

Tillsonburg POST

FREE

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Celebration planned for 200 years since town's founding

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

A birthday bash is planned to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Tillsonburg's founding on Oct. 18.

"We're excited to celebrate the town going from a two-room shack to a town of over 20,000 people," said Kathleen Watkin, Culture and Heritage Programs Coordinator with the town.

"It's a great opportunity for the community to come together and celebrate our 200 years of shared history," added Kate Bakos, Cultural Heritage Manager/Curator.

Memorial Park is the main venue for the events, which will commence with a land acknowledgement at noon, greetings from dignitaries, and the singing of O'Canada. A performance by the Ingersoll Pipe Band will follow.

The Great Canadian Lumberjack Show will provide a preview of some of the skills required to clear the land 200 years ago. It will take the stage at 1 p.m., 2:30 p.m., and 4 p.m. Show participants will compete in chainsaw carving, axe throwing, chainsaw cutting, wood chopping, cross-cut sawing, and log rolling. The log rolling in particular, will be a test of the dexterity of the competitors.

An overall theme throughout the day is a look back at some of the ways people lived 200 years ago.

The Pioneer Experience Zone is for the young and young at heart. A petting zoo, pottery demonstrations, woodworking, and forging demonstrations will be available. Patrons will also have the opportunity for a wagon ride, courtesy of Ewart McLaughlin, who will provide rides with his wagon and heavy horses, located near the John Street entrance.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 5



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

LITTLE FIREFIGHTER

The Tillsonburg Fire Department's annual open house opportunity for youth to put out a simulated fire is always a popular part of the event. Michael McDonald, five, of Courtland receives assistance to handle the hose from firefighter Dean Townsend. See more photos on Page 19.

About 50 people turn out to hydro merger information sessions

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Concerns about changes to monthly electricity bills were the largest concern among the 50 people who attended the two open houses held about the possible merger between Tillsonburg Hydro Inc. (THI) and EARTH Power.

The possible merger was announced on Sept. 9, and would see Tillsonburg Hydro merge with EARTH, which is a collaboration of local utilities, if it proceeded. Tillsonburg would be the second-largest partner within EARTH,

and would still have a say on local decisions if the merger moves forward.

The number of utilities in Ontario has been reduced dramatically since the passage of the Electricity Act, 1998, through either mergers or sales to Hydro One. One factor in THI's board considering a merger is the need for \$29 million in upgrades to the town's transformer station to increase capacity.

Two open houses, one on Sept. 29 and the second on Oct. 6, were held to explain the process, garner feedback, and answer any questions the public may have.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

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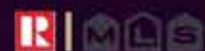


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Monthly bill cost biggest concern at open houses

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

“We actually get to choose this and have a say going into the future,” said THI board chair Dan Rasokas.

Chris White, president and CEO of ERTH, said people were generally positive.

“If they came in with questions or doubts, they left more informed,” he said.

The big question, not surprisingly, was whether there would be an impact on rates.

“We’re very confident we’re stronger together and together we can mitigate those rate increases to our customers,” he reassured.

Another concern was the response time in the event of an outage. White, who transitioned from lineman to CEO over the years with the company, explained that Tillsonburg currently has one person on call. However, if there are issues, 90 per cent of calls require two people to address the call. Currently, the person on call needs to find a second person from amongst Tillsonburg’s five linesmen.

Under the possible post-merger scenario, there will be two people on call in the southern area. White predicted a similar response time to the initial call, but was hopeful that power restoration times would be faster.

If the merger were to occur, Tillsonburg would be the second largest shareholder after Ingersoll of the 10 in ERTH. The merger would also bring more in-house expertise to the utility.

Tillsonburg Mayor Deb Gilvesy said she had a few residents contact her outside of the meetings, but not a lot.

“People had a lot of fantastic questions, but it really goes down the bottom line,” she said of the open houses, while pointing to an information panel titled the bottom line that explained if THI were to invest \$29.2 million in upgrades, there would be a 104 per cent increase to the fixed costs for utility customers.

She also said this issue has been a long time coming and emphasized that no decision has been made yet, and



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Tillsonburg Mayor Deb Gilvesy answers questions from former Mayor John Armstrong during an open house on a possible merger between Tillsonburg Hydro Inc. and ERTH Power. Feedback was mostly positive from the 50-plus people who attended the two open houses.

it will be up to the shareholder down the road.

The Town of Tillsonburg is the sole shareholder, and council meets as the shareholder of THI at least once per year. The next step will be to assess the feedback from the open houses and then determine the next course of

action.

If the decision is to proceed with the merger, an application will need to be submitted to the Ontario Energy Board. Then it will be a waiting game for an OEB decision.



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EDITORIAL

Something to be thankful for

As you read this paper, chances are you enjoyed Thanksgiving with family that included a turkey dinner.

That alone is something to be thankful for.

In these days of food poverty and homelessness, having close family connections is important and those who are in that position should consider themselves fortunate. All Tillsonburg residents have seen the growing number of homeless people on our streets. How they got there is an individual story for each, but the sad part is not only that this problem exists, but it is growing.

One of the fallouts from COVID was it seemed to become the reason for everything becoming more expensive. That was likely true for a short time, but it's not anymore. Then, it was the counter tariffs imposed by the government. These have been rolled back, but have prices dropped correspondingly in all sectors? The end

