed that Ange had a tumour. In 1999, she underwent brain surgery, and again in 2005. Soon there were more hurdles to

overcome. Bill became ill in the following years, and as his condition deteriorated, Ange took time off to care for him until he passed in 2014.

"I always had my husband by my side," Banks said. "He was my rock and I was his rock."

Ange became a caregiver again when her mother became ill. She retired from TD Bank, where she had worked for 18 years, to help take care of her. She passed in 2018.

While working through complex grief, Ange was asked by a previous co-worker to join Seniors in Food Crisis - Oxford County, a Facebook group.

"I didn't know what it was when I joined," Banks said. "I didn't know Jayna Hendren very well, but she had started the group to help seniors with food and other items. She realized how many seniors were struggling financially in Oxford County and how many were facing food insecurity. CPP and OAS doesn't stretch far enough."

Bringing her considerable communication and people skills to the group, volunteer Ange sought out donations and con-

tributions for the group's pantry, and she has been very successful. Grocery stores, farmers, and community gardeners continue to support the group.

"Jayna has taken over her husband's shop," Banks said. "There are freezers, fridges and shelves upon shelves. People reach out when they are in need. Between Jayna and her volunteers, they pack and deliver approximately 300 bags a week to seniors in need."

Ange was helping with deliveries and picking up donations too, until her third surgery in 2025, but she has continued her efforts to source donations.

"We're always looking for volunteers," Banks said, "but more importantly we want to make sure seniors know about us and don't go hungry"

The support that the group gives and receives is done primarily through social media and word of mouth. Ange has certainly been instrumental in spreading the word. Helping others who are struggling and in crisis is gratifying, but it has also satisfied a deep need for Ange and given her a renewed sense of purpose when she needed it most.

Till-Cable TV brought a new era for Tillsonburg viewers



**THE
STAGE
IS THE
WORLD**

LAUREL A. BEECHEY

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Remember the dark ages of television right here in Tillsonburg? When a television had only 13 channels and no remote? When it took forever to get the rabbit ears on top of the TV in just the right place to get a decent picture on the black and white television?

A new era started when a group of men discussed a new business venture to offer cable television to Tillsonburg in 1967. From the initial group of three men - Andy Balazs, Fred Berlet and Roy Beechey who formed Till-Cable TV - Roy Beechey would be president and oversee running the company. Peter Beechey and Colin Holmes were the technicians and Lucy Gaynor the secretary.

This was the latest technology of the time which required various types of aerials to capture the programming signals from the air, processing the signals in a headend, and then send a signal out to the subscribers. The headend was located just out of town on North Street East, north of 5 Points corners.

Everything had to be built from the sky down. After

signals were processed, they would then be sent electronically via cable wires out to the Town of Tillsonburg. Cables wires had to be strung up on the hydro poles or placed underground, and the electronic equipment was installed throughout the town.

Drop wires then went from the street into your home, then connected directly to your television. It was like magic! Over the years, local skilled labour did all the construction, maintenance and installations. This provided the Town of Tillsonburg with television programming, radio stations, and live local television programming from the Till Cable studio, Channel 5 on your dial!

The first studio and offices were in the former Scotts/Tillsonburg Dairy and PeeWee store building at 16 Raynes St., owned by the Beecheys, who lived above in an apartment.

Once up and running, Lucy Gayner performed the office work, backed up by Roy or his wife Kay. Peter would do system maintenance, repairs and installation; Everyone chipped in, and helped with programming, which Penny Esseltine and Peter hosted the live programming. The weekly Kinsman Bingo began in Aug 1971, with bingo cards purchased at local merchants. It was the big time with two \$50 games.

This property was expropriated by the town for the downtown mall in the late 1970s, so the company moved to the northeast corner of Tillson Avenue and Brock Street West. Now the home of McFarlan-Rowlands, LifeLabs and other businesses, it was also the home to the Tillsonburg News, and prior to that Reith's Bakery. Renovations were done for offices, a program room, and a large studio, which allowed a variety of programming. Lucy moved with the office.

Local fundraisers were live on your television from the studio. The Kiwanis Club ran a Radio Auction. Annandale House ran a TV auction. The Happy Seniors not only

performed their variety styled show, but also the equipment. Penny Esseltine put together summer programming of local interest. Annandale High School students also did programming. Local sporting events, church events, and parades, were all broadcast live over Till-Cable Channel 5. The channel was open to local groups to promote charitable and local events using a messaging board. Local hockey games, swim meets and special events about the town were broadcasted.

To keep up with the technology of the time, a 300-foot tower and satellite dishes were added, with updates to the infrastructure, for the addition and improvement of channels.

In 1981, Theatre Tillsonburg was starting up, without a home, performing in the Community Centre's Lion's Auditorium. Roy allowed the group to build, paint and store the flats, lights etc. in the back bays and rehearse in the studio when available.

Big changes started in 1983 with the advent of 'pay tv channels' where \$15.95 got you TSN, First Choice, Super, C-Channel, and more.

About this time, Till-Cable had 4,000 customers who were now receiving a multitude of channels of all genres, and Channel 5, which allowed everyone to keep up to date with news, events and happenings in Tillsonburg.

Alas, the 1990s saw the end of the locally owned cable TV system era, when Till-Cable was sold to Cablecasting, and management switched to operating out of St. Thomas. The dismantling of the small locally owned community cable systems began. In March of 1992, Cablecasting sold to Shaw Cable, then a couple of years later, Shaw sold to Rogers Cable. Each time the company was sold, various parts of it shut down. The studio and local programming were the last to close. Today all technical operations are run out of London.

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WEEK APRIL 19-25**

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TILLSONBURG COUNCIL BRIEFS

Council waives fee for Battle of Badges

Tillsonburg council waived arena rental fees for the annual Battle of Badges between firefighters and police.

Firefighter Tony Hietkamp spoke to council as a delegation and provided more details about the third annual event, planned for April 25 at 3 p.m.

"It is organized not only to foster camaraderie among emergency services, but to raise funds for a cause important to all of us," he said.

This year Parkwood Institute in London will be the recipient of funds raised from the event.

"This facility plays a vital role in rehabilitation, providing care for patients with significant physical and emotional challenges," he said, explaining many know someone who has been impacted by the health care received there.

Council approved waiving the ice fees for the game and funding the cost from the tax rate stabilization reserve.

Report to look into bylaw infraction

Council requested a report to investigate a bylaw infraction by a Tillsonburg resident.

Kristine Marshall of McGuire Crescent appeared before council as a delegation to explain the situation. Behind the property owned by her and her husband, Marshall, is a strip of marshy area with a storm-water management pond. They clean up three feet into the town property, which is allowed. However, a neighbour has called, complaining about the clean-up.

The latest issue was chicken wire her husband put around saplings growing in the area to protect from browsing by rabbits and deer. Then they received a registered letter stating that the chicken wire was in violation of the bylaw, that it had to be removed, and that they were being invoiced \$230 plus the cost of the registered mail.

VandenBussche requested the fee be waived "as it was the decision of the bylaw officer to undertake such an unreasonable and lengthy approach to the situation"

"The chicken wire certainly is no comparison to someone wrecking a fence, building, or other structure as per the bylaw, nor was it creating any destruction," she added, saying it was a waste of taxpayers' money.

With bylaw enforcement officer Cameron Cyr on the phone, Coun. Chris Rosehart wanted to confirm the department only responded to complaints. Cyr confirmed that was the case.

Coun. Chris Parker questioned if it was normal for the department to respond to one complaint, in this case raking leaves, and then issue an order for something else.

Cyr said there were multiple complaints in the past, along with a trespass order.

"If we are on site and observe other infractions, we will put that in the infrac-

tion order," he said.

Coun. Pete Luciani asked more about how far the chicken wire was from the property line.

Cyr said it was eight feet from the property line, and the saplings were planted in a straight line.

"The officer made the determination it's likely they were planted there," he explained.

"It sounds to me like this one neighbour is complaining frequently, and that's unfortunate, but the bylaw is the bylaw," said Coun. Bob Parsons. "Would there be an opportunity to look at this bylaw?"

In the end, Luciani made a motion for a staff report to look into this further, but said it wasn't up to council to negate any charges. The motion was carried.

Town looking at surplus for 2025

Preliminary indications are Tillsonburg will end 2025 with a surplus.

A report to council by Renato Pullia, Director of Finance/Treasurer, showed a preliminary surplus to be \$1.725 million. Some of this is already allocated to various reserves, but there should be \$795,834 left to distribute to the remaining reserves.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy asked if this will go to the tax rate stabilization reserve, which is currently underfunded. Pullia said council will be able to provide direction after the audited financial statements are completed later this year.

Gilvesy also asked why council's budget for 2025 was over budget by \$46,000 and was told the \$93,303 in contracted services was responsible. Further questioning revealed this was for integrated commissioner spending associated with an investigation launched by complaints from three councillors.

The mayor's challenge

During the informal part of Monday's meeting, Mayor Deb Gilvesy related how this week's Clean and Green Challenge came about after she suggested expanding the trail clean-up done last year.

Then, to "put my money where my mouth was," she picked up garbage next to the cemetery on Townline Road. She ended up with five bags of garbage, weighing 160 pounds.

"I'm putting out the challenge out to all the teams that registered to beat my 160 pounds of garbage," she said.

Cranberry Road construction

Cranberry Road is temporarily closed as part of the reconstruction of the road and sewers.

Pickleball court construction

Construction of three new pickleball courts was slated to start last week. It wasn't expected that there would be an impact on using the existing courts.

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Council gets lame duck education

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Tillsonburg council received a refresher course in the meaning and implications of what is unofficially known as the “lame duck period” at its last meeting.

Actually, a provision of the Ontario Municipal Act, the unofficial “lame duck” term refers to two possible scenarios where council must temporarily designate its authority to the CAO, and there are restrictions on spending.

Clerk Trisha McKibbin explained there are two possible lame duck periods – the first between when nominations close on Aug. 21 and election day, and the second between voting day and when the new council is sworn in on Nov. 15. The lame duck scenario comes into play in the first scenario if less than 75 per cent of

current council members are not running again, while the second possibility comes into play if less than 75 per cent of current council are re-elected.

The threshold for Tillsonburg council is five or less members. With Coun. Pete Luciani telling the Post last week he won't be running again, and Coun. Bob Parsons leaning that way, the odds are currently good the legislation will come into play.

The legislation restricts council during a lame duck period from the appointment or removal of any officer of the municipality, hiring or dismissal of any employee, making any expenditures exceeding \$50,000 outside of the previously-approved budget, and the disposition of any municipal property with a value exceeding \$50,000. McKibbin said if there are active property files anticipated to come to council during a lame duck period, council can provide direction prior to it starting.

McKibbin also provided an update on advance poll locations for institutions and retirement homes. These will be offered at Maple Manor Nursing Home, Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital, Woodingford Lodge, Tillsonburg Retirement Home, and Harvest Crossing Retirement Community as required by provisions in the Municipal Act. Previously, advanced polls were offered at other locations, but some of these will be eliminated this election due to low turnout, the availability of online and telephone voting and in-person options at the Voter Help Centre.

“We're finding as more seniors subdivisions and apartment buildings come on line it's harder to determine what should and shouldn't be,” McKibbin said. “What we are doing for the 2026 election is stick to the Municipal Elections Act and those areas that meet criteria.”

