

The Paris Independent

Issue #259

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2026

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(CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTO)

Riley and Charlie get a hands-on lesson in river safety at the Grand River Conservation Authority booth during Riverfest in downtown Paris on Aug. 29. Environmental interpreter Kaitlyn Taylor guided youngsters through an interactive display designed to teach them about the importance of staying safe around rivers and dams.

Downtown Paris Promenade wraps up summer of events with Riverfest

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

What began as a way to make the most of a necessary downtown road closure turned into a summer-long experiment in transforming the heart of Paris into a pedestrian gathering place. The Downtown Paris Promenade opened

in early July along a closed section of Grand River Street North, offering residents and visitors a car-free space filled with seating, games, entertainment and community programming throughout the summer.

The County of Brant Economic Development and Tourism team said the idea grew directly out of the ongoing Downtown Dig reconstruction

project.

“As part of the construction on Grand River Street North, this section of the street had to be closed. With the street closure this created an opportunity to program this space and help attract both residents and visitors downtown,” the team said in an email to the Paris Independent.

That opportunity ultimately produced nearly

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SKIP THE DISHES

The \$43,000 promenade brought music, markets and family activities downtown

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

two months of activities designed to give people another reason to visit downtown Paris, linger a little longer and support businesses navigating the disruption of a major reconstruction project.

Programming included the Downtown Paris Art Crawl, street markets featuring local artisans, a movie night and vintage market, along with recurring weekly activities. Music Mondays brought performers Brandon Dean, Liam McGarry, Lisa Warren, Onion Honey, Michael Bryan, Daelin Henschel and Chaz & Todd to the promenade over the summer. Wellness Wednesdays featured Zumba and yoga, while Urban Cowboy brought line dancing downtown on Thursdays.

The summer's largest celebration arrived this weekend with Riverfest, which took advantage of ideal late-August weather for two days of festivities.

The second annual Block Party kicked things off Friday evening with live music throughout the night and a beer garden hosted by Paris Beer Co. Michael Bryan and Ty Baynton entertained the crowd, along with Pynx Production DJ and a special appearance from Core Dance Project.

Activities continued Saturday with a full day of family-friendly entertainment. Visitors could try their hand at cornhole and ping pong, take part in arts and crafts and face painting, listen to live music from Ben Sommer, Florin Clonta, and Michael Bryan or enjoy the bouncy castle and other activities spread throughout the promenade. The Grand River Conservation Authority and GrandBridge Energy were also among those offering interactive games and activities at their booths.

Riverfest served as the final major weekend celebration on the promenade, but programming isn't quite finished.

The promenade itself will remain in place for another two weeks before being dismantled Sept. 14 to allow outstanding work associated with Phase 1 of the Downtown Dig to proceed.

"The Promenade is scheduled to be dismantled on September 14th. Our goal is to keep it in place as long as possible for patrons to enjoy with good weather, while also not impeding the construction schedule, as final elements in Phase 1 still require completion," the Economic Develop-

ment and Tourism team said.

While conceived as a response to construction, the promenade also gave the County an opportunity to see how residents, visitors and businesses would respond to a pedestrian-focused downtown space.

According to the County, the response has included calls to make the concept an annual attraction.

"We have heard from many residents and visitors who appreciated the opportunity to enjoy a pedestrian-friendly downtown environment, participate in community programming, attend special events, and spend time in public gathering spaces," the team said. "Many have expressed that the promenade created a vibrant atmosphere and encouraged people to spend more time exploring downtown. The comment we have heard most from visitors is 'can this be every year in Downtown Paris?'"

Downtown businesses also became part of the programming, with the County pointing to special events and markets hosted by businesses including the Rustic Palm, Le Petite Marche and Big Cityyy Arts.

Whether the promenade will return, however, remains an open question.

The County considers this year's initiative something of a pilot and plans to review feedback from businesses, residents, visitors, community partners and staff before deciding whether similar downtown activations could be considered in the future. Any decision would have to consider factors ranging from community support and impacts on businesses to traffic, staffing, funding and operational feasibility.

The experiment came with a price tag of approximately \$43,000, funded through a combination of County money, sponsorships and provincial support.

The County contributed \$15,000 through its capital budget, money intended to support businesses during the Downtown Dig. Another \$13,000 came from sponsorships, while \$15,000 was provided through Ontario's Rural Economic Development Program. Riverfest also received a separate grant through Experience Ontario.

Community organizations and sponsors also provided financial and in-kind support, programming assistance and volunteers. Some of the physical investments made for the promenade won't disappear when the street reopens either, with pic-

nic tables, recreational equipment and the tourism chair among the items that will be repurposed for County use.

For now, the County says it is too early to determine whether Paris will see another promenade next summer. But after a season of music, markets, dancing, recreation and community events, the response to this year's temporary transformation will become part of that discussion.

"The County views community partnerships as an important part of delivering initiatives such as the promenade, helping to maximize the experience for residents and visitors while leveraging support from local organizations and businesses," the team said.



(CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTO)

The Paris Horticultural Society and Museum hosted historical tours through downtown. Pictured are Tina Lyon (right) and Karin Terry (left).



(COUNTY OF BRANT PHOTO)

Dancers take over Grand River Street North during the second annual Block Party, which kicked off Riverfest festivities in downtown Paris on Aug. 28. The Friday night celebration brought the Downtown Paris Promenade to life with live music, dancing and a beer garden.



(CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTO)

Ben Sommers entertains Saturday morning at Riverfest downtown Paris.



(CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTO)

Felix Probst tries his luck at Plinko at the GrandBridge Energy booth at Riverfest. GrandBridge Energy was one of several Downtown Paris Promenade sponsors this summer.



(COUNTY OF BRANT PHOTO)

Downtown Paris glows under strings of LED lights as crowds gather for the second annual Block Party on Aug. 28. The Friday night Riverfest celebration featured live music, dancing and a beer garden hosted by Paris Beer Co. along the Downtown Paris Promenade.



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PARIS, ONTARIO

Thrift for Charity turns second-hand treasures into support for Nova Vita

RUBYYY JONES

Cultural Correspondent

Paris has a reputation for caring deeply about its community, and local residents are continually finding creative ways to bring people together while supporting causes. Paris mom and community facilitator Shar O'Neill is doing just that with Thrift for Charity, a fun indoor event that combines the thrill of thrifting with fundraising for charity.

The concept came to her in 2005, when she explored the idea of opening a shop out

of her heritage home, after having found some treasures that had been left behind when she moved in. Rather than keeping the proceeds for herself, Shar considered how great it would be to benefit local charities.

In 2022, Shar created a Facebook group that functioned much like an online marketplace, allowing people to buy and sell items while directing the proceeds to a charity of either the buyer's or seller's choice. She followed that up with her first pop up event at the Paris Vintage Fest in August of 2026. In just a few short hours, before the rain cancelled the event, she raised over \$300 to donate to four different charities: Nova Vita Domestic Violence Prevention Services, Sexual Assault Centre of Brant, Salvation Army, (who operates the Paris Food Bank) and Northern Rescue, an organization that helps animals escape the wildfires in Northern Ontario.

"I am also passionate about thrifting, because it's a win-win-win: people find items they need or want at great prices, items are kept out of landfills, and those wanting to clear their space can do so knowing their items will continue to be appreciated," Shar explained. "Adding the charity element is a fourth WIN, and I've been inspired by many wonderful people in my community over the years."

I intend to continue doing this type of work in my "spare time" as a working single mom. I love the opportunity to meet people face to face and share my excitement for the project!"

On Saturday, Sept. 12, Thrift for Charity will host its first indoor event at St.

Paul's United Church in downtown Paris from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Nova Vita Domestic Violence Prevention Services has been selected as the event's sole beneficiary, with proceeds from all sales and donations collected at the door going directly to the organization.

Shar shared why she chose Nova Vita. "Intimate partner violence (IPV) rates sadly keep increasing at alarming rates, and as someone who has personally been affected, I feel passionate about the cause."

Visitors to Thrift for Charity on Sept. 12 can expect a lively, relaxed atmosphere

while browsing clothing, home décor, vintage finds and other second-hand treasures — all at affordable prices and tax-free.

An on-site café will offer goodies for purchase, along with a cozy space where visitors can play games, read a book or simply enjoy the community atmosphere.

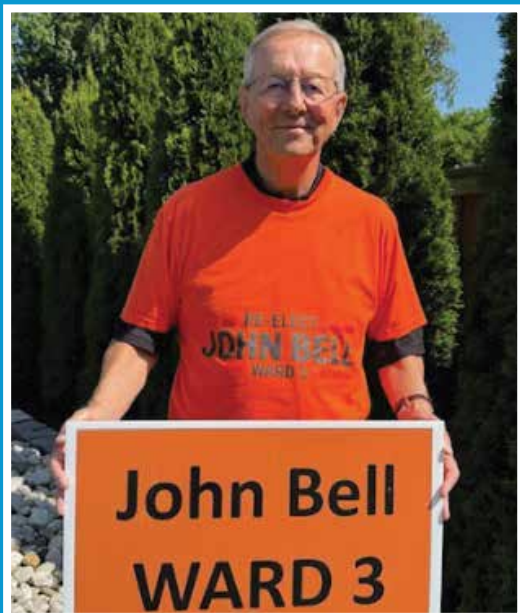
Admission is free, but visitors are encouraged to make a donation to Nova Vita at the door or bring a non-perishable food item for St. Paul's United Church's food collection. Shoppers are also encouraged to bring a reusable bag to carry home their finds.



From left, volunteer Barb Perilli and organizer Sharlene O'Neill are pictured during the Vintage Market downtown Paris this summer.



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🔧 But delivering it will require continued hard work, the acceptance of a degree of disruption as we upgrade infrastructure and manage growing pains, and a recognition of the changing demographics and expectations of our community.

Facebook: Re-elect John Bell in Ward 3 | E-mail : johnbellward3cob@gmail.com | Website : johnbellward3.com | Cell: 519-209-2277

* Authorized by the campaign Re-elect John Bell in Ward 3.

