

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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Oxford County paramedic system under strain

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Ambulance response times are increasing in the county, and Oxford County is considering how best to respond to the growing demand. As the county's population continues to grow in both rural and urban areas, officials say new strategies and resources may be necessary to ensure timely emergency care for residents.

East Zorra-Tavistock and Zorra have the poorest response times in the county, mainly due to the fact the two towns have seen high population growth.

"Tavistock and Thamesford used to be called small settlements, but they are pretty well-established areas where historically there haven't been ambulance stations," explained Ryan Hall, the county's Chief of Paramedic Services. "We have had them where the majority of the calls are, which is Woodstock, Tillsonburg and Ingersoll."

Norwich and Drumbo also have stations and there is another location just north of Embro. Hall said the growth in the rural areas is expected to continue.

"With long-term care beds being opened in Tavistock and the former Maple Leaf property in Thamesford being zoned for residential development. That's going to make it even worse," he added.

Hall explained rural areas received a few calls every month twenty years ago but now 15 to 20 is more the norm.

"It has crept up quite slowly, but we are at that threshold now where it makes sense to respond to these areas from a closer location."

Woodstock City/County Coun. Bernia Martin asked Hall at a recent county meeting if the paramedic service has the capacity to respond appropriately to the rise in call numbers.

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(RON YUZARK PHOTO)

HIKE FOR HOSPICE

Participants of the 23rd Annual Hike for Hospice set off along the trail, led by the sound of John's bagpipes. The event brought together families, friends, and even four-legged companions to raise funds directly supporting VON Sakura House. Full story on page 30.

Oxford County conducting a forensic investigation after cyber attack

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Oxford County has released a few more details regarding what is now being called a "cybersecurity incident," but very few details are known.

"Last week, we shared that Oxford County was responding to a technical incident relating to its information system," said a Monday afternoon press release. "We shared this update ahead of full information to be as open as possible, as early as possible, with residents and partners."

The county's communications department has confirmed the following details:

- Oxford County was subject to a cybersecurity incident. As soon as information technology (IT) staff identified unexpected activity, they worked to prevent any further unauthorized activity.

- The county engaged third-party cybersecurity experts to assist with containment, remediation and to conduct a forensic investigation.

- In addition to the measures in place before this incident, the county is working with third-party cybersecurity experts to introduce additional security measures as needed to mitigate potential future harm to its system.

- At this time, all systems are operating normally and there are no changes to the service provided to the public.

"Our focus from the start has been, and will continue to be, determining whether and to what extent information within our systems may be compromised," said Warden Marcus Ryan. "We operate with a high degree of caution and awareness when it comes to cybersecurity. It is disappointing for us to share this news, and we acknowledge the concern it may cause for our residents and partners."

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3



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Municipality remains tight-lipped about “technical incident”

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The Echo reached out to Carmi Levy, a well-known London-based technology expert, for his thoughts on the situation. He explained when governments, organizations, or other public-facing entities fall victim to a cybercrime, they often find themselves forced to strike a balance between informing their stakeholders of what has happened and not tipping off the attackers or otherwise worsening an already challenging situation.

“It’s a bit like walking a high wire because there’s a very fine line between just enough and too much. The harsh reality of the immediate aftermath of a cyberattack is the county may not necessarily know all the specific details of how the event played out, what caused it, what’s impacted, what isn’t, what’s safe to continue using and what needs to be sidelined while the investigation continues.”

He added the recovery often involves days, weeks, or even months of painstaking detective work to fully understand the breadth and depth of the attack and build an appropriate recovery strategy that balances safety, cost and risk minimization.

“This effort requires the input of a wide range of competencies, which the county may or may not already have on staff. And as they work with newly engaged third-party specialists to investigate and recover, they’re challenged with continuing to maintain an optimal level of service to residents even while the crisis is unfolding. It’s akin to rebuilding an airplane while in flight, and it is a tremendously difficult balancing act to pull off, hence it’s often understandable why not every last detail is necessarily shared either early on, or at all.”

Levy said the county is not deliberately withholding information from residents, adding its communications approach follows cybersecurity best practices developed through a growing number of similar incidents elsewhere.

“They’re sharing what they can share as they can share it. They have effectively set expectations that this will be an ongoing, longer-term event, and further information will be released as it becomes known, as appropriate. This is to be expected and suggests county officials are leveraging both internal-systems expertise and guidance from third-party organizations and specialists who have been engaged to manage this crisis.”

“We ask for your patience as we continue to respond to this incident. We are committed to providing you with as much information as we can, as we are able,” added Ryan, who explained municipalities are frequent targets of cyberattacks. “Please be aware that our full response to this incident may occur over months, not days. As with any type of investigation, there will be details we cannot publicly share without compromising the investigation and our response to it.”

The City of Hamilton was hit by a ransomware attack in 2024. Hackers demanded about \$18.5 million, but the city refused to pay. Instead, most systems were restored from backups as staff worked alongside cybersecurity experts and law enforcement.

Many city services and systems were disrupted, including online payment systems, transit and telephone lines, accounts payable, licensing and permit applications, and vendor payments. Emergency services, water/wastewater treatment and curbside collection were not affected. By mid-2025, the cost to the city was about \$18.3 million for the immediate response, system recovery and external expert support.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

London-based technology expert Carmi Levy said municipalities are routinely victims of ransomware attacks and said, so far, Oxford County is still able to use all of its IT systems.

Levy explained, at least so far, the impact on the county is less pronounced than in other attacks.

“Oxford County has been able to maintain ongoing normal operations of all systems compared to other governments that have had to shut down critical systems such as websites, payment portals and even library lending platforms for months at a time. In some cases, systems were not recoverable and had to be rebuilt from scratch. So far, their systems operations do not seem to be affected, which is a major relief for residents.”

Levy added the county has likely activated an all-hands response to the crisis. In such situations, victims often establish a war room to bring together key stakeholders, including county staff and third-party experts, in a single coordinated space.

“They’ll likely be working closely together to understand how the attack happened, where the critical vulnerabilities could have been, how the attack is impacting operations, accounts and data, and what steps need to be taken in the near, mid and longer-term to close off those areas of weakness and move toward a final resolution.”

The county’s best-case scenario is that no resident information was stolen and that the root cause of the attack is identified and addressed with enhanced security measures to reduce the risk of future incidents. Levy said the worst-case scenario is far worse.

“Residents’ data is breached and they are faced with the prospect of personal information, potentially including government-issued identification, financial information and usernames and passwords falling into the hands of criminals who would then use it themselves to amplify future attacks, or sell it to other criminals who would use it for similar purposes.”

He added in the hands of criminals, personalized data can be used to craft sophisticated, customized phishing messages that mimic those originating from legitimate organizations. Authentication data can be used to attempt to break into other accounts. The data can also be shared with or sold to other criminals anywhere in the world.

“This is a risk that doesn’t simply disappear once the headlines surrounding this particular attack fade. The risks persist over time and, in fact, grow as future attacks add to the pile of breached data available on the open internet and dark web.”

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SUICIDE PREVENTION IS AVAILABLE

Recently, I listened to a CBC radio program re suicide prevention in Canada. I was not aware that there was an "Emergency Suicide Assistance Program" that we can access by dialing 988.

There is support offered 24/7 where trained people can be of help to you to find the resources and coping skills free for the asking.

The word suicide has become a reality for too many families in Canada. No one regardless of their location, education, religion, sexual orientation or wealth are immune to the danger.

We too have friends, neighbours and relatives who have to deal with the fact that suicide does not just happen to other people.

The pain of the loss of a loved one can last for many years with us constantly asking the question why?

Here are the facts according to Stats Canada 2020. Approximately 12 people a day die by suicide that comes to 4,500 deaths per year.

The numbers show us that suicide is three times higher in men compared to women. Females know when they are vulnerable and get help while we macho males choose "to just suck-it-up" and choose suicide to end the suffering.

Did you know that suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among our young adults 15-34 years of age?

Indigenous suicide stats for the people living on the Reserves are very troubling. They are three times higher than the rest of the

non Indigenous people in Canada.

The male Indigenous youth, ages 15-24 deaths are five to six times higher than other Canadians who commit suicide.

Why? Poverty drugs, alcohol abuse, crime, broken families because of the residential schools 60's scoop legacy that still lingers on in the family's memories in the First Nations communities.

It is difficult for the Indigenous people to be called "Apples" Red on the outside and White on the inside. Trying to live in two different worlds is hard to do.

All Canadians need accessible, affordable mental health care services to help sustain them when they are in need of help.

If you are contemplating committing suicide please call 988.

Len Lesser, Dorchester

The article in a recent Echo edition, Route to The Past-Battle of Britain Bravery Remembered is yet another reason for all us to give thanks to those who sacrificed so much for our freedom.

Whenever I drive past the London cemetery at Springbank and Wonderland, I always glance over at the rows of markers in the veteran's section and say a silent thank you. All our military personnel, be they active or retired, living or dead, deserve our respect and thanks 365 days of the year, not just on November 11.

*Robert Trowell
Ingersoll, Ontario*

Warden wants to hear creative thinking from paramedic staff

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

"If we were one big urban centre, we would have some capacity. Our issue is where our calls are now happening more often is further from where we have ambulances stationed," answered Hall. "We can add all the resources in Woodstock, but the laws of physics prevent us from responding to Tavistock and Thamesford at the same time as we would in Woodstock."

Deputy Warden and Ingersoll Mayor Brian Petrie asked Paramedic Chief Hall whether the 2026 budget would include measures to address diminishing response times. Hall said he is reviewing the redeployment of resources and will bring forward options for council's consideration.

East Zorra-Tavistock Mayor Phil Schaefer said he has had several discussions with Paramedic Chief Hall about where an ambulance resource could potentially be located in the township. Hall noted similar talks have taken place with Zorra.

"If we did have an ambulance resource, would we be able to partner with you in your firehalls to actively house one?

That's something we are considering."

Hall added having conversations with neighbouring municipalities is also on the table.

"Let's talk with Perth about a joint facility, joint response structure or some sort of partnership."

Oxford County Warden and Zorra Township Mayor Marcus Ryan offered a different take on the issue. He said some decisions need to be made.

"In the short-term I think it's almost inevitable we will have to add paramedics and possibly an ambulance. Other than that, there is nothing we can do that is quick. I don't love that, but it's not a surprise."

He added that in the medium to long term, council needs to have serious conversations with both themselves and residents about response times, noting the solution isn't necessarily about bricks and mortar.

"We don't really care where the ambulances are supposedly parked because the reality is they are hardly ever parked there. At the previous term of council we received a report on response times. Where the ambulances, and where does it make sense for them to be. The reality is, you can have a building where an ambulance gets parked, but it's only there for shift changes."

Ryan added an ambulance is likely going to or from one of the three Oxford County hospitals when a 911 call is made.

"In the case of Zorra Township, they aren't sitting around in the Highland yard north of Embro with their feet up waiting for a call. So, it doesn't really matter where the ambulance hall is, but it matters what the response time is. I say that be-

cause council needs to start asking for things from our staff, and I think they are ready to give it to us."

He said council's priority is ensuring residents receive the best response times, regardless of where buildings or ambulances are located.

"What is the system that does that? I think to a large extent, we kind of have that now, or pretty close. We need to potentially be willing to partner with Perth, Brant and Middlesex. We partner with them already, but I think we need to explore that partnership more to say, is it possible for residents on both sides of those borders to get better response times if we are willing to be more collaborative, look at different systems, and not be so wedded to having an ambulance parked in my community."

Ryan added that council works best when it doesn't demand a particular solution, but instead sets out the service level it wants to achieve.

"What's the service look like that gets residents the fastest ambulance response time. Who do we need to partner with, and what do we need to consider doing? We can, and I think we will probably need to, throw money at the problem short-term."

Ryan added living in rural areas has its advantages, but also its disadvantages when it comes to emergency services.

"I live on a gravel road. I don't have sidewalks or streetlights. To me, those are features. I like that. The other part of living rural is, yeah, it's going to take longer for an ambulance, as well as police and fire to get to me. That's part of the deal."

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Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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GRIFFI'S GRIPEs: What's happening with Woodstock's HART Hub



LEE GRIFFI

Editor

There was a lot of fanfare and celebration once Woodstock's HART Hub was announced on Jan. 27, when the Ministry of Health approved Woodstock Hospital's joint application with the Oxford OHT and partners.

Area politicians dealing with chronic homelessness, drug addiction, and mental health issues, particularly in Woodstock, believed the HART Hub would be a game-changer for those in need. That may still happen, but prog-

ress so far has been underwhelming.

For context, a HART Hub (Health and Resource Team Hub) is part of Ontario's effort to expand integrated, community-based health and social services. The Woodstock Hospital paid \$1.6 million from its reserves for the former PUC building at 16 Graham Street to house the facility.