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Group donates quilts to cancer patients



(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Members of the Tillsonburg Victoria's Quilts recently gathered for a photo to showcase the quilts they created since a challenge began last September. The quilts are donated to cancer patients.

Since 1999, Victoria's Quilts has been providing quilts for cancer patients at no charge.

The local branch of Victoria's Quilts is in Woodstock, and the headquarters is in Ottawa. Eleven years ago, Carol Nant started a quilting group in Tillsonburg. Members meet at the local quilt shop, Cherished Pieces. Owners Cynthia and Bill Hildebrand donated a space to store the donated fabric. In the past 11 years, the group has made and donated over 1,500 quilts to people in the area.

"Every year, a committee within our

group presents a challenge for our quilters," Nant said. "This year, the challenge was to create variations of a log cabin pattern."

The challenge began in September 2025 and has now been completed. The quilts will now be donated to cancer patients.

The group has 30 active members who donate their time and talents.

Anyone who would like to request a free quilt for a cancer patient, fill out the form on the web site at <https://victoriasquiltscanada.com>

Council approves new 30-unit affordable building

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Tillsonburg council approved a zone change to make way for a 30-unit seniors' apartment building on Tillson Ave.

Located at 288 and 296 Tillson Ave., the development will be between Lindsay and Barker Streets in what was best known as a former parking lot for TDS Industries. The application is by the Tillsonburg Non-Profit Housing Corporation and will contain affordable units.

The property is currently zoned service

commercial and the application was to change it to medium density residential.

Recommending the zone change for the development planner Amy Hartley, said, "The development will serve as a transition between employment uses and lower density residential."

The only question from council was Mayor Deb Gilvesy asking about sight-lines with the building close to the street as turning left onto Tillson Ave can be tricky at times.

Hartley said she would look into it further.

Nominations for chamber awards extended

The nomination period for the Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce's annual Awards of Excellence has been extended to April 30.

Award categories are: Business Improvement Award, Community Service Award,

Employer of the Year Award, Entrepreneur of the Year Award, Environmental Sustainability Award, Positive Change Award (A Made in Tillsonburg Story).

For more information, visit the chamber's web site at tillsonburgchamber.ca



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WEEKEND QUIZ

by Jake Grant

1. What is the dot over the letter "i" called?
2. What is the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea?
3. Which country has won the most World Cups?
4. What pizza flavour was famously invented in Canada?
5. What was the original name of the search engine "Google"?
6. Where is the strongest human muscle located?
7. What is the only food that can never go bad?
8. What is the only mammal capable of true flight?
9. What was the first toy advertised on television?
10. True or false - The color orange is named after the fruit.

This week's answers are found on pg. 30



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TILLSONBURG COUNCIL BRIEFS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Town to look at parking standards

The number of parking spaces per residential unit may be increasing after Coun. Chris Parker brought forward a notice of motion calling on the clerk to bring forward a zoning amendment to increase the number of parking spaces per unit from 1.25 to 1.5.

“Over the past few months, we’ve had a number of zoning applications with reduced parking,” he said. “It creates a bigger problem on the road with on-street parking. It creates risks for pedestrians and reduces sight lines.”

Coun. Kelly Spencer, who seconded the

motion, said, “With merit, there seem to be lots of complaints about parking. At the same time, the safety of having so many cars having to park on the street, I look forward to seeing what comes back.”

Seasonal load restriction adjustment

The bylaw that provides load restrictions for heavy equipment on town roads will be amended. The change will give the Director of Operations and Development the authority to waive load restrictions on specific days to allow vehicles working on municipal capital projects to access reduced-load limit roads.

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Piecemakers Quilt Show returns to St. Marys this weekend

Stitching together tradition and creativity



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Local St. Marys quilters (from left) Wendy Anderson, Joan Robinson and Darlene Roger recently won National Awards at the 2025 Quilt Canada National Juried Show in Toronto. Their award-winning quilts will be on display at the 2026 Piecemakers Quilt Show, running April 23-25 at the Pyramid Recreation Centre in St. Marys

LYNNE GODKIN

Post Contributor

Quilting enthusiasts, art lovers, and community members alike should make plans for this weekend as the Huron Perth and Stonetowne Quilt Guilds present the highly anticipated Piecemakers Quilt Show, taking place over three days from April 23-25 at the Pyramid Recreation Centre in St. Marys.

Established in 1994, the show celebrates the timeless art of quilting while showcasing the innovation and passion of today's quiltmakers. The upcoming show promises to bring together a stunning array of traditional patterns, modern designs, and everything in between; with over 300 quilts and other quilted items crafted by our Quilt Guild members, ranging from hand-stitched heirlooms to contemporary textile art. There's something magical about seeing hundreds of hours of work stitched into a single quilt and each piece tells a story—about the maker, the fabric, and the tradition it carries forward. Visitors can expect to see a wide variety of styles, including patchwork, appliqué, paper piecing, plus national award-winning

quilts from the recent Canadian National Juried Show at Quilt Canada 2025 in Toronto. The Guild members are an accomplished group with exceptional talent.

In addition to the quilt exhibit, the show will include a Merchant's Mall, a Boutique, and a Luncheon/Tea Room. Come for the day and take some time to explore the beautiful town of St. Marys. In addition to the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, St. Marys boasts beautiful walking and hiking trails that take in the lovely rural landscape, as well as a vibrant main street where you might also spot some heirloom quilts in downtown store windows.

Whether you're a seasoned quilter, a beginner, or simply curious, this show is a wonderful opportunity to be inspired. Organizers hope people walk away not just with admiration, but with ideas and a deeper appreciation for the craft.

The event is being held Thursday, April 23 (10 am to 5 pm), Friday, April 24 (10 am to 5 pm), and Saturday, April 25 (10 am to 4 pm) at the Pyramid Recreation Centre at 317 James Street South, St. Marys. The cost is \$10 admission, with cash only accepted.

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Tillsonburg's independent service clubs offer personal development for volunteers as well as philanthropy

ROBIN KRAFFT

Post Contributor

Volunteer month is a great opportunity to get involved in giving back to the community.

There are numerous informal groups and church-affiliated associations that strive to improve the lives of others, but this overview will highlight historical, independent groups. Local service clubs offer the gratifying experience of philanthropy as well as camaraderie.

Kin Canada

Kin Canada, which includes Kinsmen, Kinettes and (mixed) Kin clubs was founded in Hamilton in 1920. It is the largest national service association in Canada, dedicated to serving individual community's greatest needs through service, leadership, fellowship and personal development.

The Tillsonburg Kinettes Club is best known for their enthusiasm as they host events such as Breakfast with Santa, the Mom Prom, and the Princess Ball, actively raising funds to address needs within the community. They're excited to announce a new event this year: Ladies Night Out.

"We raise money for local organizations," Kinettes President Carrie Lewis said, "including DASO, the Food Bank, school projects, and we participate in the Coldest Night of the Year, Period Promise/Tampon Tuesday and the Alzheimer's Walk."

Meetings include an hour of business followed by a social time, ranging from catered dinners to creating floral arrangements, all while supporting local businesses. Email tillsonburgkinettesgeneral@gmail.com or explore their FB or IG to see what this fun group is up to.

The Tillsonburg Kinsmen Club shares the same mandate, actively supporting local infrastructure, funding community projects, or bringing people together at events like their annual Easter Egg Hunt for kids and fundraising golf tournament.

"We focus our time and energy where it can make the biggest impact in Tillsonburg," Kinsmen President Andrew Burns said. "We're best known for rolling up our sleeves and leaving a lasting mark on the community. From major financial contributions around town to hands-on volunteer work, the Kinsmen have played a key role in building spaces and experiences that residents use and enjoy every day."

Their contributions to local indoor and outdoor arenas, Participark, the bandshell, the soccer park and the Rowing Club are prime examples of the Kinsmen's efforts.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Members of the Tillsonburg Kinsmen Club volunteered their expertise, labour and supplies to install a cement pad around the garage at the Tillsonburg Soccer Club. This is one of the club's many efforts to assist on initiatives in town.

"At Lake Lisgar, we've been part of shaping one of the town's most recognized spaces, helping lead fundraising for the Kinsmen bridge and maintaining and installing the fountain year after year," Burns said. "At our core, we're a group that blends fundraising, hands-on work, and community pride into everything we do."

This active, growing club meets once a month for planning projects and initiatives, but it's not all business. The social aspect of the group and the camaraderie is why members enjoy it so much. Contact tillsonburgkinsmen@gmail.com to learn more.

"We're always looking for community-minded individuals who want to give back, meet new people, and be part of something meaningful in Tillsonburg" Burns said. "No experience needed, just a willingness to get involved."

Lions Club

The Lions Club was formed in the U.S. in 1917. The first Canadian Lions Club was formed in 1920, and it soon became a worldwide organization. As the oldest service club in Tillsonburg, their mandate is to serve the community wherever there is a need, supporting organizations, projects and people through financial donations and volunteerism.

"The Tillsonburg Lions celebrated its 100th birthday last year and has been very

active and involved in community projects since its inception," Interim President David Pipher said. "Over the years, many projects have involved the Tillsonburg Lions, some of which are the skate park, pump track, Lions Auditorium, Lions Den, Lake Lisgar Water Park, Tillsonburg soccer facilities, to name a few. Lions also support many youth organizations, clubs, teams, community groups and the hospital."

Their biggest fundraiser, running for over 60 years, is their Monday Night Bingo. All proceeds go back into the community.

"Lions are often seen in the community at various events, and on social media helping others," Pipher said. "This is what we do, and we are proud to do it!"

The Lions meet twice a month, beginning with a meal and progressing on to club business. Special guest speakers often present community projects or represent organizations seeking support. Anyone interested in learning more or joining the club can attend three meetings to ensure they feel like it's a good fit. Contact tillsonburglionsa2@hotmail.com.

"We are always looking for new members to help us serve the community," Pipher said. "We have many outstanding members who have been part of the club for a number of years. These seasoned members have been instrumental in many of the community projects that Lions have been part of. We also have new members

who bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm into the club."

Rotary Club

The first Rotary Club in Canada was formed in 1912, marking the beginning of its spread globally, guided by the motto Service Above Self.

"The club focuses on creating positive, lasting change through service, integrity, fellowship, and leadership, while advancing goodwill, understanding, and peace," Club President Gloria Aykroyd said. "The Rotary Club of Tillsonburg is best known for being a longstanding, hands-on service organization that combines practical community support with meaningful fellowship."

Along with iconic local initiatives such as the Tillsonburg Clock Tower, the Rotary Club has contributed to our town for decades through their involvement in special projects, fundraising and volunteer service. The Rotary Wing at the Seniors Centre, the second ice pad at the community centre, fitness equipment on walking trails, environmental initiatives, Wings and Wheels, community gardens, food security, theatre, favorite fundraisers and extensive youth leadership programs, including the Youth Exchange Program, are only a few examples of their extensive efforts.

Meetings include social time, updates on projects, discussion, guest speakers and recognition of achievements. Residents are welcome to attend a welcoming, engaging and well-organized meeting as a guest and can contact Gloria Aykroyd at gloria.aykroyd@rotarytillsonburg.ca for more information.

Masons

The first Masonic Lodge in Canada was established in 1738 as part of an international fraternal organization. Larry Hicks, Secretary of Ashlar Lodge No. 701 here in Tillsonburg, explained that the Masons aren't like other clubs.