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Afro-CariBrant Festival brings “Heritage in Motion” to Paris this September

MEDIA RELEASE

The two-day award-winning cultural festival returns with performances, food, film, history and community celebration

Paris, the "Prettiest Little Town in Canada", will come alive with music, dance, food, film and cultural expression when the Afro-CariBrant Festival returns to Paris Lions Park this weekend from September 5-6.

Presented by Darmont GivesBack, the free community festival will celebrate African, Caribbean and Black cultures under the theme “Heritage in Motion.” The theme recognizes that heritage is not confined to the past. It continues to evolve through music, food, fashion, storytelling, migration, innovation and experiences shared across generations.

In recognition of the festival and its contribution to the community, Brant County Council will issue a proclamation declaring September 5-6, 2026, as Afro-CariBrant Weekend.

It all begins with a flag-raising ceremony at 1 p.m. on Saturday at Council Chambers. Community members are invited to attend this civic recognition event before festival activities kick off at Lions Park.

Now entering its fourth year, Afro-CariBrant has grown from a single-day gathering into a two-day cultural destination. The festival welcomes residents and visitors of all backgrounds to experience the diversity of African, Caribbean and Black communities while strengthening connection, understanding and belonging throughout Paris, the County of Brant and neighbouring communities.

This year’s expanded program will feature live music, dance and cultural performances, the

Afro-CariBrant Festival parade, the traditional Culinary Village, a Cultural Marketplace, family and youth activities, educational programming and opportunities for community organizations to connect with festivalgoers.

A major educational feature will be an African History Exhibition curated by the

Canadian Multicultural Inventors Museum (CMIM). The exhibition will introduce visitors to the achievements, innovations and historical contributions of people of African descent. Through engaging displays and stories, it will provide festivalgoers of all ages with an opportunity to learn about individuals and accomplishments that have often received limited recognition in conventional historical narratives.

Food will remain an important part of the festival experience. Attendees will be able to explore dishes and flavours representing different African and Caribbean culinary traditions. The expanded Culinary Village will also provide participating food vendors and food truck operators with a platform to introduce their businesses to new audiences

The Cultural Marketplace will bring together artisans, retailers, designers and entrepreneurs offering clothing, artwork, accessories, personal care products and other culturally inspired goods. By creating space for small and culturally diverse businesses, the festival supports entrepreneurship while offering visitors a lively and distinctive shopping experience.

Another significant addition for 2026 will be the Afro-CariBrant Festival Film Series, with the support of the National Films Board, presenting short films that highlight African, Caribbean and Black stories connected to Canada. The film program will complement the festival’s live activities by creating space for reflection, learning and storytelling through cinema.

Children, youth and families will also find dedicated activities throughout the weekend. The youth and family area will make cultural learning engaging and accessible through interactive experiences, creative activities and age-appropriate entertainment.

Afro-CariBrant began in 2023 as a grassroots initiative to increase cultural representation and create a welcoming space where communities could celebrate together. Since then, the festival has continued to build relationships with artists, businesses, volunteers, cultural organizations, community partners and public in-

stitutions.

The festival’s growing contribution to the community has received regional recognition.

Afro-CariBrant received the County of Brant’s 2025 Good Times in Brant Award and was a finalist in the Partnership and Collaboration Award category at the 2025 Hamilton Halton Brant Regional Tourism Awards.

Organizers view the festival as more than a weekend of entertainment. It is also an opportunity to promote cultural understanding, support local and diverse businesses, provide artists with a public platform and encourage visitors to experience Paris and the wider County of Brant.

The 2026 theme, “Heritage in Motion,” will be reflected throughout the weekend’s performances, food, films, historical displays, visual arts and community activities. It invites attendees to consider how cultural traditions are preserved, adapted and carried forward, particularly by younger generations and families building new lives in Canada.

These expansions required support. The festival acknowledges the Government of Canada, the Ontario Cultural Attraction Fund (OCAF), and the Brant Community Foundation for their early backing. Platinum, Gold and Bronze tier sponsors have committed resources. Vendors and food businesses have committed their time and



The Afro-CariBrant Festival received a Good Times in Brant Award during the 2025 Salute to Brant Businesses in September 2025.

products. Performers have committed their artistry. Each contribution matters. But they're all answering a call that volunteers made possible. They built the platform. They created the space. They're the reason this festival exists.

Admission is free, and residents and visitors of all backgrounds are welcome. For festival announcements, program updates and participation information, visit www.afrocaribrantfestival.org or follow the Afro-CariBrant Festival on social media.

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Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. What bird is a universal symbol of peace?

2. Who invented the airplane?

3. Which body part has the most bones?

4. What is the square root of 49?

5. How many legs does a crab have?

6. What three colors are on Estonia's flag?

7. Which gas do plants absorb from the atmosphere?

8. Who wrote the adventures of Tom Sawyer?

9. What are the five stages of grief?

10. Who sings the 1998 song Closing Time?

This week's answers are found on pg. 18

EDITORIAL

Election Q&A puts voters' questions directly to candidates

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

Over the past several weeks, we have encouraged County of Brant residents to do two things: participate in the municipal election and become informed before casting their ballots.

Now, it is time for the candidates to enter the conversation.

Beginning Sept. 9, The Paris Independent will publish a weekly Municipal Election Candidate Q&A series, starting with the candidates for mayor and continuing ward by ward through Oct. 14.

The schedule is:

- **Sept. 9 — Mayoral candidates**
- **Sept. 16 — Ward 1**
- **Sept. 23 — Ward 2**
- **Sept. 30 — Ward 3**
- **Oct. 7 — Ward 4**
- **Oct. 14 — Ward 5**

All of the questions candidates will receive came directly from you, our readers. That was the point of this exercise from the beginning.

As we wrote when we first invited submissions, voting is only one part of participating in democracy. An informed voter is an engaged voter, and engagement begins by asking questions, understanding where candidates stand and determining whose

priorities most closely reflect your own.

Municipal politics matters. The decisions made around the council table can have a direct and immediate impact on your everyday life, from the roads you travel and the services you rely on to how your community grows, how tax dollars are spent and what kind of community we leave for the next generation.

Those decisions can influence your quality of life and the pride you take in the place you call home.

That's why we wanted to give readers an opportunity to directly engage with the people asking for their vote.

The questions have now been compiled, and the same core questions will be provided to candidates in every ward. Mayoral candidates will also receive additional questions specific to the role of mayor. This will give readers an opportunity to compare candidates' positions on common issues and, we hope, better understand how each would approach the job.

Our role is to provide the platform, not influence the answers.

Candidates will be given ample time to respond and the same rules will apply to everyone. Responses are limited to 150 words per question, must address the question being asked and must remain respectful and professional. Personal attacks or

disparaging comments about other candidates, members of council or individuals will not be published.

Simply put: keep it clean.

Elections can inspire passionate debate, and disagreement is an important part of democracy. But The Paris Independent will not become a vessel for personal attacks or negativity. Tell voters what you believe, what you would do differently and, most importantly, why.

We will make every effort to contact every confirmed candidate using the contact information available through the County of Brant. If a candidate does not respond by the established deadline, we will send one reminder. If we still do not receive a response, we will indicate in our coverage that the candidate did not respond by the deadline.

That is the extent of our involvement.

It is ultimately each candidate's responsibility to monitor their email, meet the deadline and decide whether they want to participate in this opportunity to speak directly to voters.

Whenever possible, responses that meet our guidelines will be published as submitted, allowing candidates to communicate their ideas and priorities in their own words. The same word limits, deadlines and editorial standards will apply consis-

tently to everyone.

And while the questions for our Q&A series have now been selected, and mayoral candidates have already received theirs, that doesn't mean voters should stop asking questions.

If there is something you want to know that isn't addressed in our coverage, reach out to the candidates directly. Their contact information is available through the County of Brant's election page. Attend an all-candidates night when those events are announced. Ask questions. Listen to the answers. Challenge ideas respectfully. Pay attention. Engage.

Our goal with this series isn't simply to fill newspaper pages between now and election day. It's to help create a more informed electorate and, ultimately, encourage more people to vote.

We said it when we launched this initiative and it remains true today: democracy works best when citizens are informed and involved. Elections should be about ideas, priorities and solutions. It sets the groundwork for the decision that will be made around the table for the next four years.

Over the next several weeks, candidates will have their opportunity to speak. Read what they have to say. Compare their answers. Ask your own questions.

Then vote.

Letter to the Editor

What Kind of Mayor Do We Need?

Brant County residents will elect a new Mayor on October 26th, raising two key questions: Does the candidate have the knowledge and skills to become an effective Mayor, and what is their position on the main challenges we face?

Six candidates are vying for your vote, and each will claim they are best suited for the Mayor's job. Some candidates will say Council needs more transparency or better communication, stronger financial management, a safer community, or improved services. All of that sounds good, but what do those vague promises really mean?

Each Mayoral candidate should publish an election platform that identifies the major challenges and opportunities facing the community and provides tangible solutions with corresponding financial impacts. That is what candidates in federal and provin-

cial elections provide; why not in municipal elections?

Our Mayor has special powers to override Council decisions, powers the province gives them. They can have increased authority over municipal budgets, the hiring/firing of senior staff, and the ability to veto certain bylaws that conflict with provincial priorities. These legal one-person powers mean we need to understand what kind of leader each Mayoral candidate is.

The Brant County budget for 2026 is almost \$170 million and is forecasted to rise to \$194 million in 3 years. A business with a budget that size would hire a CEO with 10-15 years of leadership experience. Do any of our Mayoral candidates have the skills, knowledge and expertise to manage the complexities of large capital investment decisions or the challenges of overseeing hundreds of staff in

a complex organization? Mayoral candidates should prove to us that they are qualified for the job.

During the election campaign, Mayoral candidates should publicly state their position on some of the larger issues in the community:

Construction: The current Council and staff have completely mismanaged major infrastructure construction projects. How will you revamp the process for approving, contracting, and supervising construction projects to minimize disruption to residents and businesses? Decisions for the 2027 construction season will begin shortly after the October election, including on the large-scale Grand River North multi-year reconstruction, so time is of the essence to implement needed changes.