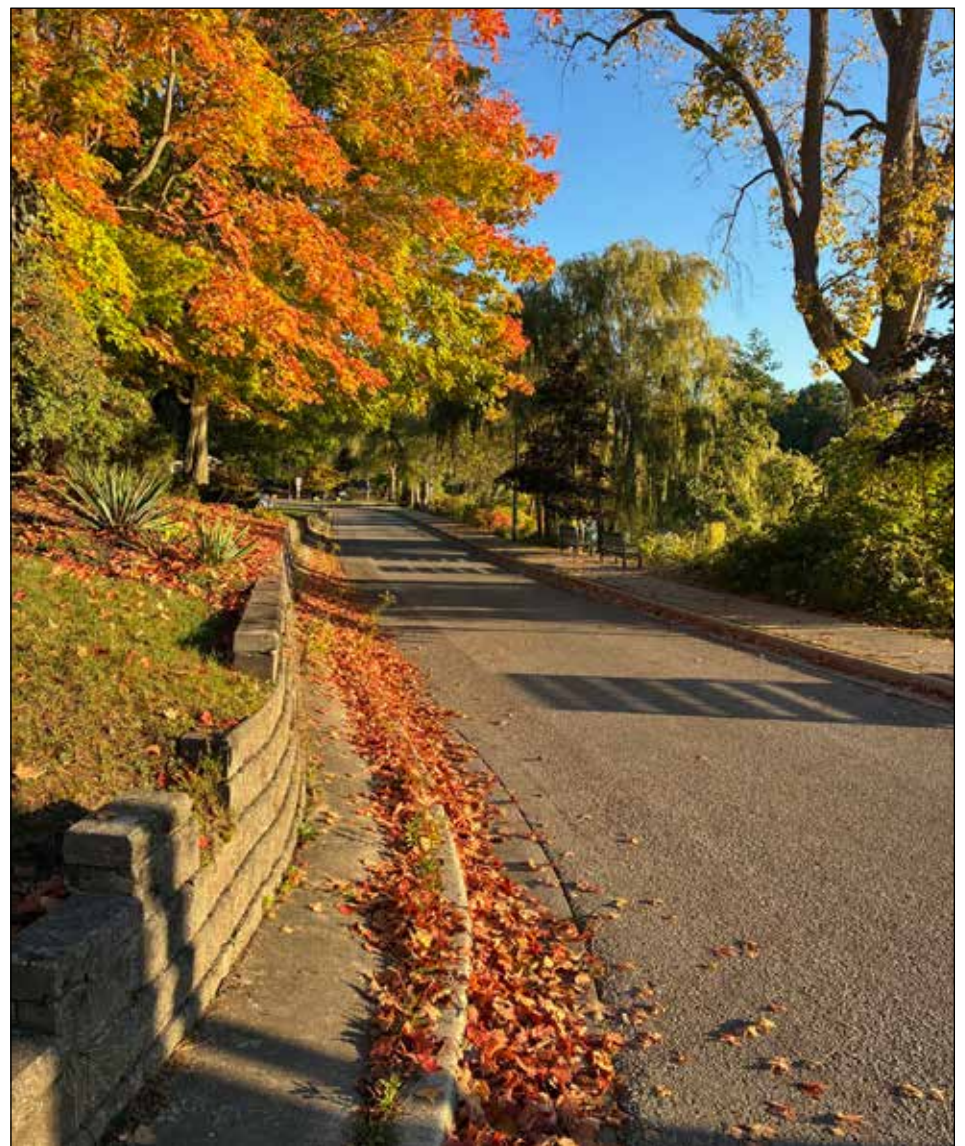
result of all this is food is more expensive.

Outside of those who end up on the streets, the number of people using the Tillsonburg Helping Hand Food Bank has increased by a third. This is the fallout from escalating food prices, and those who were barely scrapping by before are forced to the food bank now.

Lastly, for those who enjoyed a home-cooked meal with their family, there is a good chance it had a good percentage of Canadian content. The only good thing coming out of increased tensions with our U.S. neighbours is a heightened "Buy Canadian" movement. It makes sense to buy fresher food that will help our economy here in Canada. Buying local also helps the planet as there are less emissions from transporting the food.

And it can't be emphasized enough the importance of farming. It all goes back to the bumper sticker statement, "If you ate today, thank a farmer."

Have something to say? Submit your Letter to the Editor here:
info@tillsonburgpost.com



Park Avenue, by Lake Lisgar.

(PETER BEECHEY PHOTO)

Dedicated leadership and coordinated effort built our town



**EVERYONE
HAS A
STORY
TO TELL**

ROBIN KRAFFT

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

David Morris and his wife Dag have recently returned from a two-week adventure in their motorhome. They visited numerous provincial parks on their way to Thunder Bay, where they spent time with family and friends, and last year they toured the east coast. Mr. Morris has certainly earned a bit of leisure time.

In 1973, he arrived in Tillsonburg (population 6,000) in a red Volkswagen with all of his belongings in the back, ready to start his new job as the Deputy Clerk-Treasurer and Tax Collector. He was 21 years old.

"At that time there was a live TV broadcast of council meetings that took place in the Old Town Hall." Morris said, "Ken Holland, the Clerk-Treasurer, got a call in the middle of the meeting and asked me to take over. I had just met everyone, but it was exciting."

He added that "Ken was a great guy and a real visionary."

Morris didn't disappoint his mentor. Over the next few

years, he was deeply involved with the redevelopment of the downtown, with about 50 properties to assemble, including acquiring the rail line and the realignment of Bridge Street.

Discussing the considerable changes, Morris said: "It takes political fortitude. Council has to take a position and follow through. The councils I worked with were very driven to make sure Tillsonburg had a thriving downtown area."

Morris worked his way up over the next 36 years to eventually become Tillsonburg's first Chief Administrative Officer in 1999, basically the town manager.

More restructuring followed, with a new focus on customer service, technology and a consolidation of departments in a new Customer Service Centre, to improve efficiency.

"It was an interesting time to work for the town," Morris said, "and we were always asking how we could do it better."

During that time, Tillsonburg Hydro was set up and the Fire Dispatch Service was expanded. Town employees were involved in working groups to provide valuable input.

He explained that planning is done in 50-year increments, and even at that time, he said it was a question of how big do we want Tillsonburg to get?

"That is a question that needs to be answered," he added.

Beyond his official years of service to the town, Morris shares the knowledge he has gathered and utilizes it in many volunteer positions. His desire to support the community is still strong.

He has been elected to leadership positions for various service clubs and boards and is the current president of the

Tillsonburg and District Historical Society. He was there for the acquisition of Annandale House (for \$75,000) and participated in fundraising and grant applications for its restoration. Eventually, the existing museum and Annandale House were consolidated.

In 1976, he was sought out for his experience and leadership to help with starting the 153 Varnavair Air Cadet Squadron. Based on his militia background, he became the first Administrative Officer and later, the Commanding Officer.