One of my reliable sources recently told me that the province was slow to release start-up funding to the organizations operating Hubs across Ontario, causing delays in getting them off the ground. The government had floated a figure of \$1.8 million to support the launch of Hubs across the province.

The Woodstock Hospital, working in partnership with the local Ontario Health Team, is responsible for the community's Hub. I recently contacted the hospital's communications manager to request an update on the project's progress.

"At this time, we don't have any updates to share. When we have an update for the community, I

will certainly let you know."

I don't blame the hospital for not commenting—it seems clear they are under provincial orders to keep quiet, even if no one will say so outright. One of my sources confirmed as much. I did, however, receive a response from the press secretary for Ontario Health Minister Sylvia Jones. To call it gobbledygook would be putting it mildly.

"Our government is building a system of care focused on connecting people to treatment, support, and recovery. We are investing \$550 million to create 28 new Homelessness and Addiction Treatment Recovery (HART) Hubs across the province."

Governments are really good at regurgitating talking points and announcements.

"We continue to work with the remaining Hubs to bring new mental health, social, and addiction services, as well as supportive housing units, to the community as soon as possible, including the one that will provide services to Woodstock - all remaining Hubs have received their funding agreement letters," added the sec-

retary.

Despite that, I still have questions about the hospital's ability to get this project off the ground. It's not for lack of desire—I truly believe the will is there. But how will they handle the work needed inside the building? I drive by the site regularly, and I've seen no signs of progress. No contractors. No construction crews. Nothing. That's why I reached out to the hospital.

A journalist does journalism stuff, so I decided to look at the hospital's website to see if they are hiring for the Hub. What I found was a job opening that was posted on Tuesday of this week for a temporary, full-time Registered Nurse for the HART Hub.

"The Registered Nurse (RN) located at the Wellness Centre will provide care under the Terms & Conditions outlined by the Ministry of Health for Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub care providers," explained the posting.

The job description also includes responsibilities such as reporting staffing and client-acuity concerns to the Director of

Client Care, assessing the health status of assigned clients according to the Standards of Nursing Practice, and completing a comprehensive client history using information from the client, family, healthcare providers, and community agencies.

My question is: why is this position being posted when the Hub hasn't even opened yet? This is the only job opening on the hospital's website linked to the HART Hub—another question that deserves an answer.

Another source told me the hospital is considering several temporary venues to offer services that will eventually move to the Graham Street site. We will have to wait and see if that is the case.

As many of you know, I recently moved to Woodstock, and no one was more excited than me to hear about the HART Hub. I want this city to thrive, to be beautiful, and to support those in need. But I'll admit—my journalistic instincts kick in when those in charge refuse to answer questions. On your behalf, I'll keep asking. We all deserve to know how our tax dollars are being spent.

Woodstock Police briefs

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Police warning about bank card fraud

Woodstock Police are warning the public about an alarming rise in bank card pickup scams targeting community members. In recent days, multiple residents, including seniors, have lost tens of thousands of dollars to fraudsters using this method.

How the scam works:

- Victims receive a phone call from someone claiming to be from their bank.
- The caller ID often shows the real bank's number.
- Victims are told their card has been compromised. The scammer instructs them to cut up their cards but leave the chip/tap area intact, place them in an envelope, and hand them to a courier or leave them for pickup.
- Once fraudsters have the card and chip, they drain accounts or run up charges.

Recent incidents in Woodstock have led to victims reporting losses ranging from \$5,000 to over \$40,000.

"Suspects have posed as couriers and attended victims' homes or apartment lobbies to collect envelopes of cards," said a police press release. "Scammers used names, reference numbers, and even fake IT issues to sound legitimate."

Police say banks will never send a courier to collect your cards, never ask you to cut up a card but leave the chip intact, nor will they ask for your PIN, passwords, or one-time codes by phone.

"If you get a call like this, hang up immediately and call your bank using the official number on the back of your card (not the number provided by the caller). If you've already handed over cards or information, contact your bank and then report the incident to police," added the

release,

Police are asking Echo readers to share this message with family, friends, and neighbours, especially seniors, who are being heavily targeted.



Deputy Chief Nick Novacich (far left) recently received a Bar to the Police Exemplary Service Medal from outgoing WPS Chief Rod Wilkinson, honouring 30 years of commitment to policing and community safety. Constable Rusnak (far right) was awarded the Police Exemplary Service Medal in recognition of 20 years of dedicated service.

"Together we can prevent further victimization."

If you believe you have been targeted or defrauded, contact Woodstock Police Service at 519-537-2323 and report to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501.



(WOODSTOCK POLICE SERVICE PHOTOS)

Woodstock Terry Fox Run marks 45 years

The annual Terry Fox Run returned to Woodstock on Sunday, September 14, bringing the community together in support of cancer research. Participants of all ages gathered at Southside Park to walk, run, bike, or wheel their way along the courses, honoring the spirit of Terry Fox and his legacy of hope. This year's Run held special meaning, as it marked the 45th anniversary of Terry Fox's original Marathon of Hope in 1980—a journey that included a visit to Woodstock. The Bandshell at Southside Park served as the central hub, where volunteers and organizers welcomed participants, shared stories, and helped coordinate the day. From there, attendees set off at their own pace along the 2.5 km and 5 km routes or chose distances that best suited them. Families, teams, and individuals alike joined in, each step a reminder of the ongoing fight against cancer

and the determination Terry showed 45 years ago. The atmosphere was filled with encouragement and community spirit. Many wore T-shirts bearing Terry's iconic image, while others carried personal dedications to loved ones affected by cancer. Local supporters lined the park paths to cheer on participants, and donations continued to flow in both onsite and online. Organizers expressed gratitude to all who participated, donated, and volunteered, noting that the Woodstock Terry Fox Run has become a meaningful tradition in the community. Funds raised will go directly to the Terry Fox Foundation to support vital cancer research across Canada. As Terry Fox once said, "Even if I don't finish, we need others to continue. It's got to keep going without me." Woodstock showed once again that his legacy continues to inspire hope and action. (RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



With energy and determination, participants ran, walked and rolled in honour of Terry Fox while raising funds for cancer research.



John's years of commitment were honored as he stepped aside and welcomed Steve to carry on the Run.

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City of Woodstock looking to the public for ideas on a new website

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

There are only a few days left to do so, but the city wants to hear from residents on what they'd like to see in a new website. An online survey closes on Wednesday, Oct. 1.

Woodstock is in the process of migrating a website to a new platform due to the discontinuation of its existing content management system. As part of the transition, content is being updated to make it easier to find information about the programs and services. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete.

"The purpose of the City's website is to share information with the public and help them access programs and services offered by the city," explained Colleen Collins, the city's manager of marketing and communications. "While we can gather some information from analytics

about what people are looking for, we want to give people a chance to tell us what's working, what's not and what is important to them in their city's website."

When any organization is doing a website refresh, navigation is always one of the top priorities. Collins said the city's revamp is no different.

"It can be challenging to navigate any municipal website because of the number and variety of programs and services delivered to the public. We know this can make it difficult for people to find what they are looking for. It's also been a while since the website had a comprehensive update so what might have worked when this site was new, has evolved over time and is no longer functional."

Woodstock's goal is to create a better user experience for those who are using its website. Collins explained they want to make the content people are looking for easier to find with fewer clicks.

"We want people to be able to accomplish what they came to our site to do – whether that's registering for a program or finding out what's happening at the next council meeting. The workplan includes improving our menu structure, streamlining our pages, simplifying content and addressing accessibility issues.

A budget of just over \$50,000 has been allocated for the project but it isn't limited to the city site only.

"It includes our main city website, our economic development site and two new microsites for the Museum and Woodstock Art Gallery," she explained. "Because those three departments have specific audiences that are not always the same as what many of our users are looking for on the main site, pulling their content into connected but still distinct microsites improve user experience and potentially allows for some different functionality that is unique to their ser-

vices."

The website migration project is needed because the current content management system is being discontinued by the vendor next June. The project also includes the hiring of a temporary staff person for the eight months it will take to complete it.

"This is so we can continue to deliver our core marketing and communications services bringing to the total cost of the project to \$120,990.40," explained Collins, who described it as a massive undertaking. "We have more than 700 pages and hundreds of documents on the website. While we've been chipping away at different sections, re-writing content with a more user focus, some improvements made more sense to do as part of the migration. Our goal is to launch the new site late March 2026."

The survey is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RSHHQXR>.

Planning underway for 28th Annual Ingersoll Rotary Christmas Parade

JON PETIT

President, Ingersoll Rotary Club

Get ready, Oxford County, Ingersoll's most cherished holiday tradition is back! On Saturday, Nov. 15, at 11 a.m., the 28th Annual Ingersoll Rotary Christmas Parade will once again bring festive cheer to our streets, this year sparkling under the theme "Santa's Workshop." The beloved parade is a highlight of the season, drawing families from across the county to enjoy colourful floats, lively music, and of course, the arrival of Santa himself. It's one of the largest parades in the region and a tradition that has been kicking off the holiday season for nearly three decades.

The Rotary Club of Ingersoll is inviting bands, schools, businesses, and community groups to get involved and showcase their

creativity. Entries are free, and the club is hoping to see as many floats, costumes, and festive displays as possible to help make this year's parade the best yet. The route will begin at the corner of Wilson and Mutual Streets and wind its way through town before finishing at Harrisfield School. Everyone will have the opportunity to line the streets and take in the holiday magic.

If your group would like to be part of this wonderful community tradition, visit www.ingersollrotary.com to register today. Whether you're marching, building a float, or simply coming out to watch, the Ingersoll Rotary Christmas Parade is truly one of the most joyful holiday celebrations in Oxford County—an event that brings neighbours together, spreads Christmas spirit, and creates lasting memories for young and old alike.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

JOIN THE WOODSTOCK HOSPITAL FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are currently seeking a dedicated and engaged individual to join the Woodstock Hospital Foundation (WHF) Board of Directors.

The WHF is a registered charity that has been serving the community since 1988. Our mission is to raise funds in support of equipment, technology and capital needs of the Woodstock Hospital through annual events and support from individuals in our community.

For the full job description and details on how to apply please visit www.whfoundation.ca



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Ingersoll's Fall Nature Art Walk returns in October

KYRAH SMITH

Echo Contributor

Local artists are preparing once again for Ingersoll's second Fall Nature Art Walk, hosted by Aftermath Tattoo Studios. Following the positive response to last year's inaugural event, the studio has announced that the walk will return October 2-4, running daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"Basically, we just want people to experience the outdoors and be one with nature," says Sam Mansbridge of Aftermath Tattoo Studios. "And also to see what Ingersoll has to offer. The trail's beautiful."

The walk will take place along Lawson Trail, where artwork will be displayed among the trees, turning the natural space into a temporary open-air gallery. The idea for the event came to Mansbridge during a trip to Alberta.

"They had a bunch of art displays set up in the woods," she recalls. "Then I came back and was like, man, it'd be really cool to bring something like that to the community here in town."

Inspired by that blend of art and environment, Mansbridge and her team hosted Ingersoll's first Nature Art Walk in October 2024. The response, she says, was encouraging.

"People enjoyed bringing their families out to see the exhibit, even kids. The music store (Ingersoll Music Academy) actually had its students involved last year."

Artists from across Oxford County are invited to participate again this year, with all mediums welcome. Aftermath provides wooden canvases free of charge, many of which are made from repurposed materials.

"We're using recycled product," Mansbridge explains. "Some stuff is returned from weddings, some would've just gone to the garbage. So, the idea is to reuse and then give back to the community."

All of the artists from the tattoo studio will be participating this year. The hope is for the Art Walk to become a lasting tradition in Ingersoll. Submissions are open until Sept. 29. For more details or to get involved, visit www.aftermathtattoostudios.ca.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

Bee painting done by Aftermath's Taylor for last year's Fall Nature Art Walk in 2024.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

James checking out the guitar submission from Ingersoll's Music Academy at last year's Art Walk.

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Cheesy Cow Co. nominated for Ontario Made Retailer Spotlight Award again

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

Could 2025 be another “gouda” year for Cheesy Cow Company at the Ontario Made Awards?

Woodstock’s Cheesy Cow Company, featuring a variety of cheeses and craft food products from Oxford County, Canada, and Europe, has been nominated for the 2025 Ontario Made Award – Retailer Spotlight Award. The shop won the same award in 2024 and was a finalist in 2023.

“As a small business, we are humbled to receive the nomination, especially since this is a province-wide program. It reflects the love and passion our entire team has for supporting local,” said Wes Mazur, head cheesemonger at Cheesy Cow Co.

The Ontario Made Awards, run by Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, recognize retailers and manufacturers across Ontario for bringing locally made products to their customers.

“This nomination, and especially bringing home the award last year, is a testament to the hard-working local producers and makers that help fill our shelves, fridges, and freezers at Cheesy Cow Company,” Mazur added.