Paris Library: The proposed \$28 million Paris Library is shrouded in mystery. The cur-

rent Council approved buying land and developing a design for a 26,000 sq. ft. building, over double the current space. But we don't know very much about what kind of place they're envisioning. The library's annual operating budget is just over \$3 million, so we can assume this budget line will increase with double the space, but the current Council has provided no forecasts. Also, it's unclear what will happen to the current historic building when the library moves.

Trump Tariff Wars: Which Brant County manufacturers, distributors, and farmers will be negatively affected by the Trump tariff wars? How can the County mitigate any job losses or lost industrial property tax revenue? Have you spoken with business leaders in the County?

Annexation: The province was forcing Brant County to give the City of Brantford land un-

der and around the Brantford Airport, totalling 848 acres. In return, the County would receive a \$9.7 million payment to offset lost taxes and legal fees. The annexation proposal met serious resident concerns and was subsequently paused due to the upcoming municipal election. As a Mayoral candidate, do you support moving this annexation forward?

The Bawcutt Centre: The current Council approved a plan to redevelop this historic building with a \$10 million contribution to a developer, Wingbury Properties, who redeveloped Wincey Mills. The plan mentions attracting commercial tenants and creating space for County programming, but offers no specific details. However, it's unclear whether the County will ever receive any revenue to offset its investment and whether there is enough on-site parking. The

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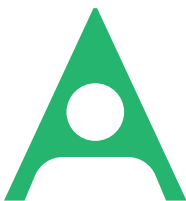
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FreshCo Opens in Growing Paris Neighbourhood



(STEVE HOWES PHOTOS)

For the second week in a row, 10 Markle Dr. was bustling with activity as shoppers returned to the new plaza, this time to celebrate the grand opening of FreshCo. Located in the fast-growing community off Rest Acres Road in Paris, the grocery store is a welcome addition for residents looking for more shopping options closer to home. Neighbouring Shoppers Drug Mart celebrated its grand opening last week. Pictured is Mayor David Bailey as he welcomed the store owner Dave Young and staff during a grand opening celebration held on August 27. Young made a \$2,500 donation to the Salvation Army during the opening.

Letter to the Editor

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

agreement does not mention the increase in annual operating expenses the County will incur. Will you review the agreement to ensure that County residents are being treated fairly?

The Brant Sports Complex: Council is set to approve a \$31 million expansion of the current recreation centre with plans for a gymnasium, running track, meeting rooms, and more dressing rooms. Mayoral candidates should ask residents whether they want these new features at a \$31 million price tag. Also, no estimates show how this proposed expansion would increase the annual recreation operating budget.

Residents should take time to understand Brant County's needs over the next 4 years and ask Mayoral candidates for their specific plans to address them. Also, check out whether candidates have the experience, skills, and knowledge to lead us forward. The candidate with vague promises and who fails to demonstrate their qualifications is probably not the best choice.

Being Mayor is a full-time job requiring an exceptional, gifted leader with relevant experience and the ability to translate the community's vision into action plans.

Patrick Draper is a Paris resident and former municipal City Manager.

All letters must be signed by the writer and are subject to editing for length and clarity. The opinions expressed in the letter are those of the writer, and not necessarily those of the Paris Independent. We make no representation or warranty of any kind, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, adequacy, validity, reliability, or completeness of this information. If you have opinions to share, email your letter to stories@theparis-independent.com

The Things People Tell Us

RACHELLE ROUSSEAU

Rousseau Rares Vintage

There's something about working with the public that makes people want to tell you things.

A lot of things.

Spend enough time behind a counter, at a front desk, beside a salon chair or serving a table and you quickly discover that complete strangers are remarkably comfortable sharing their thoughts.

Some are helpful. Some are funny. Some are incredibly personal.

And some probably could have stayed an inside thought.

There are the observations.

"Wow, it's really quiet in here today."

Yes. We noticed.

"You guys are really busy!"

Also noticed.

There are the compliments that take an unexpected turn.

"I love this place! I've lived here for six years and never knew you were here."

We're glad you finally found us.

And the questions that are somehow also suggestions.

"Have you ever thought about being open later?"

We have now.

But the things people tell us aren't usually about business at all.

Hairdressers hear life updates from people they've known for years. Servers get to be there for birthdays, anniversaries, first dates and family dinners. Shopkeepers hear the story behind the gift someone is searching for. Artists and makers hear what a piece reminds someone of.

Sometimes someone walks through the door as a complete stranger and, twenty

minutes later, you know what they're buying their sister for her birthday, where they're having dinner and why they came to Paris in the first place.

And then there are the stories about Paris itself.

People tell us what used to be in our buildings. They remember businesses that disappeared decades ago. They tell us where they worked as teenagers, where they went on their first date or what they used to buy downtown with their parents.

Often, those stories come up completely by accident.

Someone recognizes an old photograph. A familiar object brings back a memory. A building looks just enough like it did forty years ago that someone starts telling you

about the person who used to work there.

Sometimes they remember things about the spaces we work in that we didn't know ourselves.

For a few minutes, you get a little piece of someone else's Paris.

That might be one of the nicest parts of working with the public.

All day long, behind counters, across tables, at front desks and in chairs throughout downtown, these little conversations are happening.

Some make us laugh. Some teach us something about our own town. And some introduce us to people we might never have known otherwise.

So keep telling us things.

We're listening.



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Where two rivers meet,
and there is always a *story* to hear.

downtownparis.ca

HISTORIC PARIS

PARIS PAST: Midway screams, derby steel, and the spirit of Linny Nelson



By Chris Whelan

There is a distinct moment every late August when the air in town changes. The mornings get a little crisper, the lights go up on the Silver Street grounds, and for generations of Parisians, the unofficial turn of the season arrives: the Paris Fair.

Looking back at the fair through the lens of local memory, two things consistently defined the Labour Day weekend tradition, the overwhelming thrill of the midway and the legendary warmth of the neighborhood surrounding the grounds.

Back in 1982, before I even lived in Paris, a group of us Burford kids pooled our meager cash to pay the owner of the local village arcade a small fortune to drive us over in his Camaro. By the time we pulled up to Paris, our pockets were almost empty. Fate (and a little luck) brought us to Silver Street and into the yard of a wonderful lady named Linny Nelson, whose daughter Tish was right around our age.

Linny took one look at us broke teenagers, laughed her unforgettable laugh, and let us cut through her backyard to hop the fence into the fair. Little did I know that two years later, when my family officially moved to Paris in 1984, I'd have the privilege of calling Linny a true friend. In an even sweeter twist of fate, I would later meet and marry her cousin, officially becoming part of her incredible family.

As it turns out, I wasn't the only one who found safe harbor in Linny's backyard. Reading through community recollections recently, her yard was practically an unofficial midway gate of its own. Jacquie Wood remembered making the long trek up from near Bean Park with her cousins, stopping under the shade of Linny's trees for a glass of water before heading into the grounds, often bringing back burgers and fries to share with her. From North Ward kids like Shannon Lewis-Vary to neighbors like Stew-



art Parker and Tina McLaren, Linny was a staple of the fair experience, a sweet, generous soul whose memory still lingers over Silver Street every Labour Day weekend.

Even the fair authorities knew what was going on! Linda Buck confirmed that her father, long-time Paris Agricultural Society President Jim Buck, was well aware of Linny's backyard express line into the grounds, he just turned a blind eye and never said a single word.

Once inside the gates, the sights and sounds took over. If you weren't eating cotton candy or visiting Ken Rayner and Bill Telfer at the main gate, you were likely drawn to the grandstand by the deafening roar of revving engines and crunching metal. The Demolition Derby has always been a crown jewel of the fair, packing the bleachers year after year. For decades, nobody ruled that mud-slick arena quite like Paris's own Wray "Wrayzor" Robinson. Wray built a true legacy out of twisted steel and smoking engines, setting the standard for local derby drivers and creating memories that fairgoers still talk about today.

Over on the midway, a different kind of chaos was unfolding. Depending on your generation, you either remember the raw speed of Campbell Amusements' Himalaya or its sleek successor, the Matterhorn.

Teenagers lined up for the ultimate rite of passage: squeezing two-by-two into the small metal cars as they

banked hard around a central platform, spinning at breakneck speeds while top-40 music blasted from giant speakers. The announcer's distorted voice over the PA was the soundtrack to our youth: "Do you wanna go FASTER?!" followed by a collective chorus of teenagers screaming "YA!"

The Himalaya had that iconic back wall where the cars plunged into darkness, illuminated only by a flashing strobe light and the blare of a siren. Later, as Jamie Morrison recalled, the soundtrack barely changed for a decade, but nobody cared. It was the ride you rode until you were dizzy, motion-sick (as Vicky Good-Dubecki and Karen Warren fondly, or not so fondly, remembered), or just out of tickets.

Whether your fair highlights were watching "Wrayzor" smash his way to victory, making spin-art paint creations like Dennis Kalichuk, or just catching up with old friends, the Paris Fair has always been less about the rides or events themselves and more about the shared community spirit.

Decades later, the rides may have new names like the Music Express, but the heart of the fair remains unchanged.

It's written in the roar of the derby track, the screams of teenagers wanting to go faster, and the beloved neighbors like Linny Nelson who always kept their doors open to the town. Email your memories to: editor@theparisdependent.com

PARIS FAIR

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Kiddies' Day
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1:30 p.m. — Big Pet Show
8:00 p.m. (In front of the Grandstand)
CHICAGO KNOCKERS
ALL GIRL MUD WRESTLING
8 P.M. Main Exhibit Building: MISS PARIS FAIR COMPETITION

SATURDAY, SEPT. 4th BETWEEN 3-5 p.m.
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Pari-Mutuel Wagering
2:30 p.m.-4 p.m. — FASHION SHOW
Wayside Sales Room
6:30 p.m. and 8:15 p.m.
GRANDSTAND SHOW
Featuring International Recording Stars
THE GOOD BROTHERS

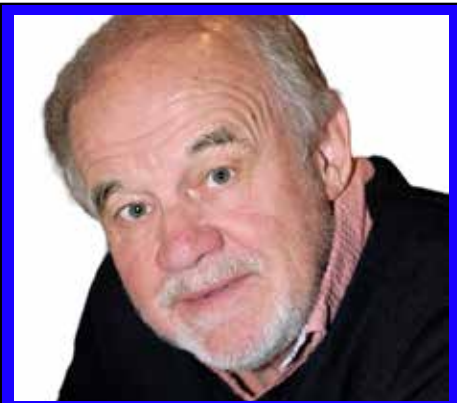
Paris Fair is unquestionably the "Inflation Fighter." Not only is the admission the same for the fourth year in a row, Campbell Amusements have also agreed not to increase the prices of their Midway Rides. NO WONDER THE PARIS FAIR IS THE BEST FAMILY VALUE IN THE AREA.