"We went from 0 to 90 cadets quite quickly and it's still going," Morris said. "It's a great program for young people, with no cost. The uniform is provided and you can even get your pilot's license." More than 1,200 teens went through the cadet program during his time there, and he still meets people occasionally who start a conversation with: "Mr. Morris, you probably don't remember me..."

He has served in many prominent volunteer positions, including the executive of the United Church Service Club AOTS, and the board of directors for the Multi-Service Centre.

"These were things I'd already been involved with," Morris explained. "I understood the history, and had a lot of contacts locally, provincially and federally. I could get people to work together and think outside the box."

Morris maintains that Tillsonburg is a great place to raise a family, and he credits his parents with getting him interested in serving the community. He encourages young people to think about municipal administration.

"It was a rewarding career," Morris said, "I got to be involved in the planning of the municipality and over the years see it come to fruition."

Tillsonburg Pioneer Graveyard's stories



**THE
STAGE
IS THE
WORLD**

LAUREL A. BEECHEY

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

The reaction of people who toured the Tillsonburg Pioneer Graveyard, listening to the stories of those who settled, lived and died here in Tillsonburg, was right on cue. When they hear facts or words that are contrary to today's social norms, they look at each other, murmur in surprise, laughter or dismay. Listening to me tell multiple stories works, however, when we have a cast to tell their story in costume, it all means much more.

For the tours at the end of September, we were fortunate that a few of our pre-Covid Pioneer Performing Troupe, who could return to celebrate Tillsonburg's

200th Anniversary with their stories, told beside their tombstones. I read letters received from various pioneers permanently residing in the town during the 1800s as well. Some former residents left behind a plethora of information, while others, especially those who passed at a young age, had little to share except the events of their death.

All the stories are based on facts of life so long ago that many people today have trouble comprehending. One thing I try to do is use appropriate historic language, names, titles, slang, and if I can, an accent. I guess that's the 50-plus years of theatre in me!

Back then there were no teenagers. If lucky, children went to school until they were about 13 to 14 years-old. In the 1800s, male or female, when you hit puberty, you were an adult and treated as such.

Remember that when Tillsonburg was founded, just the men arrived first, finding an almost-impenetrable forest of trees, which had to be cut down, so cabins and outbuildings could be constructed. They had to hunt for food, fish, and plant a garden. There were no stores. There was no cash, you traded items or your labour. The men needed a housekeeper and children to work the farm as most could not afford to hire people. Most had lots of children. There was always work for a boy to do; but a passel of girls - they were quite happy to marry the girls off young.

The follow is a script based on facts about Benjamin VanNorman:

"I had the privilege of learning from two very important men; my brother Joseph whom I partnered with for a time at the Normandale Furnace and my father-in-law George Tillson, who I helped when he was blazing his settlement of Dereham Forge, out of the wilderness. They were exciting times. At the Normandale Furnace there was nothing but wilderness surrounding us. We had to work 15 hours a day to do the work and hunt, chop down the trees to plant a field around the stumps. I met my first wife there, George Tillson's oldest girl,

Harriet. She was a lot younger than me, only 15 but she was a woman and was teaching the other children. I was 10 years older than, her. Before you get too uppity, you should know there weren't any other women around. But we did good. She gave me eight children."

On his way to Upper Canada, Joseph Herrick arrived in Granby, Mass in 1790. There at 30 years old, he wed Sarah Chaney only 12 years old, but obviously a woman as she bore Asa Meadwell Herrick, born Jan. 7, 1791. Asa lived but little Sarah died the same day. Joseph needed a new mother for Asa immediately. He found Nancy Ann Perverly, nearby in New Hampshire, 19 years old and unmarried. Nancy was a baby machine; she had 16 children, the last one Dec. 31, 1812. Joseph died in Vermont, and Nancy joined her son David, who had moved to Dereham Forge and was postmaster, to live out her days. Nancy, David and his wife Emiline are buried in the pioneer cemetery.

The story of Duncan Slaght & Racenia Eliza Turner is another tale.

"We suppose the above are the youngest married couple in Canada, the bridegroom not being yet seventeen years of age and the bride only 14 and 4 months," said the Hamilton Evening News of 1864. They were married in Mt. Elgin by Rev. Wm Elliot, as no one in town would marry them because of their age.

Ten months after the young couple married, their daughter Racenia Turner Slaght was born, and their lives seem to be following the time-honoured ways although a year-and-a-half later there were no other living children. Theirs was not to be a happy ending, as an epidemic swept through Tillsonburg, killing Duncan in 1867 on Racenia's birthday and Racenia died almost two years later at 20. Their daughter was about four-and-a-half years-old and raised by her Aunt Nancy and John Chapman. When she herself married she used the name Racenia Slaght Chapman. Duncan's stone is marked son of Rhoda & Silas Slaght. Racenia's grave is unknown, and gravestone is missing.

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Editor's Note: Talented writers wanted

Writer's Corner is a new feature in the Tillsonburg Post, featuring the talent of our local writers.

Author Norma Collis has graciously provided material to launch this new column, but features are welcome from other local writers.

Submissions should be 600 to 800 words in length.

Submitted material doesn't need to be about Tillsonburg, but a connection to the town is a bonus. Topics are diverse, but should not be business promotion or political opinion pieces.

E-mail editor Jeff Helsdon at jeff@granthaven.com with any questions.

Tillsonburg POST

Guiding Principles

1. Everyone has a story
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6. Newspapers strengthen communities
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8. Newspapers should be locally-owned and operated

Memorial Park is the venue for events this weekend

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

A marketplace will have 200th anniversary souvenirs available, including whiskey glasses, mugs, magnets, keychains, aprons, and tote bags. Souvenir clothing, reasonably priced, will be available for on-site ordering. The website to order clothing is <https://derehamforgeapparel.wscimage.com>. Three local authors will also have displays.

Independent vendors will also have displays. Early pioneer techniques will be demonstrated, including pottery and woodworking, candlemaking, weaving, spinning, and blacksmithing.

"We have demonstrators coming that will share early crafts and activities," Watkin said. "We are also excited to celebrate Tillsonburg's future through a variety of vendors who will share their hand-crafted wares."