Anyone looking to support Cheesy Cow Co. in winning the 2025 Retailer Spotlight Award can vote online until Oct. 5, with up to 10 votes per day per person. Each vote also counts as an entry to win a \$250 gift card for an Ontario-Made manufacturer of the voter’s choice.

Mazur encourages Oxford County residents not only to vote but also to spread the word and visit the shop to explore the wide variety of Ontario-made and locally made products Cheesy Cow carries.

Regardless of the outcome, Mazur says the nomination itself provides increased recognition across Ontario. “Thank you so much for your support! We are truly ‘grate-ful’ for every single vote!”

For voting and more information about past winners, visit Ontario Made Awards.

**Visit us online at
theecho.ca**

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Tips For your Wedding Attire

The Groom should be unique from the groomsmen by selecting different colours for their suit-tuxedo, neck attire differentiation

There are 122 various shades of white. Groom and groomsmen should have exact same shirt otherwise colour variations will show in pictures.

Sometimes a groom may want a second shirt for the special day, especially in hotter days or those that tend to sweat more.

Colour of groomsmen neck accessories should be the same as bridesmaids' dresses

Colour of shirts should not comprise colour of wedding dress. If the gown is off white or a darker shade of white, DO NOT wear white shirts - otherwise dress will look dirty and be exaggerated in pictures

We are open 7 Days a week and late on Thursdays and Fridays and also available by appointment.

Parents and grandparents should be the second-best dressed people at the wedding.

The benefits to choosing a local wedding venue

Wedding planning requires coordinating a laundry list of details that ultimately come together to make for a memorable ceremony and reception. Couples tying the knot have their work cut out for them, and one of the biggest decisions they will have to make involves choosing where to hold the ceremony and reception. Religious couples often opt for ceremonies at their churches, synagogues and mosques. Secular weddings can occur just about anywhere, with couples sometimes utilizing ceremony spaces adjacent to their reception rooms.

As brides and grooms narrow down their venue options, they may want to give strong consideration to the benefits that sticking close to home can offer. Certainly there are advantages to be had hosting a wedding at venues many miles away or even in international locations, but there are unique perks to keeping festivities local. The Knot 2025 Real Weddings Study indicated six in 10 couples chose to get married in a place where they currently live; 23 percent opted for a hometown venue; and 18 percent decided on a destination wedding. Here's a look at some of the perks of staying local.

- Convenience: One of the biggest benefits of a local venue is convenience for both the couple and their guests. Local venues tend to be easily accessible for those who live nearby, minimizing travel time and reducing any barriers brought on by a lack of familiarity with distant locales.
- Familiarity: Couples who love their hometowns and close environs may want to get married in a familiar and comfortable atmosphere. Plus, they may already be familiar with venues in the area and what they offer.
- Expertise: Venue staff likely live in the area or are familiar with other services close by. They can offer valuable recommendations and insights on other vendors, including what has worked before and what to avoid.
- Easy payments: Many venues require some sort of payment plan that consists of a deposit at the time of booking and a series of payments culminating with the last installment upon learning the final head count. Choosing a local venue makes it easy to stop at the reception site in person and provide such payments with ease, while getting confirmation and receipts in real time.
- Reduce delivery fees: If florists and other vendors have to drop off items, they may not charge the same delivery fees if the reception site is close by.
- Ease returning home: Chances are the couple will arrive at the ceremony and reception by hired car. Once the wedding is over, they'll have to find transportation back home, especially if there is a gap in time before departing on a honeymoon. Utilizing a local venue can make it easier to get home.
- Support of local businesses: Choosing a local venue keeps dollars in couples' own communities, which is a great way to support businesses in the town and the people that work for them.

There are notable advantages to getting married close to home. When planning to tie the knot, couples can give ample consideration to local venues.

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www.allcelebrations.ca



Planning your wedding involves countless details, one of the most crucial aspects is ensuring you have the right rentals to create the perfect atmosphere. Whether you're hosting an intimate backyard ceremony or a grand ballroom reception, wedding rentals can transform your vision into reality. Here are some key things to know about wedding rentals to make your big day unforgettable. When you are ready to get started visit www.allcelebrations.ca to create your wishlist.

1. Venue Essentials

Tents and Canopies: If you're planning an outdoor wedding, tents and canopies are a must. They provide shelter from unpredictable weather and create a cozy, intimate space. All Celebrations provides 34' hexagons tents, as well as 20x40 and 20x20 tents. We can combine these to accommodate 150 guests or more. Generally, we setup your tent 2 - 5 days before your wedding allowing time to perfect your decor and setup. In Ontario, tents are subject to the Ontario building code. All Celebrations is happy to provide you with contact information for your local building inspector as well as the documentation required to complete your building permit application.

Tables and Chairs: From rustic harvest tables to cruiser tables and vineyard chairs to garden chairs, the right tables and chairs set the tone for your reception. Don't forget about specialty seating like lounge furniture for a relaxed vibe or Chiavari chairs for a touch of elegance.

2. Decorative Elements

Linens and Drapery: All Celebrations provides majestic linens, backdrop and drapery that can elevate the look of your venue. Choose from a variety of colors, textures, and patterns to match your wedding theme. Our team can also create stunning backdrops to highlight your head table or to section off different areas of your venue.

Lighting: Lighting plays a crucial role in setting the mood. Consider options like string lights, chandeliers, and uplighting to create a warm and inviting atmosphere. For a more dramatic effect, use spotlights to highlight key areas like the dance floor or cake table.

Centrepieces: Candles and Lanterns: Perfect for creating a warm and intimate atmosphere. Options include votive candles, pillar candles, and lanterns in various styles and sizes. **Vases and Glassware:** From simple glass vases, to chimneys to elaborate candelabras, these can be filled with

flowers, stones, or even floating candles to create a stunning centerpiece. **Themed Decor:** For themed events, you can find centerpieces that match your specific theme, such as vintage, books, or holiday-themed items.

3. Dining and Catering

Dinnerware and Glassware: Elegant dinnerware and glassware are essential for a sophisticated dining experience. Choose pieces that complement your overall theme, whether it's elegant wine glasses for a classic look or sleek, gold silverware for a posh feel. All Celebrations has many glassware, flatware and dinnerware options!

Serving Equipment: Ensure your wedding servers have everything they need with the right serving equipment. This may include chafing dishes, beverage dispensers, and serving trays. Don't forget about barware if you're planning to have a cocktail hour or open bar.

4. Entertainment and Extras

Dance Floors: A dance floor is a must for any wedding reception. Our classic wooden floor supported by our fast deck base makes for a beautiful area underneath the starts or in your tent. We can also create a monogram or wedding logo for the centre of your dancefloor!

Concession Machines: Up the fun at your wedding, rent our slushie machine or add cotton candy for your guests! All Celebrations can also assist with late night snacks including popcorn.

5. Practical Considerations

Restrooms: If your venue doesn't have adequate restroom facilities, consider renting luxury portable restrooms. These come equipped with all the amenities your guests will need and can be a lifesaver for outdoor weddings. All Celebrations is happy to put you in touch with our recommended vendors.

Generators: Ensure you have a reliable power source for all your lighting, sound, and catering needs. Renting a generator can prevent any unexpected power outages from disrupting your celebration.

Mobile Bar: Farm or tent weddings may benefit from a themed or luxury mobile bar service, or refrigerated trailers.

All Celebrations is here to help you select the right wedding rentals, you can create a beautiful and memorable event that reflects your personal style. We will work with you to ensure all your needs are met and to make your wedding day as stress-free as possible.



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"The goal is simple," Corbin ex-

plains. "I don't just want people to get a picture. I want them to capture a moment they'll look back on for years."

Backdrops, props, and a polished setup make the experience just as enjoyable as the photos themselves. From newlyweds laughing with family to coworkers celebrating milestones, Corbin's photo booth creates an atmosphere of connection and joy.

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'Condemned Woodstock' premieres first season at Market Centre Theatre



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

Woodstock Mayor Jerry Acchione (center) with the cast and crew of Condemned Woodstock Season 1. To his right is producer Farrah Foster-Manning.

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

For producer Farrah Foster-Manning, watching cast, crew, and supporters pour into the Market Centre Theatre for the premiere of Condemned Woodstock was a thrilling moment—one that captured the mounting excitement surrounding the true-crime miniseries.

"I am so excited. We've waited for this premiere for so long," Foster-Manning said.

The first season of Condemned Woodstock had its premiere on Sept. 19. The mini documentary series, hosted by former ET Canada co-host Sangita Patel, explores public executions by hanging that took place between 1862 and 1954, from Thomas Cook to Velibor Rajik, as well as their crimes.

Each episode features an interview with archivist Liz Dommasch and a reenactment of the story leading up to the execution. Woodstock Mayor Jerry Acchione is featured in each episode as the judge.

Since airing on Bell Fibe TV as of Sept. 11, the show has been getting lots of recognition on social media around the world. Foster-Manning sought to bring the local true crime of Woodstock to the national spotlight.

"I've been here for over 10 years, and the more I talk to the people here, the

more comes out," she said. "I just wanted to make sure that things were brought out properly and people can dive into its true crime."

Foster-Manning also enjoyed working on the first season of the series.

"We have a phenomenal crew, so when we taped over the period of five days here, it was a well-oiled machine and just recreating the stories of the history that was here, just for it to come alive in front of our eyes was something else," she explained.

Just before the premiere of the first season, Condemned Woodstock got greenlit for a second season. Foster-Manning is seeking actors in the area to participate in the next season and invites anyone to attend the filming.

"If you see us around with cameras on location, definitely say hi, and we're bringing new true crime stories here that are here, so it's going to be exciting," she said.

The first season of Condemned Woodstock can be watched on Bell Fibe TV on TV1, available to subscribers on Channel 1 through their remote. More information about Condemned Woodstock, including how to get involved, can be found online either on Facebook or Instagram, or by sending an email to condemnedwoodstock@gmail.com.

Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. What is the capital of China?
2. Which TV show follows the lives of the Bluth family?
3. What device uses sunlight to tell time?
4. What kind of food is an olive?
5. What is the outer layer of a tooth called?
6. What is Beyoncé's last name?
7. Where does "the Muffin Man" live, according to the nursery rhyme?
8. When the stock market is performing well, it's called a ____ market?
9. Charlie Kirk was assassinated in what state?
10. Who does Meghan Markle play in "Suits?"

This week's answers are found on pg. 35

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo SPORTS

Woodstock Sports Wall Of Fame announces 2025 inductees

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The city's Sports Wall of Fame was introduced during the opening ceremonies of the twin-pad arenas, now known as Reeves Community Complex, in Woodstock in 1996.

Over the years, athletes, teams, and sport builders have been recognized, including historic inductees from before 1900. In recent years, Lifetime Achievement and Special Recognition categories were added to honor exceptional accomplishments today and over a lifetime. With the addition of the Lifetime Achievement

category, some inductees have been recognized twice, bringing the total to seven categories. Depending on the quality of submissions and the timing of the biennial induction ceremony, there can be eight or more honourees.

The public submission deadline for 2025 was March 31. The volunteer Wood-

stock Recreation Advisory Committee (WRAC) reviewed new nominations and a few previous submissions during its April 8 meeting. The WRAC recommended a list of inductees for the ceremony scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 28, at 1:30 p.m. in the Goff Gym at the community complex. Here are this year's inductees:

Female Athlete - Janet Thompson

Thompson is a retired high school teacher, coach, and meet convener, as well as an exceptional athlete who continues to compete in her 70s. Her athletes have participated in OFSAA competitions in Nordic skiing, cross-country running, and track. Janet's own athletic accomplishments include international triathlons: she placed 2nd in June 2022 in the 70-74 age group at the World Age Group Championships in Montreal, and 1st in 2023 in Spain. These events consisted of a 1,500-metre swim, 40 km bike ride, and 10 km run.



Male Athlete - Kevin Bruder

Bruder is a standout Woodstock slo-pitch player with numerous national championships as a member of various teams, most recently Reggie's Rams Oldtimers elite team. He has earned three national gold medals, five national silver medals, and multiple provincial titles. Bruder has competed in the prestigious Border Battle series, and as a member of Team Ontario in 2011, he went 25 for 39 at the national tournament, posting a .641 batting average with four home runs and 11 RBIs.



Team - Silver Tankard Ontario Champions

In 1963, a Woodstock Curling Club team consisting of skips Bill Astle and Dave Mitchell, thirds Peter Julian and Osmond "Ozzy" Evans, seconds Mark Gasparatto and Jim Schwandt, and leads Jim Keith and Dr. Gord Brown won the provincial Silver Tankard in curling eights. Woodstock defeated Unionville 22 20 in the Ontario final, advancing with earlier victories over teams from Hamilton and Sarnia. Dr. Gord Brown is the only surviving member of the team.