ADMISSION PRICES
Adults \$2.50
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(6-11 yrs) 50c
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See tomorrow's Expositor for full details of all other events during this fabulous fair.



LIVING RETIRED: 'Fashion Backwards'



By Gary Chalk
Non-Pulitzer Prize
Winning Columnist

Living Retired

cap pointing forward. Now Living Retired it is the 'HCHBP Era' — 'High Cholesterol, High Blood Pressure Era' — and guys are wearing their ball cap pointing backwards like they are Johnny Bench.

I wore my ball cap pointing backwards, once. Jan said, "Gary, you look foolish. If our granddaughters see you, they will run away!"

Off the top of my head, baseball caps pointing backwards is really just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to baby boomers trying to dress to be cool. This is what I mean...

Blue jeans. I remember bell bottoms. Regular fit blue jeans. Then stretch denims. Relax-fit blue jeans. Then it was faded blue jeans. Blue jeans designed so they hang so low you could be a plumber. Today, it is 'pre-ripped' jeans which baffles

me. When I was a kid when I ripped my pants Mom would iron a patch overtop. These days I am so fashion backwards that I am still trying to figure out whether I should iron a crease in my blue jeans?

Socks. It used to be standard attire to wear comfortable socks. These days lots of guys are going sock-less. So, I tried it, once. Jan and I were going to our friend's Christmas open house, so I didn't wear my socks. Stupid me. I had to fall down to the floor in their front foyer to pry my shoes off because my feet were sweating so much. Jan said, "Gary, something smells like a hockey equipment bag!"

Underwear. This one really gets my knickers in a knot! In my day, the popular men's underwear was a brand name every teenage guy never wanted to be seen wearing when changing for gym class: 'Fruit of the Loom.' How times have changed. These days men are protecting their privates in underwear called 'Under Armour.' Just saying.

Hoodies. The fashionistas who came up with hoodies totally neglected the Living Retired set who dangle our reading glasses on a cord around our neck. I damn near hung myself in a men's change room try-

ing to yank the hoodie back overtop my head!

Fitted shirts. Today's shirts are fitted — which means they cling so tight to my stomach that Jan laughs, "Gary, that shirt is so tight on you that I can see your two-pack."

Shoes. Here is where things are changing faster than your wife trying to decide what colour to repaint your front door. At one time it was a pair of loafers, then loafers with tassels. Then oxfords came along followed by brogues, Doc Martens, and on and on and on. Today, men top off their sharp-looking expensive Hugo Boss suit with — get this! — RUNNING SHOES! The time I tried this, Jan said, "Please go back in the house and change your shoes, ... or you're going out by yourself."

These days men's wardrobes are defined as 'Casual,' 'Smart Casual,' and 'Business Casual.' Jan said I should wait for the book 'Casual Wear For Dummies.'

Living Retired is written by Gary Chalk and published throughout Canada and USA. To receive *Living Retired* by email each week, or to book Gary to speak at your service club, corporate event, or retirement party contact Gchalk@me.com

Register for the County of Brant Seniors Active Living Centre on Wednesday, September 9

Join the County of Brant **Seniors Active Living Centre** for another exciting season of programs designed to help older adults stay active, make new connections, and enjoy lifelong learning in a welcoming and supportive environment.



Memberships will also be available for purchase online at brant.ca/COBConnect

The Seniors Active Living Centre offers a variety of social, recreational and educational opportunities for adults 55+.



Registration for the September 2026 to June 2027 season opens:

Date: Wednesday, September 9

Time: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Location: Sojourn Church, 112 Scott Ave, Paris

For more information, please email seniors@brant.ca

brant.ca/Seniors

The Fall Guide is now available!



View the guide online or pick up a **printed copy** at any County of Brant Customer Service office, community centre or library

Registration opens:

September 14, 2026
at 6:00 pm



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Paris Mounties look to rebuild community connection, one fan at a time

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The return of the Paris Mounties name brings a familiar piece of the community's hockey history back to the ice.

For the junior hockey club, reviving that identity is also part of an effort to strengthen its relationship with local fans, rebuild excitement around the team and bring more people back to the stands.

After decades as the Paris Mounties, the organization was sold and rebranded as the Paris Titans several years ago. This spring, the club announced it would once again operate under the Mounties name, bringing back an identity that President Mike Christian says carries deep meaning in Paris.

"Bringing back the Paris Mounties name was about much more than changing a logo or putting a familiar name back on a jersey. It was about reconnecting this hockey club

with its community and its history," Christian said.

"The Mounties name means something in Paris. There are generations of people who played for this team, coached here, volunteered, sponsored the club or sat in the stands supporting it."

Christian said the organization is not looking to simply recreate what existed in the past but instead use that history as a foundation for the future.

"We're not trying to recreate the past. We're taking the best parts of that history and using them as the foundation for where we want this organization to go."

That means rebuilding relationships that extend outside the rink.

Christian said one of the organization's biggest goals is to make former players, coaches, volunteers, sponsors and long-time fans feel connected to the club once again, while introducing a new generation

of Paris families to the Mounties tradition.

"One of our biggest goals is to make former Mounties feel that this is their team again," he said.

At the same time, the club wants young players in the community to see the Mounties as an organization they can aspire to be part of.

"We want young players coming to our games, meeting our players and imagining themselves wearing a Mounties jersey someday," Christian said.

The goal, he added, is to create a bridge between generations and bring former Mounties back into the rink while introducing today's young hockey players to the team's history.

That community connection will also be reflected in how the current players interact with Paris outside of game nights.

"This is probably one of the areas I'm most excited about because we want the

Paris Mounties to be visible in the community, not just at the arena on game night," Christian said.

"Our players need to understand that wearing the Mounties jersey comes with a responsibility. They're representing Paris, and we want them contributing to the community that supports them."

Volunteerism will be an important part of that effort, with the club already working on initiatives that give players opportunities to give back. Christian said the organization also wants to expand its relationships with local schools, minor hockey, community organizations, charities and businesses.

A particularly important relationship will be with Paris Minor Hockey.

"We want young players interacting with our players, attending games and feeling connected to the Mounties," Christian said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

The 2026 annual Friends of Dick Emerson Memorial Golf Tournament

BY GRIEG GRAHAM

Paris Independent Contributor

Held Saturday, August 22nd at the Burford Golf Course and it was so worth the wait. This is the date that this scribe circles on his calendar every year. Of course, the Paris Duffers were out in full force and did not disappoint. The beauty of this tournament is that Paris Duffers that live elsewhere and can't make our weekly Friday round also circle this date on their calendars. The camaraderie proves you can come home again! Making appearances were Marble, Croosh, Buzz, Hag, Uncle Larry, Oscar and a host of others. I bet Richard "Dick" Emerson Jr. would be so proud.

Speaking of whom here is a little backstory on Mr. Emerson. Born March 27th, 1927, Dick turned to and excelled at sports. He played Jr. hockey with Paris and Guelph from 1944 to 1947 claiming a Southwestern Ontario Jr B Championship. At this time, he was awarded the University of Western Ontario's Student of the year. On the greens he was equally formidable in winning 17 Paris Golf and Country Club titles over a 20-year span.

His engagement in local sports was palpable as a thirty-year member of the Paris Curling Club, coaching minor hockey and a longstanding member of the Paris Figure Skating Club. Dick also lent time to the Canadian Cancer Soci-

ety, Meals on Wheels and was a lifetime member of St. Paul's United Church. Of course he was inducted into The Brant County Hall of Fame. Quite the resume.

This tournament has been going since 2004. The story goes that Stewie and Oscar played a round in honour of Dick. They had such a great time that they had the epiphany of inviting a few more players next year.

They soon had a waiting list as long as the players. Many friends and family pitched in unselfishly to ensure success. In following in Dick's footsteps of philanthropy, the decision on a charity was to aid in the access to sports. Considering Dick's love of sports it seemed a no brainer. The Jump Start program with our local Canadian Tire has been a benefactor that met donations dollar for dollar. Donations have also been made to the County of Brant to assist local programs. To date, the tournament has raised over \$100,000.00.

Back to the actual game. In the winner's circle with a -14 was the foursome of Shawn Dailey, Callum Dailey, Buzz Cockburn (does anyone know his real name?) and Red Taylor. Good job boys. We're all happy for you. Right? Two teams tied for runner up status at -11. They were Jacob Broomfield, Chris Rewusksy, James Holmes and Justin McIntyre and the team of Scott Emerson,



Mike Holman, Chuck Zammitti and Josh Spiegel. In honour of Joey Pickering the closest to pin winner was Callum Dailey and Face won the Stewie hole. Afterwards the prize table was a free for all and I ended up with a bag of golf tees.

As usual, our friends at The Burford

Golf Course provided excellent service and the kitchen staff knocked it out. A hole in one! As for the after party, what happens in Paris stays in Paris. And, if you're wondering, I have this date marked on my calendar for next year. For now, keep em in the fairways.

Paris Curling Club opens its doors to next generation of members

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

For nearly two centuries, generations of Paris residents have gathered at the local curling club to throw rocks, sweep ice and compete against friends.

But for many members, what happens after the final rock is thrown equally important.

The Paris Curling Club is inviting the community to discover that social side of the sport during an open house Sept. 25, aimed at introducing prospective members to the club, its leagues and the community that has developed around them.

The free open house runs from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the club, located at 14 Oak Ave. While there won't be ice available that evening, visitors can tour the facilities, meet current members and league convenors, enjoy free food and try their hand at some curling-related games.

For Paris Curling Club vice-president Ellay Heys, the evening is an opportunity to introduce people to a club that has long been about more than competition.