Several members of the Tillson family will travel to town for the event, and Tamsen Tillson will be cutting the anni-

versary cake at 1 p.m.

Speaking of food, besides the free cake, a variety of food will be available for a fee. Chrissy's Catering will be hosting a pancake breakfast in the Lions Auditorium from 8 a.m. to noon. Food trucks will be on site throughout the afternoon, offering a variety of items for sale.

Volunteers will be walking through the park, wearing Dereham Forge aprons, and offering free giveaways of wooden nickels, stickers, and pins.

A memorial tree planting will take place at Annandale National Historic Site to commemorate the occasion at 10:30 a.m.. Visitors can also take home one of the 250 native trees available at the Sanders Street entrance on a first-come, first-served basis. The tree giveaway is sponsored by the town beautification committee.

The day will wrap up with fireworks at 7:30 p.m. in Memorial Park.

Police cleared of wrongdoing in two incidents

OPP were cleared of any wrongdoing in two recently-completed investigations with a Tillsonburg connection.

A decision was released on Sept. 29 regarding a 32-year-old man who was seriously injured in the course of his arrest by OPP officers in Tillsonburg on June 5, 2025. The SIU was notified of the incident and initiated an investigation. The investigation is now concluded. On his assessment of the evidence, SIU Director Joseph Martino determined there were no reasonable grounds to believe that an officer committed a criminal offence in connection with

the man's arrest and injury.

In a decision announced on Oct. 3, the Special Investigations Unit found no reasonable grounds to believe a London Police Service officer committed a criminal offence in connection with the drug overdose suffered by a 39-year-old man. On December 23, 2024, the man lapsed into medical distress while in the custody of the Ontario Provincial Police in Tillsonburg, following his arrest by a London Police Service officer. There was evidence the man retrieved and consumed a quantity of fentanyl secreted in his buttocks and fell ill in his cell.

Suspicious vehicle results in multiple charges

Three accused are facing multiple charges after a call for service for a suspicious vehicle resulted in the recovery of a stolen vehicle.

On Oct. 5, at approximately 7:30 a.m., members of the Oxford County Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Detachment were dispatched to a report of a suspicious vehicle on Simcoe Street in the Town of Tillsonburg.

Upon locating the vehicle, officers attempted a traffic stop. The vehicle failed to stop and fled at a high rate of speed. Police later located the occupants and vehicle on Plank Line, in the Township of South-West Oxford.

Investigation revealed that the vehicle was found to be stolen.

A 17-year-old youth has been charged with:

- Flight from Peace Officer

- Dangerous Operation
- Possession Property Obtained by Crime Over \$5,000 - In Canada.

Additionally, Chloe Dunn, 18-years-old from St Catharines, and Benjamin Gilley, 19-years-old from Howick Township, have both been charged with Possession Property Obtained by Crime Over \$5,000 - In Canada.

All three accused have been released from custody and will appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Woodstock on a later date.

The youth's identity is protected under the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA).

If you have any information that may be helpful, please call the Oxford OPP at 1-888-310-1122. If you wish to remain anonymous, you can call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS), where you may be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$2000.

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Oxford MP's attempt to fast track bail bill voted down

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Oxford MP Arpan Khanna says people are dying on Canada's streets while the government delays working on fixing the nation's bail problems.

Khanna's Private Member's Bill, the Jail Not Bail Act, will address the problem with repeatedly letting repeat offenders out on bail. He said with 1,600 violent crimes per day, many of these by repeat offenders and one-third of murders in the country committed by repeat offenders, there is no time to delay.

Khanna's bill is number 10 on the list when the government starts to debate private member's business. A date for that to start hasn't been set, but will occur this fall. The Conservatives believe the bail problem is large enough that the Oct. 6 Opposition Day Motion was to speed up passage of the bill and not wait for the Private Member's Bill process.

"The Liberals and the other parties voted against fast tracking the bill," Khanna said of the result of the lost vote. "They want it go through the normal channels."

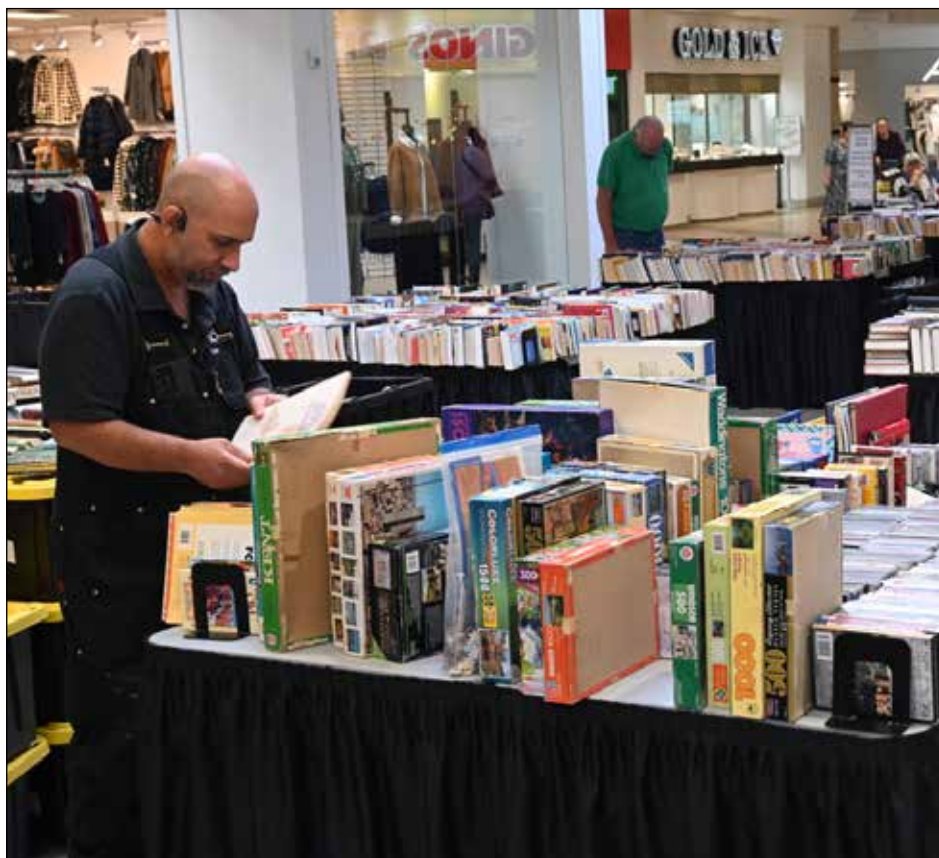
He believes the decision was made because of politics, but he maintains it's not a political issue but one that crosses political lines, with surveys showing 80 per cent of people want the issue fixed. Khanna pointed to calls for immediate action from B.C.'s NDP Premier David Eby and Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow, who also has NDP roots.