"We are not really a service club, we are a fraternity of like-minded men who strive to take good men and make them better," Hicks said. "We meet once a month and carry on the business of our Lodge. Masons are known for helping the community in any way possible."

The Masons lay a wreath at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Day and sometimes sponsor a little league team. A favorite annual tradition is their Christmas Potluck. Local membership includes outstanding members who have been dedicated Masons for over 50 years.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK APRIL 19-25

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How local club volunteers help the community

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

“We as Masons speak proudly and justifiably so, of the Great Teachings of our Fraternity,” Hicks said. “We make speeches about the Sublime and Eternal Truths contained within our Symbols. We sometimes speak of Freemasonry as a liberal education, which it is. It is not a religion. Masonry is more than a service club; it is something far more different and far more wonderful. It’s a lifestyle, a philosophy, a way of life that should be a part of ourselves each and every day.”

Optimist Club

The Optimist Club has been active in Canada since 1924, and there are now over 500 clubs across the country. Providing hope and maintaining a positive vision for self and others is a key component of the Optimist perspective.

“We utilize the tenets of the Optimist Creed,” said President Michelle Wegg. “We work for friendship among all people, aid and encourage the development of youth, and believe that the giving of one-

self in service to others will advance the well-being of humankind, community life and the world.”

The Tillsonburg Optimist Club is best known for the Santa Claus Parade, one of the largest and most well-attended parades in the area. They have hosted a variety of other events: the Zombie Adventure Run, free Chocolate Bar Bingo, and Dungeons and Dragons. The club sponsors soccer, baseball, ringette, Girl Guides and Scouts.

Monthly meetings for discussing upcoming initiatives include a social, family atmosphere, which has often included member’s children. Reach out to tillsonburgoptimistclub@gmail.com for more information about this group which happily accommodates those with families.

Royal Canadian Legion

The mandate of the Royal Canadian Legion, founded in 1925, is to serve veterans, their families, the communities they live in and our country, as well as promoting remembrance.

The Tillsonburg Legion Branch 153 provides a space for community groups and organizations to meet. The Tillsonburg Military History Club, Tillsonburg Firefighters Association, Tillsonburg Seniors Club, Community Living Association, Kiwanis Club, VON exercise classes, Varnavair Air Cadet Squadron and various fundraising groups all use the Legion on a regular basis. The large hall can be rented for events such as weddings, showers, anniversaries and celebrations of life, but the Legion does much more than provide space.

“The Legion sponsors teams for Tillsonburg Minor Soccer and Minor Baseball, Glendale Ringette, Youth Public Speaking and Literary Poster Contest for Tillsonburg Schools,” Administrator Laura Belous said. “We also donate to the Tillsonburg Food Bank and Christmas hampers by the Salvation Army.”

The Legion is non-profit, and their dedicated volunteers run sport leagues, prepare and serve meals and make up the executive.

“The Legion provides seniors with a place to meet, socialize, play games, watch sports, and join in with various programs designed specifically for seniors,” Belous said. “These programs include weekly darts, euchre and cribbage games, exercise classes, snooker and pool.”

Anyone can join the Legion as a member. Learn more by calling 519-842-5281.

The experience of belonging to a service club includes personal growth, social opportunities, and professional development. People coming together to have a positive impact on their community are simultaneously improving their skills in leadership, project management, and communication, but social activism and philanthropy are their own reward. While volunteering their time and expertise, these members know that they are helping others, whether providing necessities, planning family events that create cherished memories, contributing to structures and spaces that benefit all residents, or supporting a small group, their efforts make Tillsonburg a great place to live.

Meat-A-Kinsmen is group’s latest fundraiser

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Looking to fill your freezer for summer barbecues?

The Tillsonburg Kinsmen Club has one possible solution to purchase meat, and

other staples, while contributing back to the community. The group’s latest fundraiser Meat-A-Kinsmen lets community members purchase a variety of beef and chicken products, cheese, and sauces. And for those with a sweet tooth, Rachel’s Butter Tarts, are also available.

Orders can be placed online through the club’s website at tillsonburgkinsmen.com

Club member Geoff Cork said the concept was one idea that came out when fundraising ideas were being discussed. Members then voted what they wanted to go forward with.

“This was one of the top ideas, to sell products from local companies, but do it through online orders,” he said.

Those wishing to support the fundraiser can purchase bulk packs of steaks, burgers and other beef products sourced

from Norpac; Poultry Specialties’ chicken breasts, wings and other chicken products; Delmar Foods barbecue sauce; smoked brisket and other prepared meat products from JTK Meat Shoppe; Gunn’s Hill Cheese; and Rachel’s Butter Tarts. Using the online order form, supporters can pick and choose what they desire from the 30 products available.

The order cutoff deadline is April 30.

Proceeds from the fundraiser support Kinsmen projects, which include all minor sports, local town facilities and being a sponsor of Turtle Fest.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Kinsmen members, from the left, Lawrence Covey, Matthew Thompson, John Danbrook and Geoff Cork, display a variety of products available for purchase from the Meat-A-Kinsmen fundraiser.

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The rewarding experience of 50 years of service and friendships

ROBIN KRAFFT

Post Contributor

As Kinettes life member Mary Bartram celebrates 50 years of service, she reflects on the friends she has made and her involvement with the community over the years.

Mary joined the club in 1976, and at that time you could only be a Kinettes if your husband was a Kinsmen, although that restriction was eventually discarded. She estimates there were 25 members when she joined. Meetings were quite formal - you had to address the chair, there was a dress code (no jeans) and the group decided what fundraisers to do and where funds would be allocated.

Mary wanted to contribute, but the club was important for the women who joined for social reasons too.

"That was my night out," Bartram said. "I was home with the children, and our monthly meetings included a dinner, and I stayed to the very end. We were farmers, and it was a little intimidating. Most of the ladies were married to lawyers, doctors, dentists, and business owners, but I got to know everyone."

It was a community, and there were many social events for the collective Kin members; banquets, dances, and Christmas parties. When the Bartrams had an open house at the farm, the children were delighted to have the opportunity to hold piglets, but they recommended that mink coats not be worn in the barn.

United in friendship and their desire to help those in need, the early Kinettes planned events to raise money for worthy causes.

"One of our biggest fundraisers was the bridge and euchre tournament, held at the community centre," Bartram said. "We needed everyone at that event, all of the Kinettes. We sold tables of four, and it was always a full house. We made all of the desserts, and served them with coffee at halftime. It was held in the fall, and we made

wreaths, at least 200, as well as handcrafted items that people could purchase. We called it 'The Country Store' and it was all part of the fundraiser."

Mary also remembers making large batches of strawberry jam, which she poured into decorative wine glasses, sealed with whipped wax, for attendees to take home as a thank you. Another favorite fundraiser that started in the late '60s was an annual fashion show.

"The fashion show was already a tradition," Bartram said. "There were a lot of ladies stores in town, and we would ask them to supply outfits. The Kinettes and their children would be the models at the complex. It was the only big place to have anything."

Walking on the stage and down the steps, circulating among the tables, the inexperienced models may have been worried about tripping, but they managed to strut and twirl for a good cause.

Funds were dispersed throughout the community: \$2,400 for a children's corner at the new library, \$200 to Block Parents, \$3,000 over three years to the Multi-Service Centre, the purchase of fresh fruit and coolers for Meals on Wheels, books donated to the library, toys to the hospital, and a balance beam for the gymnastics club, to name just a few.

"The Kinettes donated to the fire department for the purchase of special decals for people's windows," Bartram said. "It was a little red heart that people would put on their bedroom windows so that firefighters could identify if there was a child or someone disabled in that room that would need help getting out. I've seen the odd red sticker around town still."

The Kinettes were also known for volunteering their time and helping hands. Before there was administrative staff, they regularly volunteered at the Blood Donor Clinic, signing people in and assisting them with filling out forms. They also operated a food booth at the Kin hockey

tournament.

In 1983, the Kinettes were made full partners of the association, but the Tillsonburg membership fell and in 1985, with only six members, they surrendered their charter. By 1990 there was sufficient interest, and with 23 members, they rechartered.

Mary was the only member to continue on from the previous charter, and she has always been the club historian, archiving what the Kinettes have done and where they volunteered or donated.

"I was the keeper of the history," Bartram said. "I'm the oldest member too. At every meeting I flip open my scrapbook and share something from the past. There were very large scrapbooks dating from 1946 and they got smaller over time. There were newspaper clippings, souvenirs from conventions, photos, flyers, invitations and thank-you cards. Now everything is on the computer."

The new Kinettes club needed to be more creative. Some of the fundraisers they used to do were now being done by schools. In 2008, Mary and two other Kinettes started the beloved Breakfast with Santa event.

"We brought our own grills," Bartram said. "I used to cook hundreds of sausages back in the day. I wouldn't want to eat a sausage for a while after that. Now I sit at the table where people come in. It's beautiful! District governors come, and they cannot believe the numbers and the response. We served over 700 meals last year."

In 2013, Mary was also part of a small committee who started the Princess Ball. They heard about it at a London meeting and thought it was a great idea.

"We hired four princesses to interact with the kids," Bartram said. "We had craft tables, manicures, colouring, dancing, singing, snacks and photos taken. All the kids came dressed up."

Mary and her husband Larry are both still active in their respective Kin clubs, and although some of the events and projects have changed, the goal of supporting others in the community has not.

"I loved doing something, helping them," Bartram said. "Now that I'm retired, I have lots of time. After the re-charter, I made new friendships. I love it. It's half giving back and half friendships. There are so many new girls and someone's always thinking of something!"

Kinettes President Carrie Lewis noted that Mary brings a wealth of wisdom and experience to the group.

"She serves as a reminder of what it truly means to be a Kinettes, grounding us in the values and traditions that have shaped who we are today," Lewis said. "Through her, we are reminded of the importance of carrying forward the practices and legacy of those who came before us. Being recognized as a life member is not simply a title—it is a reflection of deep commitment, time, and a piece of oneself given not only to a group of volunteers, but to the community as a whole."

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Maple Manor Family Council (left to right): Americo (chair), Brenda (co-chair), Hillary (treasurer), Nora Marie (secretary), & Ashley (Maple Manor Administrator).



Thanks to your generosity, the residents enjoyed a wonderful day filled with fun, connection, and lasting memories. Proceeds from the event also made it possible for the Family Council to purchase the beautiful bench. Your support helps create meaningful experiences for our residents and truly makes a difference in their lives.

Thank you for being part of something so special

Ontario RCMP dismantles synthetic drug lab and seizes nearly \$300,000 worth of controlled substances

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Federal Policing – Central Region, have successfully dismantled an active synthetic drug lab in Norwich and charged an individual from Delhi, with offences under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

The investigation was initiated in November 2025, after the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) reported suspicious importations made by Kenneth Camacho and his business, Cam Valley Farms.

It is alleged that since the summer of 2024, Mr. Camacho has imported more than 1,500 kg of an unregulated chemical that could be used to make GHB, which

is known as a date rape drug, and several large pieces of laboratory equipment consistent with its production. Working in collaboration with CBSA, the RCMP Federal Policing – Central Region Kitchener Detachment launched an investigation into Camacho and Cam Valley Farms on the suspicion of manufacturing GHB. The results of that investigation led the RCMP to uncover a large, well organized illicit drug lab at an address outside of Norwich.