"Whenever I play in events at other Clubs, I always describe our Club as a 'Social club first, and a curling club second'. We're more about getting together to have a drink and share a story and comradery rather than we are about the competition of it all."

It's a culture that has been developing for generations.

The Paris Curling Club officially formed in 1843, making it one of the oldest curling clubs in Canada. Through the years, it has provided local residents with a place to gather for friendly competition in a social setting.

Today, the club bills itself as the "Friendliest House in Town," welcoming members of different ages, backgrounds and levels of curling experience.

"Our Club is proud to include members from all different walks of life – of all ages, all with different stories and backgrounds. There is no member who sees themselves above another. We are just a bunch of down-to-earth folks who need a fun way to pass time through the winter and happen to share a love of the same game," Heys said.

And while it's a winter sport, those relationships don't necessarily end when the curling season does.

Members golf together during the summer, travel together and form friendships that can extend well beyond the clubhouse. Heys has experienced that personally since he and his wife, Ashley, joined in 2018 while in their late 20s, looking for something fun and new.

When the couple married in 2024, roughly 20 to 25 per cent of their wedding guests were fellow club members they hadn't known before joining.

That sense of community is something the club hopes prospective members will experience at the open house, whether they are experienced curlers, complete beginners or simply looking for a new way to meet people.

The club offers different league formats designed for a range of abilities, including a U5 league for curlers with fewer than five years of experience and Choose Your Own leagues geared toward more competitive players. Its mission is to be "An inclusive, friendly club, for the participation, promotion, and inspiration of curling."

Newcomers who attend the Sept. 25 open house will also be eligible for a special new-member signup discount on either a full membership or the club's Learn-To-Curl program.

Those who want to try the sport before committing will have another opportunity in October. Adult Learn to Curl nights are scheduled for Oct. 18 and Oct. 25 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the club. Each session is \$20. You just need to bring clean indoor shoes.

The club is also looking to its younger curlers as it considers how to carry its long history forward.

Its youth program is expanding with a new Youth Bonspiel after volunteers began looking for ways to give junior curlers more opportunities beyond weekly practice sessions. Some older juniors travelled

to out-of-town events last year, an experience that helped inspire the club to host an event of its own.

Another highlight of the upcoming season will be the annual P'Ayr's Cup, a friendly competition between the Paris and Ayr curling clubs. Modelled loosely after golf's Ryder Cup, each club fields 32 players who compete in different formats for total points. Paris will host this year's event in November after reclaiming the cup last year following a couple of losses. For Heys, even that competition ultimately comes back to the social connections at the heart of the club.

"While the games themselves are obviously fun, it's the social side that is the best. It truly brings out a sense of pride & community amongst our members as we work towards a common goal of victory."

As the club looks toward another season, Heys hopes newcomers will find the same sense of belonging that has kept generations coming back.

"I'd love to see all new members have the same experience that I've had since joining – finding a community built around friendship, encouragement, social interactions, and friendly competition."

The Paris Curling Club open house takes place Sept. 25 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at 14 Oak Ave. Questions about the event can be directed to Ryan Benson, the club's "Director Of Fun," at fun@pariscurlingclub.com.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

The organization also wants to make the experience of attending a game part of the community's social fabric again.

"Junior hockey should be affordable, entertaining and something people genuinely look forward to doing together," Christian said.

For Christian, rebuilding attendance isn't simply about asking people to support the team. The organization recognizes that support has to be earned.

"We understand that support has to be earned," he said. "That's why our responsibility isn't simply to ask people to come back. Our responsibility is to give them a reason to come back — and then give them a reason to return the following week."

On the ice, the club is working to build a team that reflects that renewed identity.

Christian said the goal is to have a competitive team featuring local and Brant-area players, along with young men who demonstrate character, work ethic and a desire to develop.

"We want to be a team that works, competes for one another and is difficult to play against every single night," he said.

The club will be led by new head coach Zac Rinaldo, who comes to Paris after coaching the Pelham Panthers in the GOHL.

Christian said Rinaldo's emphasis on work ethic, accountability, attention to detail and player development fits with the identity the Mounties are trying to establish.

"We want to play an honest, hard-work-

ing and exciting brand of hockey," Christian said. "We want our players competing for every inch of the ice, playing for one another and representing the Mounties jersey with pride." Local representation is also an important piece of the plan.

"There's something special about having players on the ice who grew up in this area and understand what representing Paris and Brant County means," Christian said.

Ultimately, the organization wants fans to recognize the team both for how it plays and what it represents.

"We want people in the stands to look at this team and say, 'That's a Paris Mounties hockey team.'"

That identity will take time to build, but Christian believes the return of the name provides an opportunity to start that process.

For longtime fans, it is an invitation to come back. For former players and volunteers, it is an invitation to reconnect. And for a younger generation, it is an opportunity to become part of a tradition that has been part of Paris hockey for decades.

Christian said the long-term vision goes beyond wins and losses.

"We want to build a team capable of competing for championships," he said.

Most importantly, Christian said, the organization wants to build something that lasts.

"We don't want one successful season followed by starting over. We want to establish standards for how the Paris Mounties operate, develop players and represent this community."

Dusters End 2026 With Heart!

SID LUCKMAN

Paris Independent Contributor

How can you summarize such a great season of Dream-Die Hockey as was just exhibited by your Brant County Dusters? Well, you just can't. Is there any other league on the great earth where the worst player on the ice gets a hat trick in a 2-2 tie? Dare I say...let that league come forth! But that is Dusters Hockey my dear friends.

And so, another season wrapped up with a great match and an even greater after party.

Below are this year's award recipients.

- **League MVP:** Ryan Hodgson
- **Smiler of the year:** Spencer Lees
- **Repairman award:** Blair Burton
- **Camper (in tents player):** Butters
- **Smooth Operator Award:** Greg Collings
- **Vocal Management:** Paul DeBruyn
- **Egg-sellant play:** Sean Graham
- **Return to Form trophy:** Matt Papple
- **Best Equipment:** Braeden Gregory
- **Seriously Guy?:** Jamie Ohhhh-nooooo

- **Take up Space Award:** JY
- **You Have to Love Him:** Bob Kivinen
- **He Does Care About Shinny:** Chadlatty
- **Where'd He Go?:** Kirk Mackenzie
- **I Miss Kirk Trophy:** Chris Vanderpols
- **Kneel to the King:** Rob Malcolm
- **Great Wall of Defence:** Bruce Mitchell
- **Plumbing be Darned!:** Opy
- **Speed times Two:** Tyler Stam
- **Barricade on D:** Ben Stevenson
- **Tony Stark Ironman:** Camstone
- **Gdańsk 1992 Memories:** Andrew Bak
- **Muffin Magic Trophy:** Ken Grasley
- **Saved our Day:** Greg Montour
- **Scoring Optional:** Ryan Neufeld
- **Zone in the Zone:** Goalie Camaryn
- **Scapa Flow Sub Award:** Brian Kenney

And with these recognitions, we say so long to the 2026 Dusters Season. Thank you to the Paris Independent for your support of local and community groups!

WWW.GRANTHAVEN.COM

SEPTEMBER IS WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Changing the Narrative on Suicide

KickBack seeks local voices to share mental health stories for upcoming series

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

After more than a decade of encouraging people to speak openly about mental health, the team behind KickBack is looking for new voices willing to share their stories — and potentially help someone else feel less alone.

The locally produced mental health series is preparing for its 11th year and organizers are inviting people from Brantford, Brant County and the surrounding community to take part in conversations expected to air early next year.

Producer Ben Strasser said one lesson has remained clear after years of listening to people talk candidly about their experiences: mental health struggles are far more common than they may appear.

“One of the biggest things I have learned over the last decade is that, in one way or another, everyone struggles with their mental health,” Strasser said.

“The circumstances may be different and the severity may be different, but so

many people are carrying things that nobody else can see. Unfortunately, a large number of us still feel like we have to carry those struggles alone. We don't reach out, we don't talk about what we are feeling, and that isolation can very quickly create a spiral.”

That desire to break through isolation has been central to KickBack since its creation. Previous editions have brought conversations about mental health into familiar community settings rather than traditional studios, featuring people speaking about subjects ranging from parenting and grief to trauma, addiction, recovery and workplace stress. Last year's series featured more than 30 conversations filmed across Brantford and Brant County.

This year, Strasser said organizers want to hear from people with a wide range of experiences, including those who may question whether their own story is important enough to tell.

“The first thing I would tell someone is that nobody's story carries more weight than someone else's,” he said.

“We have a tendency to compare our struggles and convince ourselves that what we have experienced isn't serious enough, difficult enough or important enough to talk about. But our struggles are our own, and what someone is carrying should never be diminished simply because someone else may be going through something different.”

Potential participants could include someone currently experiencing mental health challenges, someone who has emerged from a difficult period, a family member or caregiver who has supported another person, or a professional working in the mental health field.

Strasser said participants remain in control of what they choose to discuss.

“You don't have to have everything figured out. You just have to be willing to have a conversation.”

For people interested in learning more before deciding whether to participate, KickBack will hold its first information night Sept. 18 from 7 to 9 p.m. at Up Yoga + Wellness in Paris.

People can meet the team, ask questions and learn what taking part involves without making a commitment.

Organizers are also using social media to reach potential participants and reconnecting with people who have previously appeared on KickBack, either to hear where their journeys have taken them or connect with others who may have a story to share.

Strasser said one encouraging change has been seeing more men step forward to discuss their mental health and have conversations that have traditionally been difficult for many men to have openly.

“We have personally seen an increase in men reaching out to us, sharing their struggles and wanting to be part of these conversations,” he said. “Seeing that shift happening gives me a lot of hope and is a huge reason why I want to keep pushing this project forward.”

While KickBack is intended to normalize conversations about mental health broadly, its message also intersects with suicide prevention, particularly the importance of reducing isolation and encouraging people to reach out before they reach a crisis point.

“When someone is struggling, it can become very easy to believe that nobody understands, nobody cares or that the people around them would somehow be better off without them,” Strasser said. “One of the things these conversations can do is challenge that isolation.”

“There are people who care. There are people who would notice if you weren't here. There are people who want the opportunity to help.”