Khanna said he saw "zero cooperation" towards an offer to the Liberals to use the bill, saying he doesn't have to take credit for it as long as there is action.

"They want to continue business as it's supposed to be, they want to continue through normal channels," he said.

The vote to move up debate of the bill was lost 196-142.

tillsonburgpost.com



BOOKS BY THE HUNDREDS

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

The semi-annual Rotary Book Sale was held in the Tillsonburg Town Centre last week. There were several thousand books available, ranging from novels to coffee table books to non-fiction, in both hardcover and paperback. Mike Singh is seen browsing the many titles available.

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New logo released for integrated hospitals



**Alexandra Hospital Ingersoll
Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital**

The new Rural Roads Health Services, which is an integration of Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital and Alexandra Hospital, Ingersoll, has a new logo.

The recent release of the logo has been a long journey. At the June 2025 board meeting and annual members meetings, the boards approved coming together under a common board as well as a Common Brand Policy - outlining the use of Rural Roads Health Services (RRHS) to represent the integrated entity. The logo and branding for RRHS was developed in partnership with the Oxford County Communications team in a process that engaged several team members.

The new logo is "inspired by the rolling landscapes home to the rural and small communities we serve. The heart-shaped horizon is an expression of our organization's commitment to a caring experience." The logo has a corporate colour from each of the hospital's logos, plus a complimentary green colour.

The hospitals have transitioned from two separate websites to one unified

website found at <https://www.ruralroadshealthservices.ca/> - representing both sites and will be updating all social media sites as well. We hope you will "follow us" on LinkedIn, Facebook or Instagram at RRHS.

Over the coming months, new templates for memos and written communication materials using our new brand. E-mails will be transitioned to new addresses (@rrhs.ca).

Eventually our external signage will also be branded with RRHS while retaining the AHI and TDMH site specific identity. In the meanwhile, we have placed pop up banners at our main entrances to share our new branding with the people we are honoured to serve.

"Where we are today represents an evolution of many years of strong partnership and intentional planning and engagement with team members, patients, partners, volunteers, and the community," said Nadia Facia, integrated president and CEO. "Through this, we are strengthening the sustainability of rural small community hospitals in the ever-changing health care landscape."

Best Management Practices to address phosphorus loading in the big otter watershed

Norfolk County Farmers in the Big Otter Creek watershed can apply to a program to address phosphorous loading.

Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA) has received a commitment of \$512,000 in federal funding over the next four years to help address phosphorus loading in the Big Otter Creek sub-watershed.

The funding is part of the Government of Canada's \$76-million investment in the Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystem Initiative. Over the next four years, the Canada Water Agency will distribute funding to LPRCA to implement best management practices, such as cover crops and erosion control structures, in high-risk phosphorus loss areas.

The initiative's goal is to reduce phosphorus loads entering Lake Erie by keeping fertilizers and soil on the landscape and in farmer's fields. Doing so will help prevent harmful algal blooms and areas of low oxygen. The Big Otter Creek sub-watershed was historically identified as a high-risk phosphorus loss area, meaning the lost phosphorus ends up in Lake Erie.

The initiative offers funding for best management practices such as cover crops

and erosion control. For more information and to see how you can get involved, please visit the LPRCA's website at lprca.on.ca

Invasive Species funding

LPRCA Authority has received funding from the Invasive Species Action Fund through the Invasive Species Centre to control invasive species, specifically Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), in partnership with private landowners.

Inventorying, monitoring, pre-treatment and treatment of HWA has been completed in Coppens/Ferris/Armstrong Tracts, Hay Creek Conservation Area, Rugeinis Tract, Harvey Tract, Haldimand Conservation Area, Jackson Tract and Hobbitstee Refuge.

The funding will help maintain the health of the Long Point Region watershed's forests by facilitating on-the-ground management and monitoring of the invasive species to preserve the wellbeing of the natural area while promoting and protecting Species at Risk.

Long Point Region Conservation Authority offers a number of landowner services to help landowners within the Long Point Region Watershed preserve and enhance their natural environment.

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New chamber CEO brings experience to position

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

The new CEO of the Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce brings valuable experience to the position.

Rocio Salinas started as the CEO on Oct. 1. She previously worked part-time as the communications coordinator for the Tillsonburg chamber and served as the general manager of the Norwich Chamber of Commerce for four years.

"It's pretty much the same as this position, but on a smaller scale," she said, explaining Norwich was a part-time role.

Salinas moved to Canada from Mexico in 2014 with her husband who was transferred within his company. She previously worked in human resources in Mexico. Initially, she worked at small jobs after moving to Norwich five years ago, and then learned about the chamber of commerce system.

"There are a lot of people who are active in the community, and they care," she said.

At one of the first chamber networking events, she saw former Tillsonburg CEO Suzanne Renken talk about networking and was impressed.

"She and the Tillsonburg chamber have a great reputation in the Ontario chamber network," Salinas said.

About a year ago, she was approached by former CEO Ashley Ed-

wards about the possibility of working as communications coordinator in Tillsonburg. At the time, Salinas was also working part-time as the grant administrator for the Oxford Community Foundation.

"For me, working for Tillsonburg was a goal," Salinas said. "I always wanted to work for a chamber that did more."

That opportunity arose when Edwards moved on to other things.

"It's very rewarding for me to be working here," Salinas said a few days into the job. "I feel very humbled and want to learn way more."