On January 24, search warrants were executed, leading to the seizure of \$300,000 worth of suspected GHB, 39 kg of controlled precursors, lab equipment, chemical glassware, and approximately 1,000

kg of assorted chemicals, which would be used to produce up to \$9 million dollars of controlled substances. A significant amount of hazardous waste was also removed from the site.

As a result of the investigation, Kenneth Augustine Camacho, 41, of Delhi was arrested and charged with the following offences:

- Production of a controlled substance contrary to section 7(1) of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, for unlawfully producing Schedule I substance 4 hydroxybutanoic acid (GHB) and its salts.
- Possession of chemicals and equip-

ment for the purpose of producing a controlled substance contrary to section 7.1(1) of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

- Possession of a controlled substance for the purpose of trafficking contrary to section 5(2) of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, involving Schedule I substance 4 hydroxybutanoic acid (GHB) and its salts.

The RCMP would like to thank the CBSA, the Ontario Provincial Police, the Norwich Fire and Emergency Services, the Ontario Fire Marshal, and Health Canada for their collaboration and contributions to this investigation.

Mayor highlights key initiatives during annual chamber address

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Budgets, bridges, buildings, and the future were all highlighted in the mayor's address at the annual Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce mayor's luncheon.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy touched on the town's budget, the new town hall, the future of Tillsonburg Hydro, and the Kinsmen bridge during her speech on April 15.

Starting with the budget process, which was conducted in a different format due to the province's Strong Mayor's legislation, Gilvesy said she began by reaching out to council to determine the priorities.

"My focus throughout this process was on sustainability, affordability for our residents, and a disciplined approach that prioritized needs over wants," she said. "A key objective was to ensure the town continues maintaining and repairing our existing assets."

The town's budget increase was 1.8 per cent, but a provincial court-mandated retroactive pay adjustment for policing added an additional 1.84 per cent.

Priorities for 2026 are: maintaining and renewing critical infrastructure, supporting safe and reliable frontline services, planning growth in a measured, sustainable way, leveraging external funding and partnerships whenever possible, and building the internal systems, people, and processes needed to deliver modern, effective municipal services.

Health care is not a municipal responsibility, but the town assists where it can. Money was allocated for assisting with physician and nurse practitioner recruitment. Hopes are still to establish a permanent nurse practitioner clinic, an effort headed up by the Ingersoll Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic.

"We have met with the minister at multiple conferences," Gilvesy said of efforts to bring the clinic to fruition. "It's been a long, long road, and we're hopeful we will hear something positive soon."

In the coming year, the clerk's department

will do a review of the town's committees.

"We do have a lot of official committees," the mayor said. "Any official meeting needs a clerk there, so it's a lot."

The potential merger between Tillsonburg Hydro and ERTH is under discussion.

"A decision is forthcoming from council in the near future," she said.

Talking about the fire department and fire communications, Gilvesy said an update to the 9-1-1 dispatch system was completed to bring it up to date. Investments continue in equipment upgrades, and staffing at the hall has been adjusted. She thanked the employers of the volunteer firefighters for their flexibility.

"We wouldn't be able to continue with the model we use without the dedication of the employers who employ our firefighters."

Gilvesy talked about the new town hall project, which is underway.

"Town hall projects are never popular – it doesn't matter what council or when," she said.

After relocating from the mall, the town rented two buildings on Brock Street as an interim measure. Part of the staff from one building has already moved to the Customer Service Centre, and the remainder will move as the \$6-million renovation to the Customer Service Centre proceeds. It will be funded through the sale of assets, savings from rent, and some planned debt.

"Most importantly, there is zero impact to taxes," Gilvesy said. "This will not make your taxes go up."

The mayor talked about marketing and development, including a joint effort by the town, BIA, and chamber of commerce to apply to HGTV's Home Town Take Over.

While residential building has slowed, the mayor was hopeful a recent announcement suspending HST on the sale of new homes would help. On the commercial front, Gilvesy said the addition of the plaza on north Broadway was needed.

"It's a welcome addition because commercial space is limited," she said. "This should be celebrated because you go to oth-

er towns, and it's not the case. Tillsonburg is this unique place where everything is full downtown."

The BIA was also thanked for keeping the downtown spotless.

The last two years being record-breaking years for industrial construction, were bright spots. Gilvesy explained that residential growth puts more pressure on residential taxes, but industry pays at a higher rate and helps offset those costs.

"It contributes not only taxes, but it creates jobs," she said, while also mentioning that industries give back by sponsoring free skates and swims.

East Elgin Concrete, Marwood International, Legend Metal, Schep's Bakeries, Soprema and Systemair were mentioned as big industrial investors. Armtec recently located to Tillsonburg because of the airport.

"Everyone in Ontario is competing for these businesses," Gilvesy said. "To get them here, land them here, is important."

Legends Metals is expanding with a new 58,800 square-foot facility which will incorporate fibre optic laser tube cutting. Schep's Bakeries' new 192,000-square-foot facility will create 50 jobs, with future growth up to 200. Soprema's 249,822-square-foot facility, which is under construction, will create up to 62 jobs. Systemair recently expanded to increase capacity for large air-handling units.

The town is continuing to streamline its development process, and the mayor asked the crowd for feedback on how it can be improved.

PeopleCare's new facility on Maple Lane will employ up to 250 people when fully operational. It will have 379 senior units, 160 long-term care rooms, 150 retirement apartments, and 69 seniors' apartments.

Harvestview, Station View, and 31 Earle Street were also mentioned as new residential developments.

With the Kinsmen Bridge getting closer to opening, the mayor talked about the delay, saying it took longer to assemble the components off site and there were issues



Mayor Deb Gilvesy. (JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

with the existing stone piers, which were used.

"Once they pulled the components off, they realized they weren't in as good shape as they thought they were, and they weren't exactly plumb," she recounted, saying it will still be under budget.

The approach to the bridge from Veteran's Memorial Walkway will be redesigned to incorporate one of the historic bridge pieces.

"It wasn't a very appealing entrance," Gilvesy said. "We are hoping to honour our veterans and have a more appealing entrance."

Work will also continue on Lake Lisgar in 2026, with money set aside for sediment removal.

"We need to remedy that before we lose a portion of the lake," Gilvesy said.

Chamber president Lindsay Tribble was impressed by the size of the crowd at the event and by the information the mayor shared.

"It went well, and the mayor gave us a lot of information on the budget and how the town is following through," she said. "It's a huge testament to her in the mayor role and how she is connected to the community."

Tillsonburg Garden Gate celebrates big anniversaries



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Former owners Don and Wayne Newman joined the current owners of Garden Gate for a celebration of 15 years since the Fenns have owned the business and 100 years since the Newmans' father started the business. Left to right are: Don Newman, Wayne Newman, Matthew Fenn, Johnny Fenn, Thea Fenn, Linda Fenn, and Linda Newman.

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Tillsonburg Garden Gate celebrated a double anniversary on April 14.

The present owners, Linda and Matthew Fenn, have owned the business for 15 years. However, the original business on the site, Newman Flowers, marks its 100th anniversary this year.

Originally, Newman Flowers closed in 2010. At the time, the Fenns were operating a greenhouse on Highway 3 near Springer Hill.

"When Newman's closed, our business jumped, and we asked ourselves,

"Why?," Matthew recounted, explaining they realized it was the closure of the long-time Tillsonburg business. "We jumped through a lot of hoops, talked to a lot of people, and moved here."

Daughter Thea, 22, and son Johnny, 14, are a big part of the operation. Thea graduated from business marketing and is now charged with marketing and the tree and shrub department.

Since then, several renovations have taken place, including renovations to the main building, replacing the original glass greenhouses with poly, purchasing Twigs, a downtown floral business, and bringing floral designer Mel Fardella and her staff



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Linda and Don Newman look at a display of memorabilia recounting a century of floral businesses in Tillsonburg, along with the current owner, Linda Fenn, center.

member on board. Along the way, Garden Gate won the Tillsonburg Chamber of Commerce Business Improvement Award in 2022.

The busy season starts long before most people are thinking about gardening, with the starting of 40,000 four-inch annuals from cuttings. Garden Gate also grows its own hanging baskets and garden mums for the fall. Vegetables are brought in from a grower in Holland Marsh.

Matthew pointed to the display of memorabilia and the story of how the business started in 1926. At the time, founder Bert Newman wanted to buy flowers for his girlfriend.

"He couldn't find flowers to give his girlfriend, so he brought them in by train from Brantford," Matthew said. "Other men wanted to do the same, he brought in more, and the rest is history."

After the business started in 1926, it moved to its present location in the 1930s.

On hand for the birthday celebration were former owners Don and Wayne Newman.

"They made a lot of improvements here, and did a really good job," Don said.

Wayne agreed it looked good.

"Something I would have done years ago, but I was too old to do it," Wayne joked.

Replica Spitfire planned for airport memorial garden

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

A replica full-size Spitfire will be the centerpiece of a memorial garden planned for Tillsonburg Airport if everything comes together.

The plane was donated to the Canadian Harvard Aircraft Association (CHAA) by Ray Whittemore, the owner of K-W Surplus.

John Britton of CHAA explained the full-scale replica is made of fiberglass and steel.

"After the war, they were putting Spitfires and Hurricanes on poles outside of outfields to honour veterans," he said, adding as the desire to restore the planes increased there was a move to take the actual planes down for restoration and replace them with replicas.

Replicas of a Spitfire and Hurricane were bound for Norway when something fell through. Whittemore purchased both from Britain, and brought them to Ontario. The Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum wanted the replicas. Whittemore gave them the Hurricane but put the Spitfire on the roof of K-W Surplus. Now he is retiring and sold the business so is donating the Spitfire to CHAA, which he is a member of.

The plane was removed from the roof of K-W Surplus on Monday, wings removed and trans-



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Tillsonburg artist Stella Jurgen has provided an artist's rendition of what the memorial garden at the Tillsonburg Airport will look like when it is completed.

ported to Tillsonburg. Plans are to put it on a pedestal in a memorial garden at the airport.

Britton said one detail to be worked out is to get town council's endorsement of the plan. The Airport Advisory Committee, which he is a member of, is all for it, but council hasn't been approached yet.

The Spitfire was an integral part of the Allies defence and the Battle of Britain. It also has a historical connection to the Harvards.

"You trained on a Harvard with the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, then you

went to England and you were put in a Spitfire," Britton said. "Once you flew the Harvard, you could fly a Spitfire, Hurricane and Mustang."

The memorial garden will pay tribute to the Canadian Armed Forces, the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), the Coast Guard, Merchant Marines and the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. It will also honour two past presidents of CHAA: former Second World War Royal Canadian Air Force Flight Lieutenant Charley Fox, a highly decorated Spitfire

pilot who is credited with wounding German military commander Field Marshal Erwin Rommel in his staff car prior to D Day; as well as Canadian Astronaut Bjarni Tryggvason who was president at the time of his sudden passing.

After arriving at Tillsonburg airport, the Spitfire replica will be repaired and then repainted to resemble the colours flown by Fox during the war.

The memorial will pay heed to Tillsonburg Regional Airport's initial role as part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. There will be benches donated by the families of CHAA's three founding fathers: Bob Hewitt, Norm Beckham and Len Fallowfield. Proposed are engraved bricks that can be purchased by donors and installed on the base.

The Canadian Harvard Aircraft Association is fundraising to recoup expenses of the removal and transport of the model aircraft, its repair and repainting, plus the design and creation of the memorial garden, including the pole mount structure and installation of the aircraft atop it.