Builder of Sport - Bill Arthurs

A long-time coach, executive member, and volunteer groundskeeper with the Woodstock Soccer Club, Arthurs began coaching lacrosse in 1974. After the lacrosse program folded, he coached his three children in minor soccer and continued for 30 years, leading both house league and travel teams. By 1995, he had won his 200th game, and by the time he retired, he had accumulated over 300 victories along with numerous tournament and league trophies. As a member of the Navy Club, he also organized curling bonspiels for more than 20 years.



Historic - Bob McMillan

McMillan was an outstanding baseball player, earning an invitation to a Brooklyn Dodgers tryout in the 1950s. A right-handed pitcher and hitter, he honed his skills with the Elmer Cuthbert Juvenile and Junior Flat Tires in the early 1950s, including throwing a no-hitter against the Galt Terriers in InterCounty baseball. McMillan, who also served as a Woodstock firefighter, passed away on May 4, 2007.



Historic - Bun Brewster

Bernard Edward "Bun" Brewster was a standout of the Woodstock Badminton Club for nearly four decades. His first top results came in 1938, when he won singles, men's doubles, and mixed doubles at the Oxford finals. In the 1950s, Brewster and George Thorpe were four-time provincial finalists in men's doubles and won the Western Ontario titles nine consecutive times. In 1961, they posted the best record in the Thomas Cup Trials but were not selected to represent Canada. Bernard passed away on May 21, 2005.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16



Lifetime Achievement - Jim Stevens

Stevens has been a dedicated figure in figure skating as a judge, volunteer, coach, executive, event convenor, and in any role that supported the Woodstock Skating Club (WSC) and regional competitions. His contributions have been recognized with numerous awards, including the Western Ontario Sectionals Outstanding Service Award (1994), the WOS Officials Award of Excellence (2017), Skate Canada Volunteer Excellence (2005), and the HOME Region Outstanding Dedication Award. A past chair of the Woodstock Skating Club, Stevens also served on the Skate Canada officials' team. He began his skating career as a competitor with WSC in 1950.RBIs.



Special Recognition - Kyla Rodrigue

Rodrigue won OFSAA gold for WCI in 2019 in the 100-metre sprint for Intellectually Impaired. The Ontario high school championships were at the Univ of Guelph, and Rodrigue won the finals in 13.64 seconds, winning by more than one second. Rodrigue also won TVRA, WOSSA (where she owns the meet record at 13.44) and the OFSAA West Regionals gold medals. In 2018, she won silver at OFSAA at York University. In her earlier Junior years, Rodrigue won gold and silver.

The WRAC has been pleased to recognize local sports accomplishments for almost 30 years now. "Athletic accomplishments of the past inspire today's up-and-coming athletes, and at the same time promote healthy participation in sports. If you know any of the recipients, we invite you to attend the event to congratulate them and celebrate local sports," read a statement from the committee.

PJHL Roundup
Navy Vets struggle to start the PJHL season while Trojans surge

LEE GRIFFI
Editor

Woodstock won its first game of the Provincial Junior Hockey League season with a 7-3 home opener win in front of nearly 700 fans against Wellesley, but it's been tough sailing since then. The Navy Vets have dropped three in a row and have been outscored 17-11 in that time. They are tied for seventh place in the Doherty Division with the New Hamburg Firebirds. Woodstock started last weekend with a 6-5 home loss to Paris in a game they were outshot 45-37. Will McGregor had a goal and a pair of assists in a losing effort, with Cooper Vickerman adding two helpers and Kingston McPherson chipping in with a goal and an assist. The Navy Vets travelled to Wellesley on Saturday where they

dropped a 7-3 decision to the Applejacks. McGergor, Vickerman and Rashaad Eichenberg found the back of the net for Woodstock, who were outshot 34-23. Woodstock downed Wellesley 7-3 to start the season on Sept. 12 but dropped a 4-3 decision in Norwich the following night. The Navy Vets have been outshot 151-134 in the four games to date. Vickerman leads the team in scoring with three goals and 10 points. The 19-year-old started last season with the GOJHL's Pelham Panthers before heading to the PJHL's Georgina Ice. Team defence has been an issue so far as the Navy Vets have allowed just under five goals per game, worst in the division. The Navy Vets host Norwich this Friday, their only game of the weekend. Merchants take early Doherty lead



(WOODSTOCK NAVY VETS PHOTO)
Woodstock captain Jordan Thomson (right) poses for a ceremonial faceoff photo before the Navy Vets home game on Friday, Sept. 19. Woodstock is off to a slow start to the 2025-26 season with just one win in five games. Norwich has won three of four games to begin the season and has a one-point lead over Wellesley. They blanked Hespeler 3-0 on Sunday with Thomas Staszczyszyn

end, beginning with a game in Woodstock on Friday night and a trip to Tavistock on Saturday. Trojans take three out of four games to lead division. Thamesford has a one-point lead on North Middlesex for top spot in the West Yeck Division with the only blemish on their record being a 2-1 loss in Petrolia last Thursday. The Trojans came back with a 7-5 win over the Stars a night later. Former Navy Vets captain Davin Gray and Owen Eldridge lead the attack with three points each. Ronan Panziera, Andrew Kalanztakos and Hayden Kemps and Ayden Hakkers added two points apiece. 16 players have hit the scoresheet for Thamesford this season with Hakkers and Gray leading the way with five points each. Thamesford hosts Aylmer this Friday and travels to Port Stanley on Saturday.

STANDINGS

SOUTH DOHERTY DIVISION	GP	W	L	OTL	T	SOW	SOL	PTS
1 - NORWICH MERCHANTS	4	3	0	0	0	0	1	7
2 - WELLESLEY APPLEJACKS	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	6
3 - TAVISTOCK BRAVES	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	5
4 - DORCHESTER DOLPHINS	4	2	1	0	0	1	1	5
5 - HESPELER SHAMROCKS	4	2	2	0	0	1	0	4
6 - NEW HAMBURG FIREBIRDS	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
7 - WOODSTOCK NAVY VETS	4	1	2	1	0	0	0	3
8 - PARIS TITANS	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	2

WEST YECK DIVISION	GP	W	L	OTL	T	SOW	SOL	PTS
1 - THAMESFORD TROJANS	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	7
2 - NORTH MIDDLESEX STARS	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	6
3 - AYLMER SPITFIRES	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	5
4 - EXETER HAWKS	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	4
5 - PETROLIA FLYERS	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
6 - PORT STANLEY SAILORS	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	2
7 - MY. BRYDGES BULLDOGS	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	2
8 - LUCAN IRISH	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0

Route to the Past – A Servent to the People

SCOTT GILLIES

Contributor

George William Servent was born in 1902 in Greater London England but was living with his Canadian wife Hazel Irene (Likins) and two daughters in the Ingersoll area when he enlisted in 1939 with the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps. His parents Henry and Martha Servent had been living in Stratford Ontario, with their six children, since 1906.

His father, Henry Robert Servent, had served in England with the Royal Marines Light Infantry for more than ten years (between 1887 and 1899) before emigrating to Canada. During the First World War, he once again answered the call of duty and signed on with the local 18th Battalion as Company Quartermaster Sergeant in October of 1914.

Grief at the loss of his infant son may have been a contributing factor for him wanting to get away.

Having lied about his age (he was older than he claimed), Henry Servent was already familiar with the rigors of mil-

itary life. He had contracted yellow fever while stationed in Jamaica in the 1880s, and something known as Malta Fever when he was sent to that island.

By April of 1915 he was in England and then France but was hospitalized when his right eye was injured by fragments from a bullet. He was taken off strength as being medically unfit for active service, but was instead made a member of the Military Police Force – the dreaded and much maligned “Red Caps”, so named because of the red ribbon on their cap. He was discharged from duty in September of 1918 and returned to Stratford to resume his employment as a machinist at the railway repair shops.

At the time that his father was serving overseas, George William Servent was a teenager. His time for service to King and Country came along twenty years later.

George and his Brant County born wife Hazel Likins had married in 1936 and were living in the Thamesford area with their two daughters when he enlisted in the Canadian



G. W. Servent, R.C.A.S.C., Ingersoll (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Army in 1939. His military records show that he worked as a truck driver and cream buyer for a local dairy, perhaps Bartram's or Bigham's in Ingersoll.

He arrived with the 1st Ca-

nadian Division Supply Column of the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps in Gourock Scotland on the 17th of December 1939 and reported for duty at Inkerman Barracks the following day.

In May of 1941, he was hospitalized following a traffic accident. George had been standing on the road, speaking with the driver of a Canadian military truck, when an approaching civilian car struck him. The accident investigation reported that he had been crushed between the car and the lorry (truck). His own recollection of the accident was that he had been thrown about 20 yards. Initial first aid revealed abrasions and contusions to his right hip and a possible broken neck and femur. He was rushed to the hospital for x-rays and treatment but 20 days later he was reported as being dangerously ill. The commanding officer stated that Private Servent was in no way to blame for the accident. He was on duty at the time.

George William Servent died in hospital on July 24, 1941. The official cause of death was listed as a ruptured urethra and fractured pelvis. He was interred in Brookwood Military Cemetery in Surrey England.

While George was overseas, his wife and daughters Carol

Anne and Georgine Elizabeth, had moved to 311 Ingersoll Avenue in Woodstock. Following the war, Hazel Servent lived at 735 Rathbourne Street in Woodstock – the Regency style cottage constructed in 1833 and which was later designated as a provincially historic property, being the former home of Royal Navy Captain Andrew Drew, a land agent for city-founder Admiral Henry Vansittart. Drew rose to notoriety during the Rebellion of 1837 by sinking the rebels' ship CAROLINE in the Niagara River. He was eventually forced to return to England in the 1840s and resume his career of service with the Royal Navy. Drew retired as an Admiral.

This story about the Servent family, this one route to the past, shows how a life of service can have far-reaching tentacles and consequences. With all due respect to the family, and no puns intended, they were not servants but lived a life of service to their King and their country wherever on the face of the Earth that may have been.

Route2thepast@gmail.com

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Who is the guy behind Dine in 519?

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Jesse Walker has taken the Southwestern Ontario culinary scene by storm, and he's done it one burger and butter tart at a time.

The 36-year-old's Dine in 519 social media channels are exploding as he travels across the area, thanks to Walker's charismatic and heartfelt restaurant reviews.

He started the endeavour in 2020 while working as a marketing director for a large company, something he has done for most of his working life. During the pandemic, restaurants were closing down and Walker was working from home.

"I have this spare time. How can I use my skillset to support the food industry? I was doing photoshoots for restaurants, these ma and pa shops that don't have a budget for marketing. It grew quickly and I think it resonated because it not only

London, in the courtyard. I did that as a way to earn revenue, and I sold over 2,000 advance tickets and I think over 600 more at the door throughout the day."

This journalist went to the event and was wowed by not only the incredible selection of food vendors but also the overall vibe and the downright fun had by everyone in attendance. The prosecco stand didn't hurt either.

"Events are going to be a big part of my strategy moving forward because people are loving them and it's something I enjoy doing," he added. He also vows to keep away from chain restaurants.

"I get hundreds of emails a week from chains or those sub-chains with 10 or so locations, but I just don't feel right doing it. Even though I could make a lot of money doing that, I think what people resonate with is that I highlight what I think is truly great, and I won't just post a place because they are



Jesse Walker (left) is the man behind Dine in 519. His reviews of small, one-off restaurants and eateries have resulted in tens of thousands of followers on his social media accounts and long lineups like the one on the right at the Kai Café in Scotland, Ontario

don't look beyond that. I've owned a restaurant myself, so I know how many things they are paying for before they get any type of profit."

As far as his future plans, Walker is open to taking his

show to the next level, including television and he is also open to teaming up with local Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and townships to promote downtowns across the region.

"I've done Windsor and I went up to Bayfield. They put me up in a cottage there, they built me an itinerary, so I don't have to charge the restaurants that don't have a budget."

Walker is adamant that he is not an influencer but instead a supporter of independent restaurants.

"I think there's a negative connotation that comes with that. I am an advocate for local, independent food joints and this has exploded. My main focus is online and making videos for these restaurants. I still have the same passion for it five years later."

You can learn more about Walker on the Uncapped Network podcast at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7btns8lQIRQ>.

Ever notice how people will lose their minds over an \$18 sandwich, a \$19 burger with fries from a tiny local shop, like someone's stealing their wallet. Let me break it to you. These spots, they've got no investor money, got no grandiose. They have a flat top, a location and a dream, and rent is due on the first. Remember that \$19 burger with fries? It probably cost them \$8 to make, and that's before rent, before gas, before labour, before the guy in the back washing dishes trying to feed his kids. 99 per cent of these people are not out here getting rich, they are not sailing into the sunset on a yacht. I get it, s#@t is expensive right now, things are very hard right now. But these people are not the villains. They are trying to feed you, not rob you, and feed themselves. So, let's support local and just assume they are charging what they need to in order to survive. (Jesse Walker, Dine in 519 video)

served as a resource for the restaurants but also for the public. I think that's what hit with people."