Renken will work as a part-time administrator and help Salinas learn the ropes.

The first order of business for Salinas is to continue the chamber's advocacy work and provide members with a positive experience, ensuring they continue to renew.

"For me, it's important members have a good experience with their membership and want to continue to be a member," Salinas said.

The chamber currently has about 250 members. It hosts monthly Business After 5 networking events, a golf tournament, its annual awards banquet and organizes trips with group discounts. The next trip will be to Europe in the fall of 2026. The chamber will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2026.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Rocio Salinas started as the new CEO of the Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce on Oct. 1. She came to the role with experience as the chamber's communications coordinator and general manager of the Norwich chamber.

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A scary rundown of town's Halloween events

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

What is likely the scariest collection of ghoulish, haunted events the town has ever seen is on tap for Halloween 2025.

The early response to the newest Halloween event, called Eerie Encounters, has been overwhelming. This event is essentially the town's first-ever guided ghost tour. Naomi Dube, Downtown Tillsonburg BIA Marketing coordinator, came up with the concept, seeing many towns have a ghost tour.

"Tillsonburg has a lot of ghost stories so why aren't we doing this," she said of her original idea.

Dube, who is the daughter of former Rolph Street Public School teacher Dan Dube, said her father and other teachers had "spooky encounters" in the school. This was the start of her research. She quickly added other locations such as Seven Gables, Station Arts Centre, and the Copper Mug building.

Dube had assistance from histori-

cal writer Jason Pankratz and started working with paranormal investigator Sarah Kennedy, who was originally from Delhi.

"When she saw this opportunity was there, she was excited," Dube said. "She has done her own investigating in these buildings, so it's kind of cool she has her own stories to share."

Kennedy will lead tours on Oct. 23, 24, and 25. Dube described the tour as a mixture of ghost stories, local legends, history, and tales of secret societies. The concept is so popular, it's already sold out.

A bigger haunt

The haunted house in the Tillsonburg Town Centre is going to be the largest to date.

"This is our biggest haunt yet," said Vanessa Fortner, events and marketing coordinator for the BIA.

Last year's haunted house was on the main floor of the Tillsonburg Town Centre. This year, it's moving to the second floor into a space that's three times larger.

The haunted house is a team effort from Scott Foster and Bruce Bennett

of Coffin Man Inc., Chip Barkhouse and Mike Bolt. In addition, Stacy Hantz donates many of the props, and several local businesses contribute supplies, while the Tillsonburg Town Centre donates the space.

Admission is a donation to the food bank or \$2. The haunted house will run on Thursday, Oct. 23, and Friday, Oct. 24. On Saturday from 2 to 5 p.m., the haunted house will have its scariness scaled back for younger ghosts and goblins, but the full scare will be on from 5 to 9:30 p.m.

For witches and more

Witches Night Out last year was an event at the Station Arts Centre with vendors tailored to the night. However, Fortner said the event has taken "a wicked turn" this year and will now include the entire downtown area.

"Whether than bringing in businesses from outside of town we wanted to support businesses within the BIA zone," she explained.

And, to be more inclusive to other scary creatures, it's being opened up to other terrifying creatures.

"We're advertising it as witches and

warlocks, ghouls and goblins to bring everyone downtown," she explained.

The event will feature late-night shopping in downtown with one of the locations featuring a potions bar, another bringing in a tarot card reader, and many restaurants offering drinks with a Halloween twist.

Downtown Spooky Town for trick or treaters

The continuation of this event from 2 to 5 p.m. will welcome families and young trick-or-treaters to the mall, where they can go store to store collecting goodies. A costume contest with online voting will take place in the mall, and participants can opt to purchase a photograph for a fee. Apple cider and pumpkin carving are also part of the event.

Overall, Halloween will have a larger presence in downtown Tillsonburg this year.

"With this being the third year, we have a record number of participants in all events," Fortner said. "It shows what we can accomplish when we all work together."

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Bakery café blossoms at Makkink's Flower Farm

CHRIS ABBOTT

Post Correspondent

Makkink's Flower Farm and Bakery Café has come a long way from its humble roots – a flower table near road.

"My business has grown 'over the years,' it's nothing that I planned out," said Hilde Makkink, noting when she added the cut-your-own flowers service it was a dream come true. "I didn't say, 'This is what it has to look like in 10 years or so.'"

Makkink started with sunflowers, and enjoyed it... a lot.

"I started with a really small plot and now it's two acres of fresh-cut flowers – and two acres is enough. We start off the end of May, beginning of June when the first flowers are ready. It runs until the frost hits in the fall. I'm always hoping for Thanksgiving, and the weekend after is ideal. But if the frost comes earlier, it's over."

Flower seasons vary, but they include dahlias, peonies, sunflowers, zinnias – and so much more.

"We grow around 45 varieties," said Makkink. "I think it's even more. But nothing is growing the whole time. Peonies are a

spring flower, May-June. Then we have Delphiniums, then the summer flowers start to bloom.

"We always try to have bouquets ready."

A baker for 15-20 years before starting her flower farm, in the early years it was a bit of a struggle for Makkink learning it all.

"It was self-taught, trying and error. In the beginning we would have a gap of a couple weeks without flowers but I figured it out. Now I have the hang of it and there's always stuff growing.

"It's a lot of fun," she said. "The best part of it is weeding, I love to weed. If I have a busy day in the store, and my head is full, I go in the field and I weed for two hours. It's so relaxing! It's just my happy place – weeding in my flower fields."

Visitors come from nearby Oxford, Elgin and Norfolk Counties (\$10 admission fee), but they also from much farther away, including the GTA, to wander through the flower fields on grass paths, cutting their flowers.

Many out-of-town visitors wanted to know 'where to eat,' and Makkink typically guided them to establishments in Till-



(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)

Behind the bakery café counter at Makkink's Flower Farm are from left Bev Van Straten, Hilde Makkink and Ayla Sawchuk.

sonburg.

"We got busier and busier, I hired more people and we needed some more space."

That's when another dream was realized – more of a distant, in-the-back-ground dream – adding a coffee/lunch room.