Strasser said speaking about difficult thoughts and feelings can itself be an important first step toward finding support.



(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Paris Councillor Lukas Oakley was one of several people interviewed during the 2026 Kickback for Mental Health series.

“I also believe there is tremendous power in saying out loud what you are going through. Keeping everything inside can allow those thoughts and feelings to become bigger and heavier. Talking to someone can begin to take some of that power away and, hopefully, connect someone with support before they reach a crisis point.”

The conversations can also help friends, relatives, coworkers and others better recognize when somebody around them may be struggling and understand the importance of listening.

After more than 80 hours of conversations recorded through KickBack over the years, Strasser said one story from the project's early days continues to illustrate what organizers hope the series can accomplish.

He learned of a family, two parents and their two children, who were watching KickBack together around their dinner table. During a commercial break, one child began talking about something they had been struggling with. The other child followed, then their mother.

Eventually, their father began talking too. “From what I was told, he was someone who rarely showed emotion and certainly wasn't someone who normally talked openly about his feelings,” Strasser said.

“But something about hearing other people share their stories created enough safety around that dinner table for the entire family to become vulnerable with one another.”

Strasser said KickBack does not suggest that an interview or video can solve someone's mental health challenges. Instead, its purpose is to create an opening for conversations that might otherwise never happen.

“We aren't pretending that a video or an interview can solve someone's problems. What we can do is start a conversation that may not have happened otherwise.”

“And sometimes one conversation can change everything.”

GUARDIAN Network **Agriculture Wellness Ontario**

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Grieving a Suicide Loss: Making Space for What Remains



ASK THE GRIEF COACH By Tammy Adams

Grief is one of the most difficult conversations we have in North America. For those who have experienced the suicide of someone they love, grief can become even more overwhelming, complicated by emotions and questions that may have no clear answers.

Grief after suicide loss can feel endless, especially when we continue searching for answers to questions that may never have them.

We may feel stuck, as though we are unable to move forward, consumed by the endless what ifs and whys.

When a loved one dies by suicide, the griever is left not only with the sadness and conflicting emotions of grief, but often with additional emotions of guilt, blame, shame, anger and the fear of being judged.

While grief itself can feel isolating, grieving the suicide of a friend or loved one can make it difficult to be open and honest about what we are feeling. We may fear how others will perceive our emotions or worry that people will not understand.

Those grieving a suicide loss can also feel disconnected from who they were before the loss. Experiencing something traumatic can do that. We are trying to process what has happened while, at the same time, trying to make sense of something that may never fully make sense.

Without the tools to work through our emotions, we can easily reach for ways to avoid or escape the pain.

The Grief Recovery Institute identifies six common myths about grief:

1. Don't feel bad.
2. Replace the loss.

3. Grieve alone.
4. Time heals all wounds.
5. Be strong.
6. Keep busy.

Most of us have also learned to avoid or escape painful feelings through substances and behaviours that may provide short-term relief from emotional pain. These can include food, alcohol, recreational/prescription drugs, smoking/vaping, shopping, work, gambling, TV, reading, exercise, gaming, sex, social media, exercise, sleep, isolation, and anger.

These behaviours do not necessarily mean someone is weak or doing something wrong. Often, they are attempts to cope with feelings that seem too painful or overwhelming to face.

So, how can we show up for someone who is grieving the suicide of a loved one?

Sometimes, the answer is simpler than we think.

- Hold space.
- Ask questions.
- Say the person's name aloud.
- Listen without offering an opinion.

We cannot know exactly how another person is feeling, but we can encourage them not to disappear. We can encourage them not to change the subject or avoid the emotions they are experiencing. Most importantly, we can remind them that they do not have to protect us from their pain. That they are not alone.

Grief is a lonely and exhausting experience, and grieving the suicide of someone we love is a pain that many people carry silently.

A suicide death can disrupt the natural process of grieving. When there are unanswered questions, the mind may continue searching for answers. When stigma enters the picture, the heart may begin protecting itself from pain, judgment and misunderstanding.

It is important to know that what you are feeling is normal.

You have experienced a devastating loss, and few of us are taught how to process this kind of pain. You are not weak because you are struggling. And you do not have to justify the length or depth of your grief to anyone.

Grievors can often feel misunderstood. They may feel that they are expected to resolve their emotions within a certain timeline or that they should be processing their grief in a way that makes other people

more comfortable.

I overheard a mother explain something to her four-year-old son the other day that stayed with me. She told him that taking care of her was not his job. Taking care of herself was her job.

I believe the same can be applied to grief after suicide loss.

It is not the responsibility of the support person to try to "fix" the griever. It is not the responsibility of the griever to manage other people's discomfort with their grief. And it is not the griever's responsibility to protect their loved one who has died or even to protect themselves.

Healing from suicide loss does not mean forgetting the person you love.

It does not mean approving of what happened.

And it does not require forcing yourself to find completion.

Instead, healing can mean gently making space for what feels unfinished.

It can mean releasing, little by little, the weight of guilt and shame that was never yours to carry.

It can mean learning to integrate the loss into your life without allowing it to define every part of your present.

And, over time, it can mean discovering how to carry your person forward, not only through the pain of how they died, but through the love, the memories and the legacy they have left behind.

For those struggling to process these emotions on their own, the Grief Recovery

Method is an action-oriented educational program that gently guides people through the many emotions and unfinished business that can remain in a relationship with someone who is no longer physically present in their lives.

The process can help untangle what is yours to carry and what is not.

One of the first understandings can be this: **You are not broken, and you do not need to be fixed.** What you need is to be heard; to be listened to with dignity, compassion and support.

There is no simple answer to suicide loss. There is no perfect timeline for grief, and there is no single way to grieve.

But there is a way forward.

It begins with allowing ourselves to acknowledge what hurts, rather than running from it. It begins with creating space for the questions, the anger, the guilt, the sadness and the love.

And perhaps most importantly, it begins with recognizing that we do not have to carry all of it alone.

Healing is possible. Not because the loss disappears, but because with compassion, support and the right tools, we can learn how to carry it differently.

Tammy Adams is a Certified Coach Practitioner & Grief Recovery Method Specialist supporting individuals Canada-wide. To learn more about The Grief Recovery Method please visit www.tadams.ca or contact Tammy for a free consultation.



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Hidden Gem Offers an unexpected journey through art, science and history

WENDY LAMOND

Grant Haven Media

One of the perks of my job is to be able to meet some inspiring people and to come across some hidden gems in our community that need to be shared.

I came across one of these hidden gems when I met with Elena Dumitru and took a tour of the Art of Ideas Gallery located at 236 Jones St. East in St. Marys.

Many people in our town know the house. It is that big beautiful red brick home at the corner of Jones and King Street that has unique architecture and some very creative art on the lawn. What many don't know is that inside one can find stunning art and creations, all brilliantly displayed in a story telling format from the ingenious mind of Romanian Canadian artist Eugen-Florin Zamfirescu, who is also Dumitru's husband. Many artists have one genre or one colour palette. What makes Zamfirescu so unique is his willingness to cross categories when expressing his creative visions, whether it be oil paintings, sculptures, photography, installation art and so much more. The couple are both Romanian. After leaving their native country, they lived in England for six years and then decided to move to Toronto. When the apartment that they were living in was filling up with art, they decided it was time for more space. Originally, they were looking in Stratford but took a drive St. Marys where they came across, and fell in love with, their current

house, which was for sale at the time. After a series of events that fell into place, one being their current street in Toronto was King Street to the house of their dreams being also on a King Street, the couple felt like it was meant to be. The rest, as they say, is history.

The Art of Ideas Gallery has been open for close to four years now and offers three guided tours. No matter which tour you take, you will experience the whole space as well as the art.

"An Unexpected Journey" takes approximately 90 minutes and is a journey into the mind of Zamfirescu, a tour where you will learn about his art and artistic ethos, about our past, present as well as a possible future. As you travel to the upper galleries, you will be swept from string theory into deep space.

Many visitors have shared with Dumitru that the name "An Unexpected Journey" is exactly how they describe the tour. It goes over and above what they were anticipating.

The second tour is called "Echoes of Elegance". This tour also takes approximately 90 minutes but covers a history of the house, its unique architecture and most famous inhabitants, fascinating stories about pieces of furniture and more, a truly wonderful journey through time.

"Dial, Discover and Dream: A Fascinating Tour of Ingenious Machines" is the third tour. For someone that enjoys vintage measuring and communication equipment,

consider this one. It is a journey through imagination, progression, and technology of the past, present and future.

The tours are available on Saturdays, Sundays and Monday in the summer. However, if the times for the set tours are not doable, Dumitru said that they are flexible and will find a time that does work for other days and times of the year. The set times can be found on their website at <https://www.artofideasgallery.com>.

What makes Art of Ideas Unique is that it is not a public gallery, nor a private commercial gallery. It is a private home and an artist studio full of stories to be told and heard, all originating from a brilliant mind.

According to Dumitru, Zamfirescu doesn't like to be put in a square because his mind is not in a square. "He loves arts, he loves science, he loves technology, history, time, old instruments and so much more. He also loves carpentry, taking things apart and creating things, so you can just imagine the curiosity that drives his creativity." She said.

What caught my attention walking in was not only the old bend work woodworking but Zamfirescu's oil paintings in the lower gallery. The paintings tell a story from the history of civilization. Each painting took the artist a year to complete as he uses the techniques of the Old Masters of the Renaissance. Every painting represents a period of time in or history, from primitive times, to present, to far into our future. One of the paintings depicts a ship in a storm symbolizing difficult times such as war, plague or any other hardships that we as humans have encountered throughout history.

Another picture that stood out is one of Dumitru's father who passed away three years ago. The painting is called MNE-

MOSYNE (the Goddess of Memory). It is of an old cowboy who can no longer ride a horse but by holding the saddle, can remember the old days. Dumitru's father was the model, and the details are so accurate that according to Dumitru, if her dad was there, his hand would be identical to the painting. As we arrive in the upper galleries we encounter the String Theory series, a group of paintings that involves elements from the periodic table. Every atom in the universe vibrates, but we as humans, cannot hear that vibration. In the creative mind of Zamfirescu, he has put into painting how these elements, these atoms would look and sound when being played as a frequency generator in a musical instrument. The beauty of it is also the fact in every painting there is a hand of real musician.