Britton said organizers have talked to officials with the City of Windsor, which has a Spitfire mounted on pole, for advice. The Canadian Military History Club in Tillsonburg has provided support for the project.

SPORTS

Langton's Brenner Lammens makes successful transition to 'The O'

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

Equilibrium has been restored in the Lammens household.

Two years ago, Terry Lammens' team won their division of the Langton Six-Pack hockey tournament, and he chirped son Brenner's lack of a title for the next 12 months.

Last year, Brenner's team won and it was time for payback.

Wife and mother Saira is thrilled to report that this April, both Lammens men finished with Six-Pack wins, Terry in the 45-plus bracket, Brenner in the carded division.

"This is nice this year," she laughed. "Now we don't have to listen to either one of them."

Both played pivotal roles in their respective victory, Brenner on a crucial two-on-one double-overtime penalty kill, culminated by a quartet of tremendous saves from goalie Kobe Nadalin. Nadalin's heroics gave Brenner the chance to retrieve his stick from the corner and poke the puck ahead to teammate Myles Dunn, emerging from the penalty box to score the game winner.

If there was a differentiator, it was the fact Terry had netted a hat-trick in his final, part of a five-goal effort.

"We won't talk about that," Brenner laughed, 'grudgingly' conceding 'props.' "Give him some credit - he's definitely helped me in my life."

There was also of course, the 'small' matter of Brenner's preparation for the Six-Pack being his first season in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) with the Sarnia Sting. Being chosen fourth overall by the Sting in the 2025 OHL Priority Selection indicates hockey requires a businesslike approach for the 16-year-old Langton-area resident. However, his joy at Six-Pack competition and bragging rights also shows the sport still remains fun.

"I do it because I love it."

The transition from AAA minor hockey to 'The O' is a huge one, a player like Lammens stepping up to compete against 20-year-old veterans, live, board and attend school away from home and be thrust into the spotlight all at a time they aren't old enough to get their driver's licence.

"Everything is on a bigger stage," said Lammens, who instead of 200 fans in U15 found himself playing in front of 8,000 inside London's Canada Life Place, his

'time and space' limited compared to minor hockey. "Speed is the biggest thing for sure. Speed and size, a lot bigger players. "They hit you and you feel it."

His first season could be divided into two portions. In the opening months, he found limited ice time, struggling to find his game in two to five minutes per outing. But with a coaching change initiated mid-November and completed with the hiring of Mathieu Turcotte Nov. 24, Lammens came alive.

"Kind of thrived under him a bit," he said of a nine goals, nine assists - and 95 penalty minutes - stat line across 59 games. "The nine and nine part came mostly in the second half.

"That was definitely a turning point in the year for me," he added later. "Just being able to go play, get on the ice and get into games again."

It was a season of firsts for Lammens, his inaugural assist coming early, catching the puck off the glass, faking a pass to the point before 'saucering' beautifully to Jack Van Volsen in the middle. Lammens' first goal came in the first shift of his sixth game, against Flint, transitioning to offence after stopping a three-on-one at the end of the power play. Following a successful battle for possession in the corner he went to the net, his arrival coinciding with that of the puck.

"It went right off my pants," said Lammens, who batted it into the net out of the air. "Anything is a goal."

Technically, his first fight - as his 95-minute penalty total attests, the 6'1" 191-pound rookie didn't change the physically-aggressive aspect of his game despite playing against much-older opposition - came after levelling an opponent near mid-ice with a hard body check. Lammens never got his gloves off after a teammate objected by grabbing him, the two going to the ice. What he calls his first 'real fight' came near centre ice in London after delivering a hip check to a member of the Knights. London's Max Crete dropped his gloves and came toward Lammens.

"I was like, OK," said Brenner of the spirited tilt which ensued.

A Sting roster with 13 rookies listed on its lineup finished with a 21-31-8-1 record in regular season action, out of the playoffs. It was very much a split experience for Lammens, rating his 20 games before the coaching change as a 'one or two out of ten', the balance of the season 'eight.'

"It went pretty well," he said, noting



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Brenner Lammens (third from left, back row) and his Langton Six-Pack Outliers carded division champion teammates.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Terry Lammens (fifth from left, back row), along with his Langton Six-Pack championship teammates.

how three or four games under Turcotte before the Christmas break gave him a chance to reset for a fresh start, carrying positive momentum forward. "I was like I'm playing now.

"I kind of settled in and felt part of the team."

There definitely was an adjustment to the speed, pace and 'size' of the game, one Lammens has acclimatized to. He still feels there is much to learn.

"But on an upwards trajectory, I guess."

Currently finishing out his school year, Lammens looks forward to playing summer volleyball, baseball and golf with friends, continuing to work out and get on

the ice regularly while eyeing the possibility of playing with Canada's U18 squad at the Hlinka Gretzky Cup.

"That would be pretty cool to go to."

Looking ahead towards next season with the Sting, Lammens has gained considerable knowledge and experience about what it will take to continue to progress. There is no easy route he emphasized, just requirement for the self-confidence to believe in oneself, take a day-by-day approach to improvement and be prepared for what comes.

"Everything you can control, make sure you do that to the best of your abilities," he concluded.

Correction

The article on the Battle of the Badges in last week's Post incorrectly identified the date of the event as April 26. It should have been Saturday, April 25. The game starts at 3 p.m.

Tillsonburg Post is available for free in print and online: tillsonburgpost.com

Vyas advances to WOSSAA badminton boys singles tournament

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

Tillsonburg Gemini Om Vyas was pleased with his own performance amongst 'the best of the best of the best' Thames Valley Regional Athletics Association (TVRA) Southeast senior boys' singles badminton players.

"I'm happy I'm going to WOSSAA (Western Ontario Secondary Schools Athletics Association)," he said following a solid third-place finish in the TVRA Southeast tournament Thursday, April 16 at Woodstock Huron Park.

Vyas was the lone Gemini representative at the event, what coach Lou-

ie Tzavelas laughingly agreed was a 'small but mighty' contingent.

"That would be a good way to describe us," said the coach, like Vyas preferring to see more Gemini advance to TVRA Southeast, but happy with a numerically-strong turnout for both practice and the TVRA South tournament this year. "And a fantastic group of kids."

Vyas is an intelligent player says Tzavelas, using his head during competition along with his racquet arm and legs.

"Very cerebral, able to read the game and adjust."

Tillsonburg competed at the TVRA South qualifier tournament, the lone Oxford school to do so in an effort to balance numbers and opportunity to advance. Vyas qualified to represent Tillsonburg at TVRA Southeast, opening with victories guaranteeing his place at WOSSAA, before running into eventual champion Tyler Michiels from Lord Dorchester. Vyas' first loss put him up against Navtej Bedi from the host school, an opponent whose still badminton waters ran deep.

"Very calm," credited Vyas of an opponent he - and others - found difficult to read. "I would hit a shot, but he's there with a better shot. Hit a drop -

he's there - a smash, he's there.

"And a couple of unforced errors."

Exiting the draw in third place (Bedi would lose to Michiels in the final), Vyas was pleased with his performance amongst the top three players, close games which could have gone either way. Each had improved Vyas believed in a competitive and yet positive environment in which post-match discussion was shared around what each had done well, what each could do better in the future.

"There's nothing hostile," said Vyas. "Everyone was real, real nice."

He began playing badminton in Thompson, Manitoba, a community located eight hours north of Winnipeg. A pair of former semi-professional coaches fostered a program including a pair of teammates eventually competing at provincials. Vyas transferred to Glendale last year during Grade 11 in conjunction with his family's purchase of a convenience store in Otterville, joining a Gemini team he was able to practice far more with this season. He is looking forward to putting what he learned at TVRA Southeast into play at WOSSAA, fully realizing it's another elevated level of competition.

"I'm just going to try my best," he concluded.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Om Vyas represented Tillsonburg Gemini at the TVRA Southeast badminton championships, capturing third place in a highly-competitive boys singles division, along with a WOSSAA berth.

TVRA VARSITY GIRLS RUGBY	
TUESDAY, APRIL 14	
GEMINI	7
WOODSTOCK	13

TVRA VARSITY BASEBALL	
THURSDAY, APRIL 16	
GEMINI	15
LONDON CLARKE ROAD	0

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SKATING: DANCING WITH THE STARS ON ICE

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTOS)



The CanSkate4-6 dressed the part as they performed to Love and Marriage.



Jazmine Desrochers and Kieran Thrasher, who finished with a silver medal in Junior Worlds for Pairs, wowed the crowd with their performance.



This pair of skaters executed this move perfectly to Work Song.



The closing number of the second half kept the crowd watching as the skaters strutted some of their best, including this lift.



The Dancing with the Stars theme was repeated throughout the number with the judges and announcer eliminating pairs.



The annual number with the parents lacing up their skates is always a crowd favourite.



Fast Track and Star 1 grooved away to the number Sway.



Performing to the number Samba, Star 4 and up performers took full advantage of the stage, which was one of the props.



The bubbles were a big attraction for CanSkate 1-3 Girls as they finished their number after crossing under the arms of their program assistants.



Natalie Ferguson and Gracelyn Markowski presented their version of Oh Pretty Woman.



Claire McCutchen and Milla Leighfield were the opposite of the song Lose Control they performed to with complete control.



CanSkate 1-3 boys put their country on as they did their number to Darius Rucker's Wagon Wheel.



Star 2 and 3 completed a variety of moves during their presentation.



Ayleigh DeBrabander and Natalie Ferguson worked well together in this number.



Ayleigh DeBrabander successfully completes a jump in her routine.



Mackenzie Hutchinson performs this catch-foot maneuver during her presentation.

RIDDLES

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The more you take, the more you leave behind.
What am I?
Footsteps

Grandpa went for a walk, and it started raining. He forgot to bring an umbrella and didn't have a hat. When he got home, his clothes were soaking wet, but not a hair on his head was wet. How was this possible?
Grandpa is bald.

What comes once in a minute, twice in a moment, but never in a thousand years?
The letter "M"

I speak without a mouth and hear without ears. I have nobody, but I come alive with the wind. What am I?
An echo

What is full of holes but still holds water?
A sponge

What has a neck but no head?
A bottle

What has keys but can't open locks?
A keyboard

SUDOKU

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Solutions on Page 30

Level: Beginner

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Nominate your pet to be Pet of the Week by emailing info@tillsonburgpost.com

WORD SEARCH

VOLUNTEER WEEK

J	M	X	I	K	I	N	D	N	E	S	S	K	G	C	L	D	P	Y	G
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- VOLUNTEER
- COMMUNITY
- HELPING
- KINDNESS
- SUPPORT
- CARING
- SERVICE
- DONATION
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- OUTREACH
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- NEIGHBOR
- CHARITY
- SHARING
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Oxford County steps up to raise \$20,000 for Big Brothers, Big Sisters

The generosity of Oxford County residents raised \$20,000 in 20 days to help create 20 new mentoring matches at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oxford County.

BBBS Oxford's 20 In 20 For 20 campaign was focused on supporting children and youth on the waitlist, raising \$20,000 to assist in creating new mentoring matches for twenty mentees. From March 1-20, the campaign encouraged 1,000 people in Oxford County to donate \$20 each, less than 1 per cent of the population, to help BBBS reach the goal.