"I didn't think that people would come out of town for lunch or an afternoon coffee or morning tea, but they do, and I honestly love it."

Located a couple minutes east of Tillsonburg (east on North Street to 164604 Kellett Rd), they are almost on the edge of town.

"Still, the main focus had to be flowers.. and it still is. Everything is flower related. A lot of people come here for lunch or for a coffee and tea, and even a wine and a quiche – we have an alcohol licence."

Not only does their new building host the bakery café with plenty of tables/seating and the cut-your-own flowers section, they now have ample space to do workshops.

"Everything is flexible. The tables can go up and down, and a lot of the tables are on wheels, so I can easily change the room around to a workshop or

cafe area. Or we can make the store area bigger."

Makkink's Flower Farm and Bakery Café is open May 1st to mid-December, four days a week – Wednesdays to Saturdays 9-5. Mondays and Tues-

days are office/prep days for Makkink and her staff, which includes deliveries.

"We do pancake breakfasts once a month, with a tour of the farm. It's nice for people to come here and have the experience."



(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)

Flowers are still at the core of Makkink's Flower Farm and Bakery's décor.

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Oxford Sportsmen's Club holding event for youth



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Oxford Sportsmen's Club member Jenn Harris is one of the organizers of the Junior Trap Day being held at the club on Oct. 25.

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Oxford Sportsmen's Club is aiming to encourage more young people to join the ranks of trap shooters.

The club is hosting a Junior Trap Day on Oct. 25, starting at 10 a.m. Participants will be taught how to pattern a shotgun, the fundamentals of proper stance and gun mount, and how to hit moving targets. Each participant will be loaned a gun and given a box of ammunition. There will be a fun competition between participants where they can win prizes. Lunch is provided. The event is sponsored by the Canadian Shooting Sports Association.

The initiative is one by members to grow the sport and attract new members to the club, located on Prouse Road near Spring Lake Resort.

Member Jenn Harris and club president Gary Benko came up with the idea.

"We want to try and get more youth involved in this sport because not many youth are involved in trap shooting," Harris said.

The average age of trap shooters is 55, which she finds concerning. "We're going to try to bring that down, or else the sport will die."

Trap shooting is a shotgun target sport where competitors shoot clay

birds in rounds of 25, with five shots each from five different positions. It's a sport where shooters compete against themselves, but also against other shooters in inter-club competitions and in larger competitions through the Amateur Trapshooting Association (ATA). Trap is an Olympic sport, although at that level, competitors shoot a slightly different version of the game, which is more difficult and with quicker targets.

Harris is a relative newcomer to the sport and the club, having been a member for five years. Shaine Rogers convinced both Harris and her husband, Dan, to try it.

She found she likes the camaraderie and community feeling at Oxford Sportsmen's Club.

"Everyone is so friendly, and helpful," she said.

Harris is also a serious competitor and was the 2022 high overall C Class shooter for ATA in the province. She is an example of how a newcomer can become excited about the sport.

"I actually didn't know gun clubs existed until seven years ago," she said. "The first time I shot a gun was five years ago."

Practice is held at Oxford Sportsmen's Club on Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons.

To reserve a spot, e-mail golfgirl22@hotmail.com



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Van Leeuwen completes six world major marathons

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

When Jane Van Leeuwen started running later in life, never did she imagine the quest to complete the world's six major marathons would take her half-way around the world.

To put it in perspective, she is one of only 488 Canadian women who have completed the six majors, which is known as the Abbott World Marathon Majors. Each marathon is 42.2 kilometers in length.

She recalled years ago, while volunteering at the hospital, she ran into a girl who completed the six majors. "My first thoughts of this was are you crazy," she laughed.

This all changed when she was 43 and met neighbour Laurie Monk, who was an inspiration.

"I was starting to dabble in running because I had more time with my kids being older," she recalled.

Monk turned out to be an inspiration as she was a few years older and still running. Van Leeuwen's goal became to run a half-marathon by the time she was 50. She and Monk ended up running the Toronto Island half-marathon for women only to meet her goal.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Jane Van Leeuwen displays her medal from completing the Abbott World Marathon Majors, a journey that took her to Japan, Europe, and the United States to run six marathons.

"I loved it so much I started training for my first full marathon," she said.

She then ran the Toronto Scotiabank half-marathon, and finished with a good time.

"I ran it so well, I put my time into New York City, which is a world major," she said, explaining her time did qualify her.

At 52, she completed New York.

"I was six seconds away from qualifying for Boston," she said. "I thought I was that close, I had to try for Boston."

The Boston Marathon is one of the toughest to get into, requiring times to be five minutes faster than the qualifying time. This brought Van Leeuwen to the Philadelphia marathon in 2021, where she qualified for Boston with 13 minutes to spare.

"It's the toughest one to run, it's the hilliest," Van Leeuwen said, adding with a smile, "After that it's all downhill."

With two of the world majors under her belt, Van Leeuwen decided on her ultimate goal.

"One I ran Boston, I had my whole goal to run all the world majors," she said. "Then I realized how much of a goal it is."

The remaining world majors – Tokyo, London, Chicago and Berlin – were a little different. There are no qualifying times for Tokyo, London, and Berlin, and the ability to run is earned either through making a charitable donation, going with a tour group, or winning a spot in a lottery. Van Leeuwen donated to Ronald McDonald House to compete in Tokyo and accompanied a tour group to Berlin and London.

She finished Berlin in September with her husband, Larry Stuyt, to complete the six.

Van Leeuwen went into the competition with aspirations of setting a new personal best.

"It was the hottest (marathon) on record. I was excited and I was looking forward to a personal best, and it was the worst," she recounted. "It literally goes down as the hottest marathon on record. People were collapsing all over. I reached the point where I was hyperventilating. I called (daughter) Cassandra on the course, and she calmed me down."

Mentioning her daughter, Van Leeuwen said Cassandra has been a big supporter, and she completed a half-marathon more than seven years ago.

"All my training runs, she encouraged me, cheered me on," she said.

When Van Leeuwen completed the Berlin marathon, she was pulled aside by officials. She was presented with her medal for finishing the marathon in a separate area and given the Abbott World Marathon Majors medal. She was also part of the flag ceremony in Berlin, carrying it with a Canadian male runner.