Walker decided to step it up a notch by adding video to his hole-in-the-wall visits by doing food reviews on video in his car. The numbers are staggering

"Just in the last year I switched to the on-camera aspect, so being in my car, doing the reviews, showing a bit of personality, and I think it struck a chord with people and maybe it's more organic, I don't know. It went from 10,000 followers to over 70,000 just on Instagram alone. Facebook has grown by 20,000 in the last couple weeks."

Walker also utilizes TikTok and has well over 30,000 followers there and has branched out into the event scene.

"All this has brought me to today and I am now doing large-scale events. I recently did Brunchfest, which was at the Kellogg Lane in

reaching out and offering money."

Walker said he has launched his own line of merchandise and recently held an all-woman dinner event featuring a seven-course curated meal, which sold out. I first became interested in doing a story on Walker when I watched a heartfelt video on his Facebook page in support of small restaurants.

"90 per cent of comments I get are positive, but there's always that 10 per cent. I posted Taylor's Deli in Stratford, and they do this beef dip sandwich, which is a three-day process. They're baking their own bread, doing everything in-house, and it's \$19 and delicious."

Walker explained the deli has less expensive options on its menu, and he was getting some negative comments about the cost.

"What people don't realize is chain sub shops have \$19 sandwiches. It's not just the cost of food. People



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(WOODSTOCK FIRE DEPARTMENT PHOTOS)

Congratulations to Mike Wellman (left) on his promotion to the role of Lieutenant on the Woodstock Fire Department's B Platoon. Shawn Wright (right) has also been promoted to an Acting Officer on B Platoon. Also pictured is Woodstock Fire Chief Jeff Slager.

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Fire-safe holiday decorating tips

Decorating the interior and exterior of a home is a beloved holiday season tradition in millions of households. Such decor makes it easy to dive into the festive nature of the season.

Many people could not imagine a holiday season without decorating their homes, and it's vital that celebrants do so safely. Fire safety is especially important during a time of year when string lights and potentially dried out trees feature so prominently. These fire safety tips can ensure this holiday season is safe.

- Use lights and cords where they're intended to be used. The packaging on lights will indicate if the product is intended to be used indoors or outdoors. It's vital that individuals decorating their homes with lights pay attention to these labels. Never decorate the exterior of a home with interior lights, and vice versa. Extension cords made for indoors also should not be used outdoors and vice versa.

- Be especially careful with candles. Candles should only be burned when

adults are in the room and should always be extinguished before leaving the room or going to bed. When burning candles, place them on heat-resistant surfaces that are beyond the reach of curious kids and pets. Never place candles within arm's length of decorations that could catch fire.

- Do not pinch light cords. Stringing lights can be a hassle, but cords should never be pinched in doors or windows or beneath interior and exterior furniture. Doing so increases the risk of damage to the cord, which in turn increases the likelihood of fire.
- Avoid overloading circuits. Overloaded circuits pose a significant fire hazard. When plugging in lights, choose outlets that aren't already occupied by devices and other electronics. If need be, unplug appliances like televisions and devices while lights are on and plugged in.

When decorating this holiday season, celebrants are urged to do everything they can to reduce the risk of fire in their homes.

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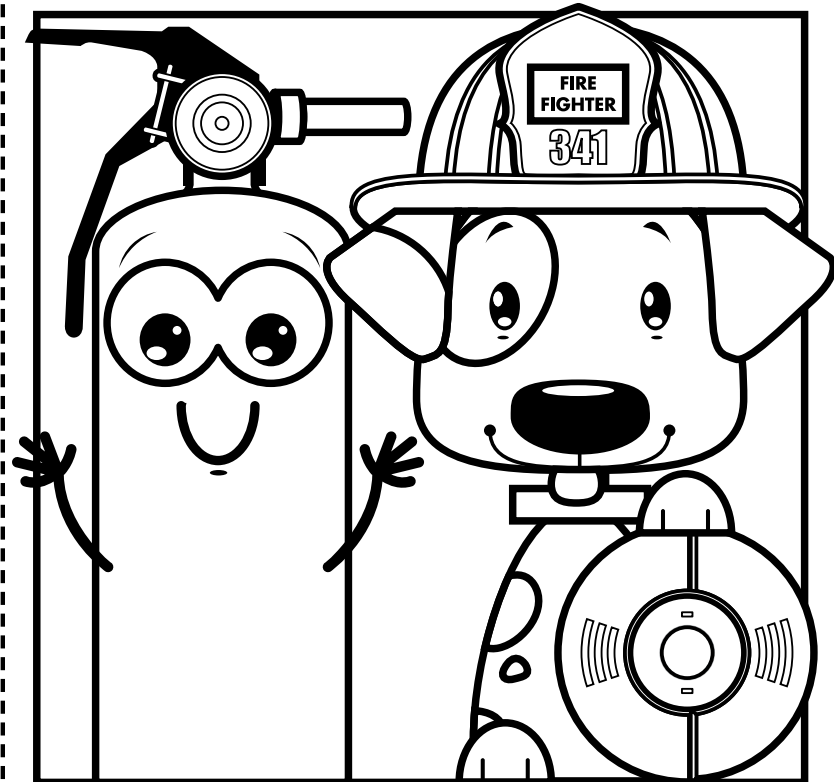
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Make a fire escape plan with your family. Find two ways out of every room and pick a meeting place outside.

SHARE THESE TIPS WITH PARENTS & ADULTS.

Test smoke alarms every month.

Don't leave the kitchen unattended when pots or pans are cooking on the stove.

Never leave candles burning when you leave a room.

WHAT TO DO IF THERE'S A FIRE:

- If you hear a fire alarm, get outside immediately and stay outside.
- Once you are outside, call 911 or get help from a neighbor.
- If your clothes are on fire, stop, drop and roll until the fire is out.
- Fall and crawl to escape a fire. Breathing is easier if you stay low to the ground.





ITOPA presents 7-10 Split after a five-year-long wait



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

(Left to right) Adam Tanton, Becky Tanton, Nick Shua, and Crystal Paul bring lots of laughs in ITOPA's production of 7-10 Split with both funny lines and physical comedy.

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

After putting 7-10 Split and bowling paraphernalia on the back burner for half a decade, the Ingersoll Theatre of Performing Arts (ITOPA) is finally ready to bring the comedy to the stage.

ITOPA will kick off its 2025/2026 season with Michael G. Wilmot's 7-10 Split.

The Canadian comedy will run from Oct. 11 to 19. The play focuses on Earl, a former professional bowler constantly in get-rich-quick schemes, and the shenanigans that follow with one particular Internet offer from a wealthy prince claiming he can save Earl's fortune.

"If you need a night of absolute laughter and hilarity, this is the show to see," said director Rebecca McNall. "We are running it in the style of trailer-trash, and it's just going to be non-stop gags, non-stop hilarious lines. And the cast, you couldn't ask for a better cast of characters to fill the roles. They just fall into the roles just like it was them. It's just so good, I love it."

The cast includes husband and wife Adam and Becky Tanton, longtime ITOPA performer Crystal Paul and newcomer Nick Shua. The performance takes place

inside the living room of a trailer, and the set dimensions are the same as a house trailer's living room.

"It's even more of a challenge, which is fun, to get the blocking and to get them so they're not just sitting still for the whole thing, so it's going to be a ball. It's going to be so much fun," said McNall, who is thrilled to finally bring the play to the stage.

ITOPA was to initially present the play in 2020, but it was cancelled due to COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions.

"We've had bowling balls and bowling trophies hidden around the theatre for five years because we didn't want to throw them out because we knew that eventually, 7-10 Split would go on stage, so it feels so great to start bringing everything out," she said. "It's awesome."

The curtain rises at 7:30 p.m. for evening performances and 2 p.m. for matinee performances. Tickets are \$26 for adults, \$24 for seniors, \$22 for students 12 years old and older, and \$10 for students under 12 years old. Every Thursday performance for the 2025/2026 season will have \$10 tickets for all seats.

To purchase tickets, either visit the box office on 88 Thames St., call 519-485-3070, or visit online via www.itopa.ca.



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-  **BUY** products with a safety certification mark such as cUL, ULC, cETL, or CSA. This means it meets important safety standards.
-  **CHARGE** devices on a hard surface and always use the manufacturer's cables. Unplug them when full.
-  **RECYCLE** batteries responsibly. Don't throw lithium-ion batteries in the trash or regular recycling bins because they could start a fire.

A message from your local Fire Services in alliance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).



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Echo

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Ontario Trillium Grant helps expand programs at Ingersoll senior centre

KYRAH SMITH

Echo Contributor

The Ingersoll Services for Seniors Centre opened its doors on Sept. 16 for a lively Welcome Back Open House, inviting members and newcomers alike to explore the wide range of programs and services the centre has to offer.

Guests enjoyed live demonstrations of newly added fitness classes, including Zumba Gold, Chair Yoga, and OsteoFIT. Classes were open to both members and non-members, giving everyone a chance to participate firsthand. Visitors also explored information booths showcasing upcoming programs such as Guitar and Ukulele, Spanish, Mah Jongg, and Creative Writing, alongside a variety of other activities designed to foster learning, creativity, and social connection.

“We try to offer something for everybody,” explained Program Coordinator Robin Goudreault. “Our members range from 50 to 90 years old.” Goudreault and Community Service Coordinator Victoria Adshade have been expanding programs to align with offerings at larger facilities in Toronto. “We

have over 700 members, which for a community this size, is actually pretty impressive,” Goudreault added.

The centre’s choir opened the event with a performance that set a warm and uplifting tone. During the speeches, Goudreault thanked the Ontario Trillium Foundation for a \$21,400 grant, which helped launch new fitness programs, train instructors and volunteers, and purchase equipment. The funding also allowed the installation of a new lift, improving accessibility for all members.

Deputy Mayor Lindsay Wilson thanked staff and the Trillium Foundation for supporting the new programs and the lift. Executive Director Kristy Van Kooten-Bossence expressed gratitude to the centre’s volunteers and acknowledged the leadership of Goudreault and Adshade in organizing the event.

With enhanced accessibility, expanded programs, and strong community support, the Ingersoll Services for Seniors Centre is well-positioned for a vibrant and active year ahead. The centre’s annual Fall Raffle Fund-raiser takes place on October 16. Tickets are available by calling 519-485-3869 or emailing info@ingersollseniors.com.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

Deputy Mayor Lindsay Wilson said a few words, thanking staff and the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

For more than 160 years, Indigenous children were forced into Indian Residential Schools.

September 30 is National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a day to learn about the 150,000 childhoods lost to Canada's Indian Residential School system.

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Join Us As The Forest City Film Festival Celebrates 10 Years of Community, Creativity, and Cinema in Southwestern Ontario

BRITTANY WHELAN

Industry and Special Events Coordinator, FCFF

Picture this: I was eight years old when a major movie production rolled into my small town in Southwestern Ontario. The downtown transformed into a film set, and I can remember my mother dragging me by hand to a gleaming white limousine. Security moved to stop us, but Julianne Moore said it was okay, and signed my scrap of paper. I didn't know it then, but that brief exchange was the spark that led me to study film and pursue a career in the industry—because film doesn't just entertain, it inspires, connects people, and fuels local economies. Now I work for the Forest City Film Festival, where we help champion the next generation of regional storytellers.

For the past decade, the Forest City Film Festival (FCFF) has celebrated the stories and talent of Southwestern Ontario. Unit-ing movie lovers, empowering creators, and contributing to a \$30 million regional film industry. And the inspiration doesn't stop with film. This year, we're honouring London native David Shore, creator of *HOUSE M.D.* and *THE GOOD DOCTOR*—whose work has influenced not only storytellers, but a generation of doctors and healthcare professionals.

That spark I felt as a kid was the same kind of magic our founder and executive

director Dorothy Downs wanted to share when she launched the FCFF in 2015. A year later, her vision came to life at the Wolf Performance Hall with a three-day event showcasing 25 regionally connected films, capped by a sold-out gala featuring local screenwriter Emma Donoghue. By 2017, FCFF had nearly doubled its programming, introducing an animation category, an international screening, and extending the festival to five days.

2018 brought a dose of nostalgia with a screening of *THE BREAKFAST CLUB* and a live Q&A with London-born actor John Kapelos. Plus the launch of the Short Film Pitch Competition which gave emerging creators the chance to bring their ideas to life. In 2019, the inaugural Forest City Youth Film Festival took centre stage, spotlighting the voices of high school filmmakers from across the region.

When the world went online in 2020, FCFF adapted with a fully digital festival, introducing a Music Video category, virtual Q&As, and on-demand access that connected audiences across Canada. 2021 marked the rebrand of our industry programming into the Ontario Screen Creators Conference, complete with a national-scale Project Pitch competition offering a \$60,000 prize package. In 2022, we expanded our lens with curated Indigenous programming and “Best of the World Fest”



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

(BOWF), bringing highlights from Cannes, TIFF, Sundance, and Berlinale to our local audiences.