Right now, BBBS Oxford has over 145 young people waiting for a mentor. Even though we successfully created 123 one-to-one matches in 2025, the enrollment applications for children and youth needing our services continues to increase. The funds raised through this campaign will now allow us to recruit and prepare more volunteers, so we can meet the rising need with safe, supported matches.

"Oxford County really showed up," said Executive Director Kristen Ralph. "This campaign proved what's possible when a community comes together, small gifts that felt doable for people added up to something powerful for kids. With more than 145 young people currently waiting for a mentor, reaching this \$20,000 goal means we can take real

steps forward and start 20 new matches for youth who have been waiting for that steady, caring connection."

Through the generosity of donors, and a boost from TD who matched all donations dollar-for-dollar up to \$5,000 to get the momentum started, the \$20,000 goal was achieved on the final day of our campaign.

"We're incredibly grateful to TD for matching donations up to \$5,000, that early momentum helped carry this campaign to the finish line. Making mentorship safe and successful takes real behind-the-scenes work, and it's not inexpensive, but that cost is never passed on to families. These funds help us recruit volunteers, screen and train mentors carefully, and provide ongoing match support so every relationship is safe, strong, and built to last."

The funds raised through this campaign directly support the initiatives to recruit volunteers and the process to create thoughtful matches through screening and training for mentors and mentees. Our professionally educated and trained Service Delivery Caseworkers provide ongoing support so these relationships are safe, strong, and lasting.

To learn more about the programs and volunteer mentoring opportunities in offered through BBBS Oxford, visit <https://oxford.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/volunteer/>

Coaches needed to help with minor soccer

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Tillsonburg Minor Soccer Club (TMSC) is seeking volunteers to help with coaching.

Jennifer Bakker, head of operations for house league, said coaches are needed in the younger groups – U-4, U-5, and U-6.

"I think it's easier because the kids want to play pre-school games," she said. "They want to play sharks and minnows and red light, green light."

Although the league has received a strong response from parents volunteering to coach and assist, it needs more than 120 people for these roles, which is a significant challenge. To help those who are coaching, practice plans have been prepared.

"We've come up with weekly schedules with what to teach the players," Bakker said. "It makes it way easier. You can print out week one, it has practice plans, and what you can expect."

The plans are flexible to accommodate skill levels from beginners to more advanced players.

Bakker, herself, is proof that parents can learn to coach. She didn't play soccer as a youth, but learned all about the game from a coach's standpoint when she started in the position 23 years ago.

Bakker is also impressed with the new moms and tots division aimed at 18-month-olds to two-year-olds.

"It's been really well received," she said.

Asked what drove the start of having players so young, Bakker recounted, "When I was coaching U-4, there were so many standing and waiting for their siblings, and they were getting involved." She pointed to her granddaughter and noted she was more involved than her older sibling.

"It's mainly the socialization, getting them out with a ball, maybe kicking a ball and making some friends," she said of the league.

There is a rotation of stations for the 30-minute sessions with different activities at each.

Coaching isn't just open to parents. Grandparents can coach two, as can older siblings, who have the added bonus of earning high school volunteer hours.

Tillsonburg Football Club (TFC) is the competitive portion of TMSC. Although positions are covered this year, organizers are also always looking for coaches. TMSC President Frank Deutsch explained U-8 boys and U-8 girls' teams are added each year, which means two coaches and two assistant coaches need to be added annually.

Being a TFC coach requires taking courses, which the club reimburses for after successful completion.

"Coaching sports offers profound rewards, primarily centered on mentoring and developing youth, building confidence, fostering personal growth, and building a sense of community," Deuch said.

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SWOX councillor passes away

LEE GRIFFI

Post Contributor

Flags across South-West Oxford have been lowered following the passing of Valerie Durston, a long-serving, dedicated councillor.

"Valerie will be remembered for her kindness, compassion, and quiet dedication to helping others. Through her work in social services and as Ward 3 councillor, she made a meaningful impact on many lives and on our community. Our thoughts are with her family, friends, and colleagues during this difficult time. She will be greatly missed," said a statement from the township.

Durston represented the Salford area and was chair of the township's Engage and Inform Committee and served on the

Salford Community Hall Board, Hilltop Park Mount Elgin, the Environment and Energy Innovation Committee, and the Tillsonburg Regional Airport Advisory Committee. She was known as a community-focused, committee-heavy councillor, not just someone who attended meetings.

She was also the area director for Toastmasters for the Woodstock, Tillsonburg, and St. Thomas areas and spent most of her career as a developmental service worker and a criminal justice worker.

"Valerie was always wanting the best for everyone and cared very much about all people in her ward and across the township. She was always willing to volunteer for any extra council work and for community service. Her commitment to our community and the council will be very much missed," said outgoing Mayor David Mayberry.

"She was always willing to volunteer and share her experiences with others. She was committed to her family, church and community and demonstrated that daily. Her positive encouragement will be missed by council and particularly myself. I am grateful to have had her as a colleague and friend," he added.

"I believe Valerie was one of the most caring individuals I have known. She will be missed," added councillor Jim Pickard.

Tillsonburg Mayor Deb Gilvesy also provided a statement following Durston's passing.

"My sincere condolences to Valerie's family and to the Township of South-west Oxford. Sending prayers and our deepest sympathies from the Town of Tillsonburg."

Durston recently said she would not be running for a third term on council.

With notes from Debbie Kasman

Oxford County residents asked to apply for election audit committee

LEE GRIFFI

Post Contributor

The municipalities of Oxford County (Blandford-Blenheim, East Zorra-Tavistock, Ingersoll, Norwich, Southwest Oxford, Tillsonburg, Woodstock, and Zorra) are looking for a few good people.

A press release from the municipality said "experienced professionals will be considered for appointment to the 2026 - 2030 Joint Compliance Audit Committee."

Compliance Audit Committees are required by the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, to consider applications from electors requesting audits of candidates' and registered third-party advertisers' campaign finances.

While it may not sound very exciting, the committee is responsible for reviewing applications to see if an audit request should be granted. If it is, an auditor will be appointed to determine if legal proceedings are required.

Committee members must be able to understand and apply the election campaign finance provisions of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, and should be considered impartial in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Preferred qualifications include a demonstrated knowledge and understanding of municipal elections, including campaign finance rules.

"Analytical and decision-making skills, experience working as part of a committee or task force, and excellent oral and written communication skills are also key requirements," according to Blandford-Blenheim Clerk Sarah Matheson, who is leading the process.

"Preference will be given to candidates who possess applicable experience in accounting, auditing law, election administration,

public administration and academic studies in related fields," she added.

Each Oxford municipality will appoint the same Compliance Audit Committee. The Clerks pool their resources, with one municipality spearheading the process, but each having a say.

Successful applicants will be appointed for the term of the next council and will be remunerated at an established per diem rate, plus mileage.

"The Clerks are currently working on the Terms of Reference for the committee, including remuneration. Last term, there was a per diem plus mileage and training. The 2022-2026 per diem is \$150.00, but is under review," explained Matheson.

The committee must include between three and seven members. The clerks will determine the final number after reviewing appli-

cations and considering any members who choose to return.

"Members of council, employees or officers of the municipality or local board, any persons who are registered third parties in the municipality in the election for which the committee is established or any persons who are candidates in the election for which the committee is established, are not eligible for appointment," she explained.

The committee has a four-year term, as it may be called upon in the event of a by-election at any point during that period.

If you are interested in being considered for appointment to the Joint Compliance Audit Committee, submit a resume or written summary outlining your qualifications and experience by Friday, May 8, at 12 p.m. to Matheson at smatheson@blandfordblenheim.ca

UPCOMING SHOWS

APRIL 24 - ATTIC APOSTLES
THE COPPER MUG
FREE ENTRY - 8 P.M.

APRIL 26 - ARCHIE & SEAN WRIGHT
THE COPPER MUG
FREE ENTRY - 5 P.M.

APRIL 30 - TV FREAKS, SLOW READER & SMUG LLC
PADDY'S UNDERGROUND
\$20 - 8 P.M. - ALL AGES/ LICENSED



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The mystery and wonder of Mount Etna



**OH,
THE
PLACES
WE'LL
GO!**

PAUL KNOWLES

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

The sky was blue, and the clouds white, although they did not obscure our view of Mount Etna, as we began the coach trip from Messina to the slopes of this active volcano. And this was all just as well, because by the time we were well on our way to the highest point of our trip, the clouds and mist were rolling in, and when we reached our final destination, the most prominent feature was fog.

But that was okay. The thing about Mount Etna is, it's unique and mysterious – the only active volcano on the island of Sicily, and one of three active volcanos in the Isole Eolie chain of islands that stretches north from Sicily. Those volcanic islands include two others that are still active – Stomboli, the easily identified triangle that can be seen from the western shores of Calabria, and Volcanu (the volcano from which the name, “volcano,” derives).

But Mount Etna is the big guy. In fact, it's Europe's largest and highest active volcano,

ejecting huge amounts of lava every year.

But, say the experts, this Etna is carefully monitored by scientists, so it is safe to visit – when “they” say so. And since “they” said so, and we had the chance to go to Mount Etna during our Senior Discovery Tours visit to Calabria, we were in.

The main reason a visit to Mount Etna is considered safe was explained to us by our Sicilian guide. Volcanos fall into two categories – “explosive” and “effusive”. Effusive volcanos tend to erupt often or continually, but in more moderate fashion. “Moderate” being a relative term. Mount Etna is an effusive volcano.

So we joined the early-morning queue to board our coach in Siderno, on the east coast of Calabria, and took the one-hour-plus trip across the toe of Italy to find reach Villa San Giovanni, the port for the ferry to Sicily.

The ferry ride across the Straits of Messina is brief, perhaps 20 minutes, but there is nonetheless something magical about sailing toward the legendary island of Sicily for the first time.

We docked in Messina, and began the hour and a half ride south to the slopes of Mount Etna.

Mount Etna is 3,400 meters high. We went just over half way up, to the 1800-meter level, stopping on route, in Zafferana Etnea, for scrumptious pastries and espresso. The guide said that this was to help us to acclimatize to the altitude, but I suspect it has more to do with the passion all Italians have for pastries and coffee.

Back on the coach, we continued the climb,



Our clear view of Mount Etna, before the clouds obscured the scene. (PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

passing through fascinating layers of topography and plant life. Before long, the predominant feature of the landscape was lava – many hectares of lava flow border the roadway up Etna. It's a stark, dark landscape, although hardy plants begin to grow not long after the lava has cooled. In fact, as lava breaks down, it becomes one of the most nutrient-rich soils anywhere.

And as we rose higher, the temperature plunged, and snow appeared. By the time we reached the top, snow covered almost everything. People were skiing and snowshoeing.

The lava fields – and the views of the mountain – were increasingly obscured by cloud as we climbed toward our 1800-meter destination. And when we reached the parking lot, visibility was a few dozen meters.

But we persisted, because we had disembarked at the site of five craters, and were still able to view some of them. As the mist swirled, the views opened briefly, and then were again shrouded in fog. As I said, the entire adventure had a certain air of mystery.

Visitors can go higher than 1800 meters – there are cable cars and specially outfitted vehicles that head further up, as far as 2900 meters, the high point anyone is allowed to go. But all the literature says, “Go with a guide,” and there are factual accounts of foolhardy folk who ignored this advice, and died in an eruption of lava.