What does the future hold for the gallery? According to Dumitru, there is so much potential to tap in to. There are potential garden tours and interactive art tours for kids. One suggestion that we discussed was the possibility of an art show that includes art, music, poetry and film.

I could go on about this remarkable place, but it needs to be seen in person to appreciate all of Zamfirescu's creations.

"The goal of art and the goal of our gallery is to open new horizons, to help the viewer see inside the mind of an artist, in this case a living artist. Art is open to interpretation, which makes it even more interesting because its meaning can differ from one person to the next, depending on how it is viewed." Said Dumitru.

Not only is seeing Zamfirescu's creations inspiring, but the knowledge also that Dumitru has when running a tour is very inspiring. Be prepared to learn a lot. Not only will you learn about the past, but you will also open your mind to the future.

Paris Shops Poker Run for the Food Bank

CHRIS WHELAN

Editor

The rumble of high-octane engines and the gleam of polished chrome are coming to town as the Paris Shops Poker Run prepares to take over the roads on Saturday, September 19th. Rain or shine, vehicle lovers from across the region will gather in Paris, Ontario, turning a shared passion for motor culture into direct support for a critical local cause, the Paris Food Bank. The event embraces every corner of the garage. Pristine European tuners, roaring muscle cars, vintage hot rods, custom trucks, and motorcycles of every shape and size will stand side by side. If it has wheels and you are proud to drive it, it belongs in the lineup.

The adventure begins long before the ignitions turn on Saturday morning. Drivers start by securing their spot online through a quick, two-minute pre-registration at parisrun.ca. Bright and early on event day, participants head straight to the registration desk to check

in, submit their twenty-dollar cash entry fee, and collect their official numbers.

At 9:00 AM, the first wave of engines roars to life as vehicles roll out onto the open road. Drivers receive their secret route on the morning of the event, guiding them through a curated tour of local shops tucked inside Paris and neighboring communities. At each stop, participants grab a playing card, steadily building their five-card hand as they navigate the countryside. By early afternoon, the convoy makes its way back to home base to reveal their final hands. Friendly rivalries will settle over who drew the winning hand, alongside awards for People's Choice and local community prizes. As the final engines switch off, the grill fires up shortly after noon, bringing drivers, neighbors, and supporters together for a classic community barbecue to wrap up a day built on good rides and local pride. Drivers looking to join the pack can secure their spot today at parisrun.ca or contact organizers directly at interested@parisrun.ca.

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Roller Skating, St. George Memories, and a Lesson in Humble Pie

STONES Around Town

By Jeff Johnston (a.k.a. Stones)

Well, here we are the Paris Fair is right around the corner, school is back in session, and if you've noticed lately, it's getting darker earlier, plus that partial eclipse! Something is definitely in the air. I even met Ben Kubelski recently, who turned out to be quite the character.

I went out for a bike ride the other day, and the young kid across the street nailed me when he asked why I wasn't wearing a helmet. He had me dead to rights! I bobbed, I weaved and did a little Ali-style "rope-a-dope," but I had nothing. I acknowledged his question, but after a generous helping of humble pie, all I could offer was, "Well, I'm over 18!"

Ten minutes later, I was off on my ride, and the next thing you know, I caught a rut in the gravel on Elm Street and wiped out. Mel happened to show up and helped me to my feet, but I've got a cartoon-sized big toe to show for it now. I'll live, but since we can pave West Broadway, can we please pave the 60-foot patch of gravel on Elm Street? Or at least give the folks there an idea of when it might happen?

The silver lining was running into a friend I first met back in the day while roller skating out in St. George. It seemed like all roads led to the village at different times in our youth. Margie, a retired literature professor who just moved back to the area, is even going to help me with my Longfellow!

The road to St. George was never a direct route, especially on roller skates, with Sue G. spinning the hottest vinyl and taking song requests. The St. George Arms remains one of my absolute favorite stops: great food, a wonderful patio, and quite the cast of characters. Whether it's Karl, Tim, or Rob manning the bar, you need a bit of thick skin because those boys are witty! I almost always spot Lisa Foulds when

I'm in there, too.

From gravel pit parties and the artesian well at the Legion, to the Legion itself, there is so much to see and do in the village. They tell me Jason over at the hardware store is the man to know, so making his acquaintance is my next mission, I know the Drongkowski's Farm Market and Deli and I love it there.

Why, a few of us even played NBC hockey out that way for a few years representing The Kalico, and it was a blast. In my eyes, St. George has the best arena and ball parks in the county, and the hall at the rink is top-notch. Well done to everyone in the village for always supporting one another. Apple Fest is always fantastic and keeps getting more popular, and let's not forget Howell's Orchards. Plus, there's always a classic PDHS story floating around, like the legendary prank by "BR Triple III."

There was just something magical about roller skating out there. A bunch of us would even boot it down Highway 24 before catching a ride. It gave us a chance to stay connected and keep in touch, especially during the summer. I remember the Sharp buses going right past us, attaboy John, Bill, and family! A tip of the hat to Sharpie and Shawna for all the good deeds they do quietly behind the scenes.

There are so many great folks out that way: Martin and Penny, Don and Julie, and Bev R., who is always smiling. Depending on which route you take, you're bound to run into a McComb or a Rosebrugh along the way. A special hello to Peter, it's always good to see you, my friend, and always with a smile. Brantwood Farms is right on the way, too.

I've traveled Mud Road (went down it once years ago!), Branchton Road, Cheese Factory Road, and let's not forget Harrisburg. Keep in mind, they were playing women's hockey out in St. George long before it was widely organized. Sandy Boyd, who is on the Wall of Fame, started her career right there alongside other stars. I was there once and witnessed a full bench brawl, sorry, but it was awesome to see, and what a great ice pad!

There has always been a special kinship between our communities, one I hope will always remain. Even with a

little friendly ribbing as we grow together, it's up to us to welcome all newcomers and share in the St. George spirit. We made lifelong friends there whom we'd see every day in high school and beyond. And who could forget the local fish fry? That's always a community favorite.

Still, I have to tip my hat to Sue G. You had that place rocking, Sue, and you made it a whole lot easier to ask a girl to couple-skate, which is how I ended up asking Kelly!

My toe is healing up nicely now. A special hello to Stephanie, whom I met over at No Frills; I handed her a copy of the paper with an innocent smile, ready to carry her groceries out Red & White style!

Before I go, I want to send out a few quick shout-outs. Rest in peace to Mr. and Mrs. White, Ron Eddy, and Bob and Scott Mason. I'd also like to wish a very happy birthday to Billy B, Chopper, Maime, and Darlene Cox, as well as a happy anniversary to Pat and Brenda Lewis. A big hello goes out to my buddy Rex, who is heading into Grade 3, and my neighbor Christopher, who is starting Grade 1, wow, that really takes you back! Finally, I want to give a tip of the hat to the Dick Emerson Golf Tournament (great work, boys!) and the Cruickshank family tournament, both of which showcased our community at its best with lots of fun had by all.

If I've left anything out regarding St. George, please forgive me and feel free to pass along more tidbits or goings-on. So yes, Bev R., just like there's a Santa Claus, St. George matters! It's another amazing, amusing part of this great County of Brant, and I'm proud to have kinfolk out that way.

Please slow down when you're coming into the Flats on Willow Street or coming in on East River Road. As someone who has been hit by a car, I can tell you it happens in the blink of an eye. If my Dad were here, he'd be yelling "Slow down!" Gordie-style. Remember, we may not always agree on everything, but let's not lose friendships along the way. Respect, kindness, and open discussion go a very long way.

All the best, folks, and don't forget to tip your waitresses! I'm here all week, so call a cab, an Uber, or a friend, life is too short to let it end prematurely. Smile, say hello, and if thinking about roller skating in St. George brings back fond memories for you like it does for me, then so be it.

As for Sue G.: keep loving Canning, keep on rocking, and thanks for the memories, the great tunes, and for making it easier to ask a girl named Kelly to skate.

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Homes of Heroes Honours the Veterans of the First World War



NEIL EDWARDS

Paris Independent Contributor

Jairus Maus was born on February 1, 1880, in South Dumfries Township, the son of Henry and Elizabeth Maus. He grew up on a farm just north of Paris. Jairus attended Maus School and Paris High School. Later he went west to fill a responsible banking position. He was working in Victoria, British Columbia when he enlisted with the 50th Regiment of the Gordon Highlanders on November 7, 1914, placing him among the first Canadians to volunteer during the First World War. On arrival in England, he was transferred to the 16th Battalion, the Canadian Scottish Regiment.

Jairus was serving with the 16th during the Battle of Langemarck. It was a major phase of the Second Battle of Ypres and the defining, legendary moment for the 16th Battalion. Langemarck is in West Flanders, Belgium, eight kilometers northeast of Ypres. It was here, during the late-night hours of April 22–23, 1915, that the battalion engaged in one of the most famous and costly actions in Canadian military history, the counterattack on Kitchener's Wood.

On the afternoon of April 22, 1915, the German Army released 160 tons of chlorine gas near Langemarck. It was the first

time that lethal poison gas was used on a massive scale. The toxic cloud decimated French colonial troops on the Canadian left flank, causing the French to retreat and leaving a catastrophic four-mile gap in the Allied front line. The Germans were poised to sweep through and capture Ypres. To plug the gap, the 16th Battalion and the 10th Battalion (Calgary) were ordered to launch a desperate, immediate counterattack into Kitchener's Wood, an oak plantation near Langemarck that the Germans had occupied. Without time for reconnaissance or artillery preparation, the two battalions formed up in the dark. At 11:46 PM, 816 men stepped off into No Man's Land in complete silence.

Halfway across, they hit a thick, wire-interlaced hedge. As they used their rifle butts to smash through it, German flares illuminated the field, and devastating machine-gun fire tore into their ranks. Screaming and charging with fixed bayonets, the Canadians broke into the wood, overpowering the German defenders in brutal, hand-to-hand combat and recapturing a British artillery battery. The 16th and 10th Battalions successfully cleared the woods and dug in, blocking the German advance. However, they remained heavily exposed and vastly outnumbered. They endured severe shelling and subsequent gas attacks over the next several days before finally being relieved.