By 2024, London's designation as a UNESCO City of Music inspired an electrifying opening night of live performances, music videos, and a world premiere. We also introduced our Lifetime Achievement Award Reception, where Emmy-winning creator David Shore will be honoured in a glamorous evening of signature drinks, generous hors d'oeuvres, and an exciting silent auction. Attendees can also explore the best international films or cheer on the next generation of filmmakers. With so much to see and do, there's truly something for everyone at this year's festival.

So grab your tickets, load up on popcorn, and join us at the theater—because in every seat, there's a dream waiting to be sparked, and a story waiting to be told.

and community meet on the big screen.

Audiences will enjoy stories from across Southwestern Ontario, featuring films from Stratford, Cambridge, Hamilton, and beyond, showcasing the region's richness and diversity. Hollywood comes to London with our Lifetime Achievement Award Reception, where Emmy-winning creator David Shore will be honoured in a glamorous evening of signature drinks, generous hors d'oeuvres, and an exciting silent auction. Attendees can also explore the best international films or cheer on the next generation of filmmakers. With so much to see and do, there's truly something for everyone at this year's festival.

So grab your tickets, load up on popcorn, and join us at the theater—because in every seat, there's a dream waiting to be sparked, and a story waiting to be told.

Visit fcff.ca to explore the full program and join the celebration.



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Overhauled Embro Fall Fair draws big crowds

The Embro and Zorra Agricultural Society (EZAS) proudly hosted the 2025 Embro Fall Fair on September 12 to 14, where the theme was Pies and Shine, It's Desert Time! set the tone for a weekend filled with family fun, community spirit, and agricultural tradition. After its major revamp in 2024, this year's fair welcomed even more visitors with an expanded lineup of activities and events for all ages. Families gathered at the fairgrounds to enjoy the perfect mix of tradition and new attractions. Saturday's festivities kicked off at 3 p.m. with a community dinner and the much-anticipated junior and senior ambassador competitions. The evening continued with lively entertainment, creating a festive atmosphere that carried into the night. Sunday began with outdoor yoga and breakfast, followed by cherished traditions including church service, the baby show, and the ever-popular pet show. Youth zucchini races returned as a highlight, along with outdoor fair games, the Farmer Olympics, and the obstacle course. Children enjoyed face painting, crafts, sensory bins, a petting zoo, pony rides, barrel train rides, wagon basketball, touch-a-truck and more. One of the features was the 4th annual Nash Memorial Car Show, which once again drew crowds with a stunning lineup of vehicles accompanied by live music. Local skills, trades, and hobbyists also showcased their talents, adding a unique community touch to the weekend. Indoor exhibits featured homecraft displays, field crops, the Pumpkin Prince and Princess Competition, and a silent auction supporting the Ambassador Leadership Program. Food trucks and vendors kept appetites satisfied, while the accessible, pet-friendly fairgrounds with shaded pavilion and air-conditioned facilities ensured comfort for all attendees. "The Embro Fall Fair has been a tradition since 1858, and this year we were thrilled to see families making memories while celebrating both our agricultural roots and the fun of fair life," said the EZAS organizing committee. The 2025 Embro Fall Fair proved once again why it remains one of Ontario's longest-running agricultural fairs, blending history, heritage, and community into a weekend of sweet success. (RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Marley enjoyed showing her painted face, beautifully done by Kelley from Giggle Time Entertainment.



Smiling families gathered for a photo that captured the welcoming spirit of the Embro Fall Fair.



The petting zoo was a favorite stop for attendees of every age.



Hailey and Alyssa, serving as Senior and Junior Ambassadors, welcomed visitors and highlighted the fair's many attractions.

Missed an issue? View all past issues online anytime: theecho.ca

Oxford Branch of Ontario Ancestors is dedicated to promoting genealogical and family history research

OCTOBER IS...
**FAMILY
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MONTH**

Attend our launch on
Tuesday, September 30th 10 - Noon
at

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82 Light Street, Woodstock**

or
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**RETIREE'S CHRISTMAS DINNER
NOVEMBER 28, 2025 \$20/person**

SOCIAL: 4:00 pm DINNER: 5:00 pm

CATERED BY LOCAL 636 EXECUTIVE BOARD

Limited Tickets available at

Unifor Local 636 Office

Monday - Friday 9 am - 4 pm

Tables of TEN (10)

(purchase before NOVEMBER 13th 2025 at noon)

Kiwanis Club of Ingersoll Hosts third annual Charity Fashion Show

KYRAH SMITH

Echo Contributor

The Kiwanis Club of Ingersoll brought style, music, and community spirit together at its third annual Fashion Show Fundraiser on Sept. 17 at Belle Vie Carnegie Hall, with 140 attendees and a sold-out crowd.

“Some of the proceeds this year will go to the Ingersoll Alexandra Hospital, and the rest supports Kiwanis’ mission of helping children in the community,” said organizer Jane Cole. Co-organizer Karen Costello praised the strength and spirit of the Ingersoll community.

Guests were welcomed at 6 p.m. with food, beverages, and refreshments, followed by the show at 7 p.m. London musician Jeremy Fox-Revett provided live acoustic covers of classics such as Pretty Woman, Jailhouse Rock, and Dancing Queen. On the runway, models showcased gowns and outfits from

local shops including Patina’s, Roberts & Co. Ladies Wear, Hometown Style, Little Town Beauty Boutique, and Sew Stylish Wedding Works, alongside Canadian brands like Charlie B. The selection ranged from wedding gowns and evening wear to casual looks, blending elegance with practicality.

Audience engagement added a personal touch, as store owners provided commentary on their designs. The evening also featured raffles and door prizes donated by local shops, giving guests additional ways to support the community.

The event was the result of meticulous planning by Jane Cole and Karen Costello, ensuring every detail, from music to runway, came together seamlessly. The Fashion Show Fundraiser has quickly become a highly anticipated annual tradition, highlighting the community’s enthusiasm for supporting local talent, healthcare, businesses, and youth.



Kiwanis Fashion Show 2025 Models took time to pose for the camera. (KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)



Event Organizers Jane Cole (left) and Karen Costello (right) standing outside Belle Vie. (KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

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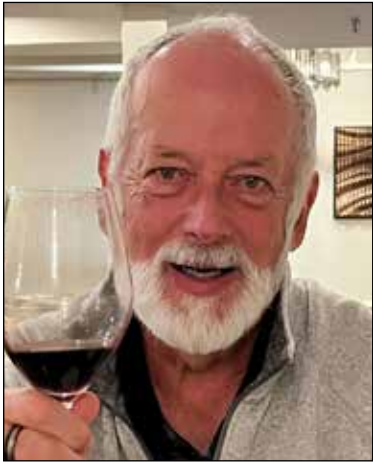


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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: History, hurting and healing



PAUL KNOWLES

Echo Contributor

As soon as I was born, I was taken from my birth mother and put into foster care. Three months after I was born, I was taken to the home of Rose and Ralph Knowles, who adopted me.

And right now, I can hear you ask, "What the heck does this have to do with travel?"

My answer: I have always known those facts about my life – although only in the past few years have I discovered the identity of my birth mother, and met seven siblings I never knew about. But knowing that I had been given up for adoption has always been part of my life, and has shaped who I am.

"But," you say, "remember

the travel part?"

Yes. One of the most impactful destinations I have ever visited is the National Indigenous Residential School Museum of Canada, in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. This is not a destination that entertains; it's one that informs, educates, enlightens and changes you from the inside out.

I have often heard people wonder why Indigenous people seem so focused on residential schools. It is not rare to hear the phrase, "That was in the past. Can we just move on?"

And that's where my birth story connects, for me, at least. Because those circumstances have been a real, living part of me all my life. And my story of loss is pretty insignificant compared to the tragedies that residential schools brought upon thousands of Native Canadians.

And their story is not ancient history. Touring the Residential School Museum, we were reminded that the last residential school closed only 29 years ago! Most of you, reading this, were adults while the government of Canada and a number of churches were still operating institutions that were founded, according to the deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs, "to continue until there is not a single Indian

in Canada." Residential schools were intended as a means to steal the identity of all Native Canadians, to "assimilate" each and every one, in the words of Prime Minister Sir John A. MacDonald.

Compare those stated intentions with the mission statement of today's Residential School Museum: "A place where people can learn, share, heal, and move forward." The museum and its staff are committed to that process.

Our guide was Farah Houle. She led us through small rooms in the museum – which was once the "Portage la Prairie Indian Residential School," founded in 1916 and in operation until 1988. Each room contains exhibits that reveal the unfolding history – often synonymous with "unfolding tragedy" – of the people of the First Nations.

I learned that from the 1800s, until 1951, residents on reserves were required to have an official government permit simply to leave the reserve. I learned that the massacre of buffalo was not just a ridiculous blood sport, but an organized effort to cause the extinction of native people.

I saw pictures of kids being transported in cattle trucks from their homes to residential



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

Farah Houle, our guide at the National Indigenous Residential School Museum of Canada.

schools. Farah described the rounding up of native kids as "Pick and Go."

One display case held three straps of different weights, all used to administer punishment by school officials. The least heavy was for children eight years and younger. The many reasons for such punishment included speaking their native language, or talking to a sibling. In fact, our guide said, "If you spoke your language, you got a pin through your tongue."

Farah says, "They were taught not to love each other." Which laid the foundation for very troubled lives.

A very telling display is found in the dining room exhibit, where the table for priests and nuns was laden with fish, meat, fruit and vegetables, while the children got oatmeal. And, added Farah, "They had to eat it even if there were bugs in it."

Perhaps the most shocking exhibit is a simple, empty baby's crib. Farah explained that this is in memory of babies born to young girls in the school, babies fathered by priests and teachers, babies who were then murdered to hide the evidence, and whose bodies were incinerated.

What is truly amazing about the museum is that, in spite of the horrors on display, there is an overriding invitation to find hope. But first, we need to learn, then to heal, only then

to move forward. The exhibits include artworks that capture both suffering and joy.

We thought that the best example of the need to know the past to move to a positive present was our guide, herself. She told us, "I was raised by a residential school survivor, and I wondered why he didn't say, 'I love you.' Now, I know why." She added, "People need to know what happened. I'm going to continue to tell the story of those who never made it home alive."

And while Farah said that part of the story is "how religion was forced on the children," she also shared that she continues to be a practicing Christian – to me, an incredible, living example of forgiveness and faith.

Clearly, the Residential School Museum is not a destination you will visit if you're looking for entertainment. But this is a place that will change your life more than a thousand visits to Canada's Wonderland. And as a guy who has discovered how one's personal, childhood history impacts the rest of your life, I could not recommend it more highly.

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



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The sculpture "Healing Shoes" by Genevieve Lavasseur features ceramic shoes made from mud from four residential school sites in Manitoba. There are 152 sores – one for every year from the signing of the first treaty to the year the artist created the work, intended "to honour lives lost and lived" at the institutions.

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Flag raisings for BBBS of Oxford



Tracy, Vanessa (Organizer), Elizabeth and Allan gathered around Vanessa's display, chatting while selecting unique items to take home.



Tracy, Vanessa (Organizer), Elizabeth and Allan gathered around Vanessa's display, chatting while selecting unique items to take home.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oxford County (BBBS) marked Big Brothers Big Sisters Day with flag-raising ceremonies in Woodstock and Tillsonburg, uniting community members in celebration of mentorship and youth empowerment. The first flag was raised outside the Oxford County Administration Building, followed by a ceremony at Museum Square in downtown Woodstock. The day concluded in Tillsonburg, where supporters gathered at the Oxford-Broadway Parkette for the final flag raising. The ceremonies highlighted the agency's ongoing mission to create and support positive developmental relationships for young people in Oxford County. Local leaders joined BBBS staff, volunteers, and community members in honoring the mentors and mentees who

make a difference every day. The celebrations also built on Oxford County Council's recent proclamation naming September as Big Brothers Big Sisters Month, further emphasizing the importance of mentorship programs across the county. For over 50 years, BBBS Oxford has connected youth with caring mentors through its Community-Based Program and group activities. These programs give young people the opportunity to develop communication skills, social confidence, and resilience through consistent, supportive relationships. Community contributions to The Spark Campaign ensure these programs remain accessible and continue to grow, providing every young person with the chance to reach their full potential.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)

Cycling event comes to Pittock in Woodstock



Cyclists powered their way across sand, hills, and gravel.