While at maximum height, we were invited to dine (Italy, right? Amazing food, right?). The restaurant is La Cantoniera, and it, too, has a Mount Etna story. During a dramatically large eruption in 1983, the original La Cantoniera was consumed and buried by lava flow. Today, the restaurant where we dined is built on top of the lava that contained the remnants of the former building.

And in the main floor dining room, there is a video screen showing that story, as well as wildly dramatic videos of previous Etna eruptions. It tends to inspire visitors to check the view out the windows every few minutes as you dine... just in case.

Our lunch at La Cantoniera, by the way, was a lavish buffet spread, with all the great Italian – and specifically Sicilian – tastes. Sausages, pasta, gnocchi, bruschetta, sundry mushrooms, eggplant, bacon, cheese. Wine by the bottle. And then, of course, pastries, all the pastries.

So did we get a perfect, close-up view of Mount Etna? No. But did we experience the mystery and the wonder of finding ourselves on the slopes of Europe's largest active volcano. And did I mentioned pastries?

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

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A lava field on Mount Etna.

(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)



LONG POINT ECO ADVENTURES

1ST ANNUAL SPRING FEST



MAY 24

10 AM - 5 PM

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1730 Front Rd, St. Williams Ont**

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APRIL 30, MAY 1 & 2 | DOORS OPEN 7 PM, CURTAIN 8 PM

LANGTON SHOWTIME, EST. 1971 - TURKEY POINT B&B
 Langton Community Centre

A musical comedy featuring local talent for all ages. Advance Tickets call 519-875-2602 or purchase at Dave's Variety, Delhi or at the door (cash only).

APRIL

APRIL 25 | 1 - 3 PM

TILLSONBURG COMMUNITY GARDENS SPRING REGISTRATION
 Tillsonburg Community Gardens, 30 Bloomer Street

Organic 10' x 20' gardens and 4' x 8' raised beds available. Water and tools available on-site.

APRIL 25 | 9 AM - 1 PM

TILLSONBURG CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE SPRING RUMMAGE SALE

St. Mary's Church, Tillsonburg, ON
 Please come join us at our spring rummage sale.

Clothing and footwear for the family. Housewares, glassware, bedding, home decor, toys and trinkets, jewelry, books and much more. Everyone is welcome. Fully Accessible. Admission is free.

Please bring a bag (or two) to carry home your treasures.

APRIL 25 | 2 PM

THE JOURNEY OF HOME CHILDREN: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Edison, Vienna & area Museum
 6209 Plank Rd, Vienna, ON, N0J 1Z0

Between 1869 and 1948, over 100,000 children were forcibly transported from the United Kingdom to Canada for labor. Labeled as "orphans," only 12 percent were actually without parents. Many faced mistreatment, and countless never reunited with their siblings, parents, or families. Join Lori Oshefski, President of *Home Children Canada*, to delve deeper into the lives of these children, the hardships they endured, and the resilience they displayed in overcoming their challenges. Seating is limited- please email bayhamhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com.

APRIL 25 | 3 PM

THE WOODSTOCK CHORALAIRES THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC, CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF SINGING

Knox Presbyterian Church, Woodstock
 Tickets \$30, children free, available at the door, online at ticketscene.ca. Guest artist,

Luciano de Cicco (anthem singer at Blue Jays home games). Woodstockchoralaires.com

MAY

MAY 2 | 10 AM - NOON

"BEE HAPPY" MESSY CHURCH
 St. Paul's United Church, 88 Bidwell St., Tillsonburg

Crafts, games, snacks, music, and a hot lunch. Children should be accompanied by an adult.

MAY 2 | 2 - 4 PM

SPRING WALK AT DELHI QUANCE PARK

Delhi Tobacco Museum and Heritage Centre, 200 Talbot Road, Delhi, ON

Join us for a spring walk through Delhi Quance Park and end with a tour of the Delhi Tobacco Museum, featuring the Velodrome exhibit. Donations to the museum are appreciated. Questions? Contact Alex Dobias 519-900-9600 x 3367 or adobias@geph.ca

MAY 3 | 2 - 4 PM

KC AND THE SUNSHINE GIRLS
 Mt Elgin Community Centre, 333204 Plank Line, Mount Elgin, ON

Put on your Boogie Shoes for an afternoon of dance hits of the 70's & 80's. This Tribute Show is being hosted by Mt Elgin United Church. Tickets are available by calling Joanne 519-485-1988 or Dawne 519-421-6836.

MAY 4 - 9

ROTARY BOOK FAIR
 Tillsonburg Mall

The Tillsonburg Rotary Club is holding its fall book fair at the Tillsonburg Mall from Monday May 4th to Saturday May 9th. Give your used books, CD's and puzzles a new home! Help the environment by bringing your own bags to take home your purchases.

MAY 5 | 7 PM

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTICE

423 Charlotteville Road 1, Forestville
 Forestville Cemetery Board will hold their Annual General Meeting on Tuesday May 5, 2026 @ 7:00 p.m. @ Dave Reeves place. Please bring your own lawn chair. Everyone welcome to attend!

MAY 5 | 7:30 PM

GREATEST PLAYLIST LIVE!
 Norwich United Church (80 Main st W Norwich)

Admission by donation. Once again, the Norwich Musical Society Band and Mitchell Legion Band will combine forces and become "Greater Than the Sum" for a spectacular spring concert! You're guaranteed to hear hits from record player, Walkman, or digital

streaming eras!

MAY 11 | 7:30 PM

DELHI & DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY MEETING

Delhi Senior Friendship Centre, 418 Queen St., Delhi, ON

Guest Speaker - Jeff Leadrer, a field naturalists; a founding member of Brant for Nature. He will introduce us to the app which helps identify plants and animals around us, explain this app and how we can navigate it on our devices. Should be very interesting. All welcome. (Enter at rear parking off William Street.)

MAY 13 | 1:30 PM

YOUR VOICE FOR NATURE
 Ingersoll Centre for Seniors, 250 Ingersoll St S, Ingersoll ON

Brian Craig will examine the ways you can influence and ensure the conservation of nature in The long Point Biosphere Region which is essential for the quality of life on our planet. To confirm attendance email libwiz@hotmail.com

MAY 21

PENTECOST SUNDAY SERVICE
 St. John's Anglican Church 46 Ridout St. (519) 842-5573

Join us on this day which commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit onto the Apostles. It could be called the 'birthday' of the church. We wear red, enjoy fellowship and cake after the service. Come and see! We are a place where people gather.

JUNE

JUNE 10 | 10 AM - 3 PM

THE BROWNSVILLE ANNUAL SCHOOL REUNION
 Brownsville Community Centre

There will be a Potluck lunch, so please bring your favourite dish. All former students and spouses are welcome to attend. If you have any Historical information or pictures please bring them with you. If you have any questions please contact Patty Meertens at rpmcortens@gmail.com.

JULY

JULY 17 & 18

BRANTFORD UKULELE FESTIVAL

Tickets for the 2026 Brantford Ukulele Festival, set for July 17th and 18th are going fast! Register before April 17th to get in on the Early Bird special. Get details on performers, workshops and more at brantfordukulelesociety.org.

ONGOING CLASSES, CLUBS &

ORGANIZATIONS

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

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

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

OXFORD COUNTY DIABETES EDUCATION PROGRAM

Appointments are available at Alexandra Hospital Ingersoll and Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital and by phone

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

MONDAYS | 9 - 11:30 AM

OTTER VALLEY TAI CHI
 St. John's Anglican Church, 46 Ridout St. W., Tillsonburg

New Monday morning classes have begun. Spots still available: 9:00 - 10:30 am Introduction, 10:30 - 11:30 am Foundations. Enjoy gentle exercise with others as you work to improve flexibility, balance and stamina. Call 519-688-9779, email ottervalley@canadiantaichiacademy.org, visit canadiantaichiacademy.org.

MONDAYS | 7 - 9 PM

MODERN SQUARE DANCING IS FOR YOU!

Thames Valley Dance Club
 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! 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). **The 2025-2026 season has started 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.

COMING EVENTS

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

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

OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY

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

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

3RD WED. OF MONTH | 10 AM - NOON
LYNN RIVER PROBUS CLUB

Army, Navy & Air Force Club, Simcoe, ON. Corner of Water St. and Culver St. Simcoe. Enter via Culver St.

Our retired and semi-retired members enjoy diverse interest groups, friendship and fellowship. We have interesting speakers at our monthly meetings as well as time to socialise. Current and prospective members are welcome to join us at the Army, Navy & Air Force Club, Simcoe, which is on the corner of Water St. and Culver St. Simcoe. Enter via Culver St. For more information, please visit our website at: lynnriverprobus239.com or email lynnriverprobus239@gmail.com

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS | 7 - 9 PM
SATURDAYS | 10 AM - 12 PM
LEARN BRAZILIAN JIU-JITSU (BJJ)

North Broadway Baptist Church

Thanks to donor support, we've been able to purchase mats and uniforms, and our instructors generously volunteer their time. This isn't a business—any donations go straight back into the program to help buy more uniforms, mats, and equipment. If it's within your means, a \$20 monthly donation helps support the program, but if not, classes are completely free. **Classes are open to anyone 14 and older.** If you'd like to try a class, please arrive about 15 minutes early to sign waivers and get fitted for a uniform. Information can be found at: <https://www.northbroadwaychurch.ca/nbmfa>, <https://www.facebook.com/northbroadwaymfa>, <https://www.instagram.com/northbroadwaymfa/> Inquires can be made at: nbmfa@northbroadwaychurch.ca

EVERY OTHER FRIDAY | 1 - 4 PM
SPRING INTO THE INGERSOLL COUNTRY MUSIC JAMBOREE

Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St. S., Ingersoll

Join us, walk ins welcome. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Perform, listen, dance & enjoy! May 1, 15 & 29, June 5 & 19.

FRIDAYS | 1 PM

INTERESTED IN BRIDGE? JOIN US AT THE TILLSONBURG DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB
Tillsonburg Senior Centre - 45 Hardy Ave, Tillsonburg

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

1ST AND 3RD TUES. OF MONTH
TILLSONBURG LIONS

The Tillsonburg Lions meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays. You are invited to their dinner meetings in the Lion's Den at the Community Centre. If you are interested in giving back to your Community contact Jim at 519 409 0876 for more information.....all are welcome.

1ST WED. OF MONTH | 7 PM
WAGNER MEMORIAL TEETERVILLE LEGION BRANCH 526 - MEMBERS GENERAL MEETING

The Wagner Memorial Teeterville Legion Branch 526 - 3890 Teeterville Road, Teeterville, ON

Not a member? Contact us to join. For More Information Call, the Legion 519-443-5588. www.teetervillelegionbranch526.ca

WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER TO HELP AT ONE OF OUR EVENTS? WE WELCOME YOU!

The Wagner Memorial, Teeterville Legion Branch 526 - 3890 Teeterville Road, Teeterville, ON

You do not need to be a member to Volunteer, Just contact the legion and leave your name and number and purpose of your call. Someone will get back to you as to where you might be needed. Students and Adults welcome. **Open hours. Wed.-Fri. 3 pm-10 pm, Sat.1 pm-10 pm, Sun.1 pm-6 pm. For More Information call, the Legion at 519-443-5588 or teetervillelegionbranch526.ca**

VON OXFORD GRIEF CARE: FREE MONTHLY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

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

TDMH PSW argues against layoffs

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

A Tillsonburg hospital Personal Service Worker (PSW) is speaking out against a layoff that she will be part of.

A Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital news release dated April 13 announced the layoff of PSWs in the hospital as part of a change in the model of care. The PSWs are to be replaced by a combination of RNs and RPNs.

According to McMaster, there are 26 PSWs in the hospital. Their duties are to assist nurses "with absolutely anything they need." This includes wound care, feeding patients, toileting patients, helping with transfers, helping with physio and getting patients moving on the weekends.

McMaster said the PSWs will be done on Sept. 24.

"All of us will be laid off but the long-term care ward is a different part of funding, and they are extending that until 2027," she said. "Once the program is done, I think it's March 2027, they will be done as well."

McMaster maintains nurses don't have time to take over PSW's duties.

"They're not replacing us one to one," McMaster said. "They're going to give one per floor (RN or RPN), the other floor maybe three," she said. "It's going to be chaotic and a lot of problems. There will be a lot of falls, a lot of bed sores, a lot of accidents because there's no else on the floor."

She estimates the patient to caregiver ratio will be

1:6 or 1:7, which is a downward move from the current 1:5 ratio. The exception is Intensive Care where one nurse will replace one PSW and one ward clerk.

"According to them it's got nothing to do with budgeting. It's because the patients' acuity and care is more," McMaster said.

She has called Unifor to see if the union can assist. McMaster inferred the nurses weren't happy with the pending change either.

The layoff made the news and was brought up in the Ontario Legislature by London MPP Teresa Armstrong, who asked Health Minister Sylvia Jones why the government was cutting health care jobs. Jones answered that the government has increased health care funding and increased nurse numbers.

Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman said, "I understand that news of staffing changes, particularly involving personal support workers, can be concerning for patients and families. The hospital has indicated that patient needs are becoming more complex, and these adjustments are being made to ensure that care, services, and bed capacity continue to be maintained."

He said the Doug Ford government has increased funding by more than 50 per cent since taking office, with more than \$100 billion being spent on Ontario's health care this year alone.

"While staffing decisions are made at the hospital level, we will continue to support investments that help ensure patients receive high-quality care," he added.

Officials at TDMH had no further comment when asked.



Artwork by Beth Kates

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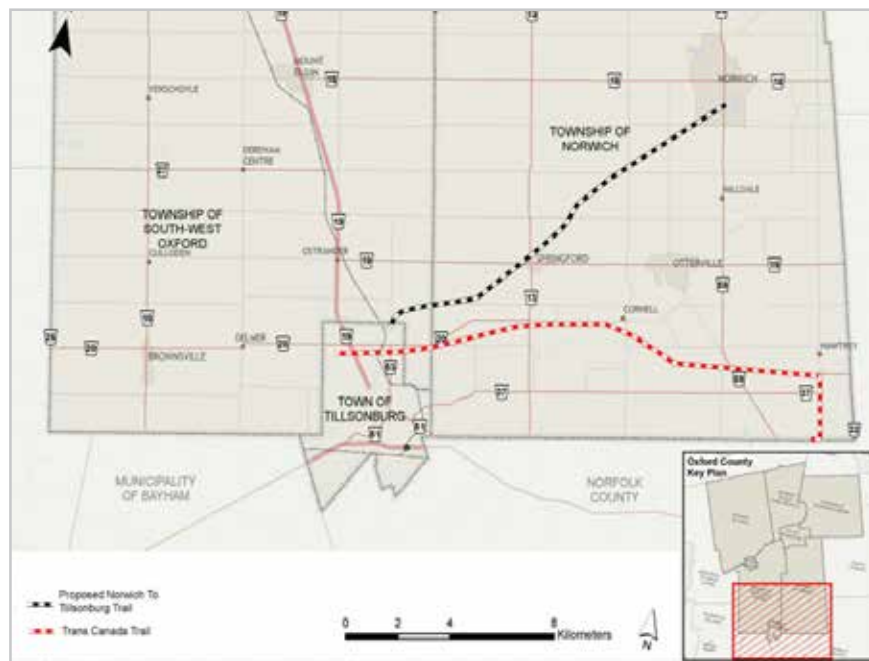
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NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE

Proposed Norwich to Tillsonburg Trail

Oxford County is hosting a Public Information Centre regarding the development of a multi-use recreational trail along the former railway corridor extending from Norwich to Tillsonburg



Oxford County and the Oxford County Trails Council are partnering to develop approximately 15 kilometres of off-road trail between Norwich and Tillsonburg.

The proposed trail (see map) will provide an off-road active transportation route from Norwich to Tillsonburg providing further connectivity to the Trans Canada Trail, the local trail network within Tillsonburg and on-road cycling routes.

Public consultation

A Public Information Centre (PIC) is being held to share proposed plans for trail development. This meeting will include a brief presentation outlining the project, followed by a question and answer period.

The PIC will be held:

Thursday, May 7, 2026
Drop in 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Presentation at 7:30 p.m.
Norwich Community Centre
53 Stover Street South, Norwich

Oxford County will reach out directly to individual land owners adjacent to the trail to share information and answer questions. Any questions

or concerns specific to individual properties will be dealt with through that process.

Project contact

If you have questions or comments, or wish to be placed on the mailing list to receive notices and information, please contact:

Brittany Pottruff
Divisional Assistant
519-539-9800, ext. 3108
bpottruff@oxfordcounty.ca

Information collected will be used in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.



This notice issued on April 16, 2026

CLASSIFIEDS

THANK YOU



MANARY

The family of Brent Manary and Claire Manary thank family members, friends, and neighbours for condolences, cards, flowers, phone calls and visits. All were very thoughtful and appreciated.

Shirley, Todd, and Scott

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With Love,
Dad, Mom Rouse & Family.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

**JIM
SWINN**
1951 - 2025



The family of the late Jim Swinn invites you
to a **Celebration of Life**
to be held on **Sunday, May 3rd, 2026**
from **1:00 - 4:00 pm**
at the **Carriage Hall,**
25 Brock St. West, Tillsonburg

OBITUARY

WESLEY EDWARD HECKFORD (JANUARY 22, 1936 - APRIL 15, 2026)



It is with great sadness and with much love, that we the family of Wesley Edward Heckford, announce his peaceful passing, at Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital, on Wednesday, April 15th, 2026, in his 91st year. Wes, or 'Pup' as he was affectionately known by his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, was born in Tillsonburg, son of the late "Sam" Heckford and the late former Pearl (nee Sharpe)

Heckford. Wes will be dearly missed by his wife and best friend of 68 years, "Beth" (nee Lover) Heckford, of Tillsonburg. Always a caring father and father-in-law to Kirby Douglas Heckford (Terry Ann), of Tillsonburg and their children Ryan and Warren (Chantelle) (their sons Hudson and Harrison; Kelli Koopman (Michael), of Woodstock and their children Hunter, Halli, Hayden; predeceased by his much-loved son Kevin Wesley Heckford (January 21, 2017). Always a caring brother and brother-in-law to: Wanda Clarke (Glen), of St. Thomas; and Pat DeLande (late Gary), of St. Thomas; Dale Lover (Georgina), of London. Also survived by nieces, nephews and cousins. Predeceased by his sister Mary McQuiggan (late Bruce); sister Eva Clark (late Gerry); sister-in-law Donna McEwan (late Lorne); sister-in-law Peggy Baker (late Hugh).

Wes will be remembered by many as the longtime proprietor of Tillsonburg Glass, a proud 4-generation family business with humble beginnings. Wes' father Sam established Tillsonburg Glass and Mirror Ltd. in the 1940's, first operating out of his home basement. Wes and Kirby worked hard to grow the business by acquiring Ellis Glass in 1991. Wes retired from Ellis Glass in 2004, when he proudly passed it on to his daughter Kelli and son-in-law Mike. Wes was proud to work alongside his son Kirby, until his retirement in 2000. Wes had a passion for racing standardbred horses and through this pursuit, he established Spring Meadow Farms. Since 1973, Wes enjoyed the highs and lows of racehorse ownership, alongside his good friend Danny Husted. Dr. Dalby, Doug Arthur and Murray Johnson together were known as the "Good Time Boys." Wes proudly named many of his horses after his grandchildren. The highlight of Wes' racehorse-ownership venture was his multi-award-winning horse "Candid Camera." Nothing can take away the fact that Wes, above all else, will be remembered as a wonderful family man, a loving husband, a caring father, much loved brother and very special grandfather. Wes will certainly be greatly missed and his memory will persist forever in the hearts of his family and friends.

Friends, neighbours and relatives are invited to attend public visitation on Friday, April 24th, 2026, between 2:00 and 4:00 and 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. in the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes Chapel, 262 Broadway, Tillsonburg. A Traditional Funeral Service will be held on Saturday, April 25th, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. in the funeral home chapel, officiated by Rayburn Lansdell. For anyone unable to attend the funeral, a livestream will be offered via Wes' online tribute page at www.verhoevefuneralhomes.com. A direct link can be requested any time April 25th by emailing verhoevefuneral@kwic.com. Interment follows in Tillsonburg Cemetery. All funeral attendees are invited to attend a Celebration of Wes' Life and Reception at the Tillsonburg Community Centre - Lions Auditorium (45 Hardy Ave, Tillsonburg), starting at 1:00 p.m. Everyone who knew Wes is invited to send personal condolences, share favourite memories and photos, or contribute memorial donations to "Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre" or the "Heart and Stroke Foundation" or "Diabetes Canada," via Wes' online tribute page, or by contacting the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes- Burial and Cremation Services Inc. (519) 842-4238, entrusted with all funeral arrangements for Wes, with confidence.

OBITUARY

MARK DANIEL WARDLE (MARCH 21, 1961 - APRIL 13, 2026)



Welcomed Home into the Loving Arms of His Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ on Monday, April 13th, 2026, at the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital, with his family by his side Mark Daniel Wardle, at the age of 65. A longtime resident of Tillsonburg, then Hamilton, then back to Tillsonburg. Son of Velma (Scidmore) Wardle of Tillsonburg and the late Donald Wardle (January 8, 2024).

Mark was truly a "workaholic" serving as a supervisor at THK for his third year. Previously Mark was a supervisor at Marwood with thirteen years of experience. Mark was an avid, passionate fan of the C.F.L. Hamilton Tiger Cats Football Team. Mark is the father of his much-loved daughter Tiffany Wardle of Hamilton. Predeceased by a much-loved daughter Brittany Wardle (March 23, 2013). Loved brother of: Shelly Covey (Terry), Kelly Oud-Klassen (Jake), Wendy Culp, and Melissa Barras (Matt) and survived by a sister-in-law Sandra Wardle (and the late Donnie Wardle (2020) and several nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews and cousins.

Public visitation was held on Thursday, April 16th, 2026, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. in the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes Chapel, 262 Broadway, Tillsonburg. Funeral Service to Celebrate Mark's Life was conducted on Friday, April 17th, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. in the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes Chapel, Tillsonburg, by Pastor Ted Smith of the Courtland United Church. Interment followed in Tillsonburg Cemetery. Friends, neighbours and relatives may share favourite memories, photos, send personal condolences, order flowers or make memorial donations to the "VON Oxford - Sakura House", or the "Canadian Cancer Society" via Mark's online tribute page at www.verhoevefuneralhomes.com or by contacting the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes- Burial and Cremation Services Inc. (519) 842-4238, entrusted with all funeral arrangements for Mark, with confidence.

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