The victory came at a horrific price. When the roll call was taken the morning after the initial charge, the 16th Battalion, which had started with 816 men, had only 268 men left standing. This heroic sacrifice at Langemarck forged the fierce reputation of the Canadian Corps but resulted in a staggering casualty rate of nearly 70% for the battalion in a single night. The Allied

supreme commander, Marshal Ferdinand Foch, later called this assault "the greatest act of the war."

Jairus survived the battle, though he wrote home that "it was a sad, sad roll call." The following day, supplies were needed for the men and Jairus volunteered to get them. He was caught by enemy fire and received the severe gunshot wounds that ultimately claimed his life. Jairus was eventually taken to the 4th General Hospital in Lincoln, England where he suffered for eight months. His mother and sister visited him there before his death on December 5, 1915. His body was brought back to Paris and a public service was held in the St. Paul's Methodist (now United) Church. The funeral was conducted by the 125th Brant Battalion who honoured Jairus full military honours. His selflessness in volunteering to look after his fellow soldiers after already surviving one of the war's most terrifying battles himself is the defining example of his heroic courage.

Private Jairus Alexander Maus is buried in the Paris Plains Church Cemetery.

Homes of Heroes chose to honour the courage and sacrifice of Jairus Maus for a number of reasons. Our plan this past year has been to research and tell the stories of the men and women from Paris who served in the First World War. Jairus Maus was an easy choice to begin with because he was one of the first to enlist in the war and one of the first from Paris to lose his life. Also, the same selfless heroism and sacrifice shown by Jairus was shown by many of the nearly 150 veterans of WW1 who we have researched so far, even though we may never know the details of many of those veterans who fought and died.

Jairus also helps us to emphasize another priority we set for ourselves this year. We

want to recognize that all of these veterans did not come from the town of Paris alone but from the greater Paris community, from South Dumfries and Brant Townships, for example. As you may already know, one way that Homes of Heroes wants to honour our veterans is to place a sign in front of the homes where they once lived. The response we received last fall from the Paris community, especially from those current homeowners who allowed us to place a sign on their property, was gratifying. We would also like to place signs where veterans from the wider community lived as well, but we do not know the addresses where they lived. But we do know that the memories of men and women in our farming communities are long, and so we are reaching out to those residents, as well as to people in Paris itself, to help us out.

If you know the addresses of any veterans from the Paris community who served in the military, not just from the First World War but from any time in our history, please let us know. Or if you have photos or details of their lives that you can share, please contact us at info@homesofheroes.ca. With the invaluable assistance of researchers at the Paris Museum, we have already uncovered upwards of 500 veterans from the Paris community, but for some we have precious few details. If you can help to fill in those details, please reach out. Also, if you have any questions about the Homes of Heroes project, you can contact us at the same email address. You can also learn about us at our website www.homesofheroes.ca. And keep looking for our articles in the Paris Independent. We will be telling a new story of courage and sacrifice every other week until Remembrance Day. Paris truly is a home of heroes. Help us to tell their stories.

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Riddles

I'm found in December, but not in January, February, or March.
What am I?

The letter D

--

I'm bought to be used, but I'm thrown away after I'm used.
What am I?

A tissue

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 18



September Meat Draw Saturday

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PET OF THE WEEK

KRITZ

Meet our Pet of the Week:

Kritz has been working on her fitness in the pool at the Willowgrove Animal Wellness Center, located in Princeton. She had a previous knee injury and is successfully building muscle while learning to swim. Way to go Kritz! We are proud of you!

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



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L S E N S A T I O N A L F U H J X T S K
E S I G N A T U R E S B E L N S F B L H
M H H H D M N H J U M K W E O S Q B Q N
K B S L F P O D S T M O Y K P W H K E Z
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SANDWICH
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- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Dove | 7. Carbon dioxide |
| 2. Wright brothers | 8. Mark Twain |
| 3. Hand | 9. Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance |
| 4. Seven | 10. Semisonic |
| 5. Ten | |
| 6. Blue, Black, White | |

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



WEEKLY Horoscope

September 2 - September 8 2026

ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 20



Fresh energy surrounds you, Aries. A new opportunity brings motivation and confidence. Stay positive—it encourages progress and exciting possibilities ahead.

TAURUS Apr 21 - May 21



A sense of stability returns, Taurus. A thoughtful choice brings confidence and renewed optimism. Trust yourself—it leads to steady progress ahead.

GEMINI May 22 - Jun 21



Fresh ideas inspire you, Gemini. An unexpected conversation opens new possibilities. Stay curious—it encourages creativity and positive change ahead.

CANCER Jun 22 - Jul 22



Comfort and harmony surround you, Cancer. A meaningful moment strengthens your confidence. Follow your heart—it brings closer connections and happiness ahead.

LEO Jul 23 - Aug 23



Your hard work begins to shine, Leo. A rewarding moment brings recognition and confidence. Stay focused—it opens exciting opportunities ahead.

VIRGO Aug 24 - Sept 22



A positive change brings fresh momentum, Virgo. Trust your instincts—they guide you toward progress and rewarding possibilities ahead.

LIBRA Sept 23 - Oct 23



Balance returns, Libra. A welcome opportunity brings renewed confidence and optimism. Stay open—it creates meaningful connections and positive progress ahead.

SCORPIO Oct 24 - Nov 22



Your patience pays off, Scorpio. A promising development brings confidence and encouragement. Believe in yourself—it leads to lasting progress ahead.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 23 - Dec 21



Adventure calls, Sagittarius. An exciting opportunity brings fresh enthusiasm and confidence. Follow your instincts—it leads to memorable experiences ahead.

CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 20



Your efforts begin to pay off, Capricorn. A small victory brings renewed confidence. Stay focused—it moves you closer to an important goal.

AQUARIUS Jan 21 - Feb 18



Fresh inspiration arrives, Aquarius. Trust your creativity—it brings confidence and meaningful progress ahead.

PISCES Feb 19 - Mar 20



A pleasant surprise lifts your spirits, Pisces. Trust your feelings—they bring happiness and strengthen meaningful connections.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EMAIL TO INQUIRE INFO@THEPARISINDEPENDENT.COM

SEPTEMBER 5 & 6

Afro-CariBrant Festival - returns to Lion's Park Paris for a free two-day celebration of African, Caribbean, and Black culture. In its fourth year, this vibrant event continues to celebrate the rich cultural contributions of African and Caribbean communities through music, food, art, dance, and storytelling, welcoming thousands of attendees from across the County of Brant, the City of Brantford, and surrounding regions. More information available at www.afrocaribrantfestival.org.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Brant County Men's Probus Club Meeting - The Brant County Men's Probus Club meeting is on Tuesday, September 8th, 2026 at 10 AM at the Sherwood Restaurant 799 Colborne Street in Brantford. The Annual General Meeting will include several members' presentations. New members are always welcome.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Catholic Women's League Monthly Meeting - Wednesday, September 9th at 7 PM in the Sacred Heart Parish Hall, 17 Washington Street, Paris.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Brant Heritage Quilters Guild: - Will be holding their 1st monthly meeting of the season on Thursday, September 10 at St. George United Church, 9 Beverly St., E. St. George. Doors open at 6:15pm with meeting start time 8pm. New members welcome. Cost for non-members \$5/meeting.

Women Inspiring Women Women's Institute Meeting: - Kick off a fun and flexible Fall with Jessica Pacey, Pilates expert and RMT on September 10th, 7-9pm. Pls note this month's meeting will be held at the Paris Curling Club.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 15, 22 & 29

Brant Men of Song Choir Practices - The Brant Men of Song will be holding their choir practices on Tuesdays on September 8h, 15th, 22nd, and 29th at the First Baptist Church 70 West St., Brantford from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. New members are always welcome to attend and enjoy some singing.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Brant For Nature's Annual Bird Walk- Kick off the fall season with Brant for Nature's annual Bird Walk on Saturday, Sept. 12 at 8 a.m. at Waterworks Park in Brantford. Participants of all experience levels are welcome to explore local birdlife and enjoy a guided morning in nature. Register at brantfornature.ca.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Decoration Day and Memorial Service- at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, in Mt. Pleasant, on Sunday, September 13 at 2pm. Bring a lawn chair. A fellowship time will follow the service. In case of rain, the service will be held at Mt. Pleasant United Church.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Etonia Princeton United Church - 101 #2 Hwy. Etonia. Roast Beef Dinner (with pie and refreshments) 5:00 to 6:30 p.m | Adults \$25; children (12 and under) \$6; preschoolers free Tickets at the door. Takeout available. Wheelchair accessible.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Knights of Columbus Monthly Meeting - on Tuesday, September 25th at 7:30 PM in the Sacred Heart Parish hall at 17 Washington Street, Paris.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

8th Annual Heroes Walk and Roll Fundraiser -in support of Lansdowne Children's Centre at Brant Park, 119 Jennings Rd. Everyone is invited out to come together in support of infants, children, and youth, facing communication, physical, and developmental needs. The hero-themed event provides family-friendly entertainment, exciting activities, accessible games, interactive experiences, and plenty of opportunities to celebrate our favourite heroes. Learn more about how you can dress up, show up and participate at <https://www.lansdownecentre.ca/heroeswalkandroll>.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

Grand River Women's Probus Club: grandriver.probuscanada.ca - invites semi-retired and retired women to its monthly meeting on Monday, Sept. 28, from 10 a.m. to noon at Best Western Hotel, 19 Holiday Dr., Brantford. Come for friendship, fellowship and an interesting presentation by Robert Stanczyk, Curator of Bell Homestead. New faces are always welcome! See the website for attendance details.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

Oxford Philatelic Society Circuit Book (Stamp) Fair: Church of the Epiphany, 560 Dundas Street, Woodstock Ontario N4S 1C7. 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Free Admission & Parking. Stop in and buy some stamps and meet fellow stamp collectors. About 8 participating stamp clubs. Contact: dheaton3e3@gmail.com. Website: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>

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