Dam 'Cross celebrated its 10th year on Sept. 13 and 14, bringing two days of exciting cyclo-cross racing back to the Pittock Dam in Woodstock. Presented by the Waterloo Cycling Club and supported by Upper Thames Brewing Co., the event once again delivered a challenging course and a lively, community-driven atmosphere. Spectators and racers were treated to the unique layout that has made Dam 'Cross a fan favorite - a small, spectator-friendly course featuring technical off-camber hills, tough sand runs, and a mix of grass, gravel, pavement, and power sections. Riders of all levels tested their endurance and skill while friends, families, and fans cheered them on from every corner of the course. This year's event continued its tradition of making racing accessible to young athletes, with every rider under 17 competing for free. The weekend also showcased the strength of the cycling community, with dozens of Waterloo Cycling Club members and local volunteers stepping up to ensure smooth operations. The 2025 edition built on the strong momentum of previous years. In 2023, the Waterloo Cycling Club began hosting cyclo-cross races in Woodstock, and Dam 'Cross quickly grew into a cornerstone of the fall racing calendar. The 10th anniversary underscored its reputation as a highlight of the season, drawing racers from across Ontario to experience the infamous Pittock Dam course. Organizers credited the event's success to the generosity and enthusiasm of volunteers, sponsors, and the cycling community. "These races wouldn't happen without the countless hours from our members and supporters," said organizers. "The camaraderie, encouragement, and shared passion for cycling are what make Dam 'Cross so special."

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Shannon and son Henry joined fellow riders on the course.

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Taste of Art returns to the Friendly City



A silent auction attracted eager bidders throughout the evening.

A night of flavor, fun and artistry unfolded at the Woodstock Art Gallery on Saturday, Sept. 20, as Taste of Art returned for its 10th anniversary celebration. Hundreds of guests filled the Gallery from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., sampling mouthwatering dishes, sipping craft beverages, and enjoying live music in support of the Gallery's fundraising goal—a new acquisition by acclaimed artist Shelley Niro. The evening kicked off with the stirring sounds of the Ingersoll Pipe Band before guests mingled among tasting stations. From wine-and-cheese pairings to rum tastings and seafood demos, the night offered something for every palate. Attendees also joined forces on an interactive community art piece, leaving their creative mark on the Gallery itself.

Laughter and music filled the air as Jack Redman Music and The Wright Stuff took to the stage. Guests paused for snapshots at the Petals 2 Posh photo booth before browsing the silent auction, where local businesses and artisans offered everything from branded goods to one-of-a-kind handmade treasures. The star attraction of the auction, a pair of battery chairs and a side table valued at over \$700 from Maglin Site Furniture, helped raise funds for the Gallery's ambitious acquisition project. With semi-formal attire in emerald green, black, and metallics adding sparkle to the night, the community came together not only to celebrate a decade of success but to invest in the future of art in Oxford County.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Posing with the newest addition to the collection, Roxanne, Sam, Debbie, John and Denise stood before Shelley Niro's work.

Woodstock hosts Hike for Hospice

Oxford County came together in an outpouring of support for the 23rd Annual Hike for Hospice on Sept. 20 at Roth Park. The event not only brought comfort and remembrance through a touching Tribute Ceremony but also achieved and exceeded its fundraising goal of \$100,000 in support of VON Sakura House. Hikers of all ages took part in the 1 km, 5 km, and 8 km routes, walking in memory of loved ones and in solidarity with the families currently receiving care. Following the hike, participants enjoyed a BBQ lunch, celebrating the community spirit that has defined the event for more than two decades. In its 23-year history, Hike for Hospice has raised over \$1.45 million, helping VON Sakura House provide compassion-

ate care, last year reaching 344 patients and their families. As Oxford County's only residential hospice, the facility depends on the generosity of the community to cover essential day-to-day costs not funded by government. "Every step taken today symbolized the compassion of our community," said organizers. "We are deeply grateful to everyone who walked, donated, sponsored, or volunteered. Your support ensures that VON Sakura House continues to be a place of care and dignity." The event closed with thanks to sponsors, volunteers, and participants for their ongoing dedication, with hopes to see the community return for the 24th Annual Hike for Hospice in 2026.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Families and friends walked the 1 km, 5 km, and 8 km routes together, paying tribute to loved ones and standing with those receiving care.

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A Night Out for Emma Bennett and Family rallying community support

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

Members of the community are encouraged to gather together for a fun evening to support a local resident battling cancer and her family.

A Night in Support of Emma Bennett and Family will be held at the Oxford Auditorium in Woodstock on Oct. 25 starting at 8 p.m. The event will feature games, live music, and a silent auction to support Bennett and her family, including her two children. Bennett was diagnosed with cancer and fought it last year. The cancer returned and she is facing medical treatment.

"I just thought that it doesn't take much to get people together and rally and try to make their family some money so that they can buy a new house or go to school for the kids," said Chad Yates, one of the organizers.

Yates works with her brother Derek, a foreman at Peters Paving, and wants to ease the financial burden on the family.

"He's like a brother to me too, so it seemed like the right thing to do to try to raise some

money for the family for the future," he said.

The organizers behind the event are looking for the community to donate items for gift baskets, tickets, services, and gift cards for the silent auction. In a follow-up with the Echo, Yates said that some items have been donated, mostly smaller door prize items for the silent auction.

He spoke with his friend, who is an auctioneer, and they're looking for big-ticket items to auction off in person at the event. So far, there are concert tickets for Brad Paisley's show on Dec. 11 and Bailey Zimmerman's show on June 19, 2026, both at Canada Life Place in London. Yates would also like to see donations for sports game tickets, like the London Knights.

He added those who know Emma and her family have been showing plenty of support online. He's also been talking with local businesses to see if they have any items to donate.

"People are very kind and seem to be very giving, so, so far so good."

With about a month to go until the event, those behind the fundraiser will use the last few weeks leading up to the event to en-

courage as much community involvement as possible.

Tickets for the event are \$25 each. Financial donations can be made via e-transfer to emmabennettfundraiser@gmail.com. More information can be found by either calling

Yates at 519-532-249 or Tina at 519-788-5349.

To RSVP for the event online, search "Emma Bennett Fundraiser" on Facebook or visit <https://tinyurl.com/emma-bennett-fundraiser>.

A night in Support of Emma
Bennett and Family



Help Support Emma Bennett & Family



(PETERS PAVING INC. FACEBOOK IMAGE)



Saturday, October 4, 2025
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Participating Sites

- Baird Machines
- The Mill
- Museum Square
- Woodstock Masonic Lodge
- Woodstock Museum NHS
- Church of Epiphany
- Old St. Paul's
- Woodstock Art Gallery
- Fire Station No. 1
- Woodstock Art Gallery

www.cityofwoodstock.ca/specialevents

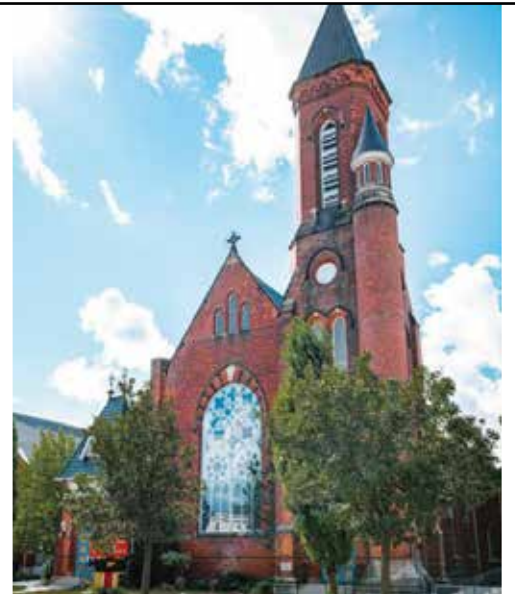
Fall Fest 12 - 5 p.m. in Museum Square



City of
Woodstock



WOODSTOCK
FALL FEST



COMING EVENTS

UKRAINIAN HERITAGE CELEBRATION

Saturday, Sept. 27: 1-5 p.m.

Museum Square, Woodstock

Enjoy Ukrainian folk dances, songs, instrumental music, arts & crafts, a kids' corner, and a handmade photo zone. A vibrant afternoon of culture and fun for all ages!

DOORS WIDE OPEN

St. David's United Church, Woodstock

Saturday September 27: 11 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

We invite our community to come check us out and chat with some local groups that are part of our church community. All are welcome! The Optimist Club of Oxford County will be hosting a BBQ for a minimal fee.

OTTERVILLE'S LIVING HISTORY RE-ENACTMENT

September 27 and 28

225422 Main St. W. Otterville

Sat. Sept. 27: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Skirmish at 2 p.m., Candlelight Tour at 7 p.m.

Sun Sept. 28: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Skirmish at 1 p.m.

SNHS Food Booth. Admission by donation.

COPING WITH GRIEF & LOSS

8-week grief support group starts Monday, September 29: 6-8 p.m.

Ingersoll Services for Seniors,

250 Ingersoll St. South, Ingersoll

Space is limited. Pre-registration required. Cost \$20 for members, \$25 non-members. Group led by trained facilitators and focuses on coping and living with loss. To register, contact Compassionate Grief Support at 519-866-3016 or email faye@compassionategriefsupport.ca.

SACRED HEART PARISH EUCHRE

Henderson Hall, 133 John Street Ingersoll.

Tuesday, September 30, October 14 and 28: Starts at 1:00 p.m.

We invite everyone to join us for a Euchre afternoon. Refreshments provided. Contact: Martha 519-320-0785

The Ingersoll Rotary Club is proud to host:

THE 2025 INTERNATIONAL SOFTBALL CONGRESS

(ISC) MEN'S FASTBALL TOURNAMENT

in Ingersoll September 26-28

at Victoria and Garnet Elliott Parks.

Games begin 7 p.m., Friday.

See some of the best league teams vying for a berth into next year's World's ISC Championship Tournament in Kitchener, Ontario in August 2026. At press time, registered teams are Georgian Bay, Sebringville, Saugeen, St. Thomas, Puslinch, Wiarton, Waterdown, Jarvis, Walton and Kitchener.

DOORS WIDE OPEN

St. David's United Church Woodstock

Saturday September 27 from 11 - 2:00 pm

We invite our community to come check us out and chat with some local groups that are part of our church community. The Optimist Club of Oxford County will be hosting a BBQ.

The Woodstock and Innerkip Lion Clubs host:

PET VALU 40TH WALK FOR DOG GUIDES:

BRIGHT FUTURES, COUNTLESS POSSIBILITIES

Come and join the local Lions Clubs as we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides, theme Bright

Futures, Countless Possibilities. www.walkfordogguides.com

The walk this year will be held at the Pavillion (beside the playground/ Sea Cadets building) in Southside Park in Woodstock, Ontario on Saturday, September 27. Registration is at 10 a.m., Walk starts at 10:30 a.m. Bring your family, friends, and sociable dogs. Fun for the whole family. Please contact Jennifer and Tatum "dog guide" at jharrington743@gmail.com for more information.

BEEF ON A BUN DINNER

Thursday, October 2: 5:30 - 7 p.m.

Church of the Epiphany

560 Dundas St., Woodstock

Includes coleslaw, cake and ice cream, tea and coffee. Tickets age 13 & up \$15.00, Ages 6-12 \$8.00, Ages 5 & under Free. Tickets available by calling 519-537-7698, or the Church Office. Tickets available at the door. Takeout Available.

Hearts for Ethiopia Hosts:

A WALK IN THEIR SHOES

Register today for Hearts for Ethiopia's A Walk in Their Shoes!

This meaningful community event is happening soon on **Saturday,**

October 18 in Woodstock, and individuals and teams are encouraged to sign up today at www.heartsforethiopia.com. A Walk in Their Shoes invites participants to step into the daily experiences of women and children in Ethiopia, while raising vital funds to support those living in extreme poverty. The event features a family-friendly walk, interactive education, a silent auction, an Ethiopian Merkato, refreshments, and opportunities to learn how the money raised will change the lives of women and children in Ethiopia.

REVEREND MARK CURTIS WITH HIS MUSICAL

SERMON, "SONGS MY FATHER SANG TO ME"

Saturday, October 18, starting at 2 p.m.

Old St Paul's Anglican Church,

723 Dundas Woodstock, Ontario

Come visit our historic church to worship with this talented priest and singer-songwriter. Good will offerings only. All are welcome. Refreshments will follow.

LET'S FALL INTO COUNTRY MUSIC WITH THE

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Every other Friday: 1 to 4 p.m.

Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St., Ingersoll

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

TREATS 'N' TREASURES CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Old St Paul's Anglican Church

723 Dundas Woodstock, Ontario

November 8: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

We will feature a silent auction, baking, frozen meat pies and soups, candy, books and a Café. All are welcome. No entry charge.

16TH ANNUAL TREATS & TREASURES EVENT

November 8, 9am-3pm

Maranatha Christian Reformed Church

735 Frontenac Cres., Woodstock (Just off Juliana near the new hospital!)

Lots of variety! Returning vendors and "newbies"! You don't want to miss this event!! Free admission!! Free coffee! Vendors in front foyer, the east and west hallways, the youth room and the gym!! ?'s: contact church at 519-539-5301 or organizer 519-536-0493

FAMILY FUN DAY @ EMMANUEL REFORMED CHURCH

170 Clarke St. Woodstock, ON

November 22: 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Penny Sale - Silent Auction - Bake Sale

Games for all Ages

Delicious Soup - Chili - Hot Dogs - Buns

Yummy Desserts - Drinks

FREE ADMISSION - EVERYONE WELCOME

WOODSTOCK COIN CLUB PRESENTS

A CONTEST OF MEDAL DESIGN

CELEBRATING OUR CITY'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY

THEME: WHAT DOES WOODSTOCK MEAN TO ME?

WHO CAN ENTER? ANYONE! And as often as you like.

TWO CATEGORIES: ADULT (18+) AND YOUTH

One winner from each category will receive a set of medals with their design and initials on the medal itself, plus a numismatic prize.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING YOUR DESIGN: DECEMBER 1, 2025

Designs to be submitted to: wcc2026contest@google.com

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Last Tuesday of every Month:

10 a.m. to Noon

Ingersoll Pharmasave

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TILLSONBURG DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB

Interested in Bridge? Join us every Friday at the Tillsonburg

Duplicate Bridge Club at 1 p.m. at The Senior Centre. Don't have

a partner? Come anyway and we will match you up with someone.

For more information, visit their Facebook page: TburgBridge.

THE OPTIMIST CLUB OF OXFORD COUNTY

The Optimists bring out the best in Youth, Community, and

Themselves. If anyone is interested in coming out to meet us and

learn more about us please email brenda7621@outlook.com

REPAIR CAFÉ - TOSS IT? NO WAY!

1st Saturday of each month: 9 a.m. to Noon

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

St. John's, Eastwood, now affiliated with Repair Café International

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

CALLING ALL LOCAL VENDORS!

511 Finkle St., Woodstock, ON

Saturday, December 6: 1 - 4 p.m.

Cedarview's Annual Christmas Bazaar is back, and we're on the lookout for talented vendors to join us! We're seeking: Artisan goods, Crafts, Holiday décor, Homemade goodies, Unique gifts & all things Christmas! Apply by November 1st to secure your spot! To join, send your info + business details to: lisa.eccleston@bwliving.com, (226) 458-3294. Don't miss this chance to be part of a festive community event full of holiday cheer!

GRIEF SUPPORT FOR MAID RELATED LOSS

This monthly in-person grief support group for loss related to Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) offers a compassionate, safe space to explore this unique loss. **The group will meet the 4th Wednesday of the month from 1-2:30 p.m. at the Thamesford Library, 165 Dundas St., Thamesford.** The group is free of charge. Pre-registration is requested. The next meeting is Wednesday, September 24th. To register or inquire about an evening group, contact 519-866-3016 or email faye@compassionategriefsupport.ca.

PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS &

CAREGIVERS

Third Wednesday of each month:

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

21 Wellington St., Woodstock

(Virtual options available)

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

VON OXFORD GRIEF CARE:

FREE MONTHLY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

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

TILLSONBURG

WHEN: 2nd Tuesday of every month

WHERE: VON Oxford Office 24 Brock St. W., Tillsonburg

TIME: 6:30PM-8:00PM

INGERSOLL

WHEN: 4th Tuesday of every month

WHERE: Ingersoll Public Library 130 Oxford St., Ingersoll

TIME: 10:30AM –12:00Noon

WOODSTOCK

WHEN: 3rd Saturday of every month

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

TIME: 10:30AM-12:00 Noon

THE LIONS CLUB OF WOODSTOCK

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

COLOURING THROUGH GRIEF

Caring Hearts Support Network:

St. David's United Church,

190 Springbank Ave., Woodstock ON

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

Call 519-536-3370. Check out website

www.caringheartssupportnetwork.com

OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Meetings: 2nd Tuesday (2 to 4 p.m.) and 4th Tuesday (7 to 9 p.m.)

September to May

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

If you have never belonged to a stamp club, now's the time. Meet new friends, grow your knowledge and collection. Contact: Don Eaton dhfe@silomail.com

Website: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>

COMING EVENTS

OXFORD COUNTY BRANCH OF ONTARIO ANCESTORS

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

OXFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY FALL SPEAKER SERIES

Industrial Woodstock – Timberland Machines Limited
Wednesday, September 24: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Woodstock Museum NHS

Special Guest Speaker Wes Magill – Join Wes as he takes us through the history of “Industrial Woodstock” including Timberland Machines Limited and Timberjack Inc., founded by his father Weston A. Magill, Vernon B. King and Bob Symons – the undisputed “industrial kingpins” of Woodstock. Free Event, Donations Welcome!

CONDEMNED: WOODSTOCK’S WICKED PAST

Wednesday, October 29: 6:30 p.m.

Location: To be announced.

Special Guest Jennie Grevers - Uncover the gripping stories behind the executions that shaped Woodstock and Oxford County’s past. Dive into the fascinating historical accounts from people who faced the gallows and learn how their lives – and deaths impacted our community. Join us for an evening filled with dramatic tales, historical insight, and a deeper understanding of Woodstock and Oxford’s most somber chapter. Free Event, Donations Welcome!

OXFORD GOES TO WAR

Wednesday, November 26: 6:30 p.m.

Location: To be announced.

Special Presentation by Scott Gillies, Chair OxHS. Free event, Donations welcome!

OXHS - BOARD MEMBER CURRENT VACANCY

The Oxford Historical Society celebrates, shares and commemorates the County’s stories of its people, places and events in history. We are currently looking for a volunteer Board member to fill a current vacancy. Consider getting involved behind the scenes. For more information, please email us at info@oxhs.ca.

BEACHVILLE LEGION EVENTS:

434852 ZorraLine, Beachville

EUCHRE

Thursday nights 7 p.m.

DARTS

Friday nights 8 p.m.

FREE POOL

KARAOKE WITH KEN PYLE

Sat Sept 27 7-11 p.m.

BLUEGRASS AND OLD TIME COUNTRY JAM

Sun September 28 1-4 p.m.

Come jam (acoustic only) or come listen

GENTLE CHAIR YOGA

Wednesdays till October 22: 7-8 p.m.

BLUEGRASS AND OLE TIME COUNTRY JAM

Sat October 4: 1-4 p.m.

SIGN UP FOR MEN’S DART LEAGUE

October 6: 7 p.m.

Commencing Mondays Oct 20. 4-6 players per team

HAM AND SCALLOPED POTATO DINNER

October 10: 5:30 p.m.

BBQ BEEF ON A BUN DINNER

October 24: 5:30 p.m.

LINE DANCING

Thursdays till November 6: 7-8 p.m.

INTRO TO BALLROOM DANCING

Thursdays till November 6: 8:15-9:15 for 6 weeks.

No partner required.

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 55 EVENTS:

642 Dundas St, Woodstock

SOUP N SANDWICH

October 2: 11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

Our Speical is Fish n Chips this day only. Please contact the Office.

SHUFFLEBOARD

Thursdays at 1:30 p.m.

DART LEAGUES

Every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday evening.

MEAT DRAW

October 11: 3 p.m.

CADETS

Every Monday night.

EXECUTIVE MEETING

October 7: 7 p.m.

BRANCH GENERAL MEETING

October 14: 7:30 p.m.

MONTHLY DINNER

October 26: 5 - 6 p.m.

Cabbage Rolls Mashed Potatoes with Veggies & Cole Slaw. Please contact the Office.

DART TOURNAMENT

October 5: 9:30 - 5 p.m.

EUCHRE

October 5: 1 - 5 p.m.

Contact Dave for more information 226-888-7246

PRIVATE FUNCTION

October 25th. Canteen will be closed that day.

OPTIMIST CLUB HALLOWEEN DANCE (DRESS-UP)

October 31: 7:30-11:30 p.m. Open to the Public.

SATURDAY NIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

October 4: 7-11 p.m. - Back to Back

October 11: 7-11 p.m. - Jeff Dawdy

October 18: 7-11 p.m. - Blue Sky

HALLOWEEN DANCE

November 1: 7 - 11 p.m.

POPPY CAMPAIGN

Starts October 31 and runs for 2 weeks

Please come out and sign up and help our Veterans' and their families.

DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK BIA

IMPORTANT DATES:

DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK SHOPPING NIGHT

October 23, November 27, December 18: 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Our monthly shopping event, Woodstock Shopping Night, typically occurs every 4th Thursday of the month. Participating stores stay open late until 8 pm to facilitate late-night shopping. Enjoy a great night out in downtown Woodstock with extended store hours & exciting specials.

CHRISTMAS IN THE SQUARE

December 12/13 & December 19/20

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

SOUTH GATE CENTRE EVENTS:

www.southgatectr.com or 519-539-9817

BLUE JAYS VS. TAMPA BAY

Saturday, September 27: 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

South Gate Centre Bus Trip

Members pricing and non-members pricing.

CEDARVIEW RETIREMENT HOME EVENTS:

511 Finkle St, Woodstock

PINK OUT PARTY FOR BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

EDUARD KLASSEN ON THE HARP

Thursday, October 16: 2:30-3:30 p.m.

Call to RSVP at 519-602-0282

Wear Pink! Accepting non perishable food items for the food bank.

FREE event

EUCHRE TOURNAMENT

Sunday October 26: 2-4:00 p.m., followed by dinner

Call to RSVP at 519-602-0282

Accepting non perishable food items for the food bank. FREE event

SOCK HOP DANCE

Saturday November 15: 7:30-9:30 p.m.

DJ Frankie. Call to RSVP at 519-602-0282

Accepting non perishable food items for the food bank. FREE event

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Saturday December 6: 1-4 p.m.

Accepting non perishable food items for the food bank. FREE event



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Riddles

I change my coat from green to gold, then let it go when days turn cold. What am I?
Leaf

Round and orange, carved with a grin; by candlelight I glow within. What am I?
Jack-o'-lantern

I stand in a field with button eyes; I guard the corn from hungry spies. What am I?
Scarecrow

I'm warm and soft with sleeves that squeeze; you pull me on when nips the breeze. What am I?
Sweater

I'm tiny and brown with a cap on my head; plant me now for oaks ahead. What am I?
Acorn

Sip me hot with spice and cheer; I taste like orchards every year. What am I?
Apple cider

You'll wander my walls and look for a way; left, right, dead end—come back another day. What am I?
Corn maze

I'm a circle of light in a crisp night sky; I rise in autumn, big and high. What am I?
Harvest moon

I crackle and glow as stories are told; gather 'round when nights turn cold. What am I?
Bonfire

I scratch and scrape across the lawn, chasing colors that have gone. What am I?
Rake

Sudoku

by PeterS 2025

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

Solutions on page 35

Featured Pet



MASON

Mason is a 3 yr old Great Bernese who lives in Beachville.

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

Word Search

FALL DAYS

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

PUMPKIN

HARVEST

LEAVES

CORNMAZE

SCARECROW

ACORN

BONFIRE

CIDER

HAYRIDE

GOURDS

SWEATER

CHILLY

MAPLE

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HOUSE FOR SALE

Lovely move in ready bungalow in the west end of picturesque St. Mary's. 72 Carrall Street.

This property features a large corner lot, 2 main floor bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a partially finished basement with 2 additional rooms, plus a family/rec room. Single detached garage.

Go to Kiji Ad ID 1724804443 or Facebook Marketplace, search "72 Carrall Street" for all of the details and photos.

Must see! Contact 519-570-6931 or kristafrancisshere@hotmail.com.

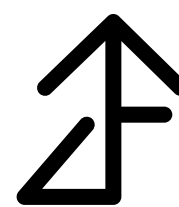
QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Beijing
2. Arrested Development
3. Sundial
4. A fruit
5. Enamel
6. Knowles-Carter
7. Drury Lane
8. Bull
9. Utah
10. Rachel Zane

SUDOKU

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

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OBITUARY

FORD KATHLEEN ALICE MARY 1945-2025



Loving wife of Bruce Ford of RR #2 Mossley passed away on September 14, 2025. Also survived by her son Darcy McLeod (Cathy) and grandson Justin McLeod (Cassandra) of London, brother Jim McLeod, as well as nieces and nephews. Predeceased by daughter-in-law Elizabeth McLeod, grandson Jason McLeod, brothers Ken and John McLeod. Kathy entered a career in nursing in 1963 thus beginning a life long passion for helping and caring for others. She had a keen eye for spotting anyone in need and always went that extra mile to help. She loved to laugh and have fun and many of her greatest joys came from children and animals. Kathy will be missed. A Celebration of Life will be held at the Ingersoll Services for Seniors 250 Ingersoll Street South on Sunday October 5, 2025 from 12-3pm. She had many charities that she supported. Donations in memory of Kathy may be made to DASO (Domestic Abuse Services Oxford) or Operation Sharing Ingersoll. Arrangements entrusted to the McBeath-Dynes Chapel of the Glendinning Funeral Home 246 Thames Street South, Ingersoll. Personal condolences may be posted at mcbeathdynes.ca/memorials/kathleen-ford/5637444/

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