"They treated me like a celebrity," Van Leeuwen recounted. "They escorted me to a separate place and took photos. When I walked away, literal strangers wanted to have their picture with me. They haven't heard of this."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Husband Larry Stuyt also ran the Berlin Marathon to give Jane Van Leeuwen support and be there when she completed the Abbott World Marathon Majors.

Stuyt said seeing a person with the medal for the six majors isn't something he and Van Leeuwen had seen in the other marathons either.

"It's such a rare thing to win that," he said.

It's taken intense training to complete the six majors in such a short time, and Van Leeuwen credited the ability to work part-time for Stuyt's company as a positive factor. She also mentioned his support was integral, as was the boost from the entire family.

She trains by running a minimum of 10 kilometers three to four times per week, in addition to bicycling, swimming, and strength training.

"I'm a firm believer in cross-training to ward off injuries," she said.

Stuyt pointed out that statistically speaking, the chance of injury when completing the six majors is 100 per cent. Van Leeuwen managed to complete it unscathed, except for Planta's fasciitis, which developed early in the journey.

One of her goals after Boston was to complete the world majors while her mother, who is now 91, was still alive. Van Leeuwen became concerned when there was a two-year delay due to COVID, but was happy her mother saw her achieve her goal.

With one goal down, Van Leeuwen is moving on to the next: she and Stuyt plan on completing half-marathons in each of the Canadian capital cities.

Gemini junior girls enjoy back-to-back TVRA Southeast hoops victories

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

Winning is a habit the Tillsonburg Gemini junior girls' basketball team could get used to.

"The back-to-back wins came as a bit of a surprise," said coach Kiersten Sanderson following a 30-18 Thames Valley Regional Athletics East victory over the visiting Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers Tuesday, Oct. 7 at Glendale. "We are pretty green to basketball but the girls have a few plays they could do in their sleep at this point and they are really working as a team more and more each game which has shown through the wins."

The Gemini kicked off the mini two-game winning streak the previous Thursday at Woodstock College Avenue, downing the homecourt Knights by a solid 33-13 margin.

Tillsonburg built on a 6-2 first-quarter advantage with a 10-4 run in the second period, essentially locking up the victory with a 9-0 shutout through the third quarter.

"It was good all our hard work paid off," said Tillsonburg's Kate Bruder, who contributed six points offensively. "Really happy about it," she continued. "We all played good."

"I feel like we ran our plays really well," added teammate Callie Emmerston who scored one field goal from her wing position. "Our passes were really good."

"A nice positive game."

A. Ivanyshyn, S. Connors and B. VanRybroeck each had a field goal for the Gemini, N. Caperchione had three points, C. Gundry four and Sophia Monsere eight.

"Sophia has been a great leader this season," credited coach Sanderson. "She plays point guard and has really stepped up to the plate, beginning in practice."

At home to Ingersoll, the Gemini made it two wins in a row. The juniors had their trademark slower start to the game said Sanderson, but the girls 'got back in the groove.'

"By the fourth quarter we were a well-oiled machine."

The coach is pleased to be able to work



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO))

Gemini point guard Sophia Monsere (right) keeps track of College Avenue's Aaliyah Thompson during a 33-13 Gemini victory.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO))

Gemini point guard Sophia Monsere (left) closes on College Avenue's Cat Pye as the latter cuts toward the Tillsonburg basket.

with a significant number of returnees this season, along with some rookies who are 'showing great skills.' A majority play school basketball without additional club experience, and while learning the sport can be overwhelming says Sanderson, it can also be exhilarating.

"I am lucky enough to coach such a positive, friendly and fun group of girls. We can never get through a practice without laughing together and they're just such a good group."

There are some games Sanderson expects to present a tough challenge in the team's upcoming schedule including St. Thomas St. Joe's and Woodstock CI, but buoyed and encouraged by two victories to date, she is looking forward to see what the second half of the season brings.

"I think it will be a great learning experience and we will gain a lot from the games."

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Tuesday, October 7

Junior
Gemini 30, Ingersoll DCI 18

Senior
Ingersoll DCI 26, Gemini 25

Boys Volleyball

Junior
Ingersoll DCI 25, 20, 25, 25; Gemini 17, 25, 16, 23

Senior
Ingersoll DCI 25, 25, 25; Gemini 16, 11, 20

Football

Junior
Gemini 41, London Montcalm 6
Gemini touchdowns: Janzen, Cato, Thompson, Davidson. PATs: Strathern.

Senior
Gemini 21, London Montcalm 6
Gemini Touchdowns: Park-Thomas 3. PAT: Janzen 3.

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Curling club hosting events for youth



**ON
THE
BROOM**

NORA PETERS

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

To make the winter fly by- give curling a

try. This is the beginning of the season and a good time to give our sport an on-ice try. Look for more info at CurlTillsonburg.com.

I'd like to reach out to all you potential youth curlers (8 – 18 yrs) and give you some good reasons for trying this wonderful winter sport.

Kids- you can play and enjoy this sport for a lifetime! You need minimal equipment to get started – just a clean pair of shoes, warm clothing and some sort of helmet. Currently, the club will provide the sliders and brooms needed. While it's a physical sport that needs you to develop basic skills, there is no physical contact with other play-

ers. You're on a team of four people who all have something to do at each end on the ice, and you're always involved. It's easy to learn the game and get to know your teammates. You're able to curl with friends, make new friends, go to other clubs and compete at many different levels of curling. It can lead to a lifetime recreational sport, competitive curling –like your high school team -or even the Olympics- our own Jayden King started with our youth program and now we're watching him on TV and in two weeks he's off to the Olympic Pre-Trials. Imagine telling your friends that every week you "throw rocks at houses!" and it's okay.

Parents: there are some good reasons for your kids to try curling. Our Youth Curling Program is designed to introduce kids to one of the fastest growing sports in Canada. It doesn't matter if you are big, small, short, tall, boy or girl, each participant has an equal role in the game- everyone has something to do with each stone that is delivered. The season consists of two eight-week sessions beginning Mondays 5:30 to 6:30 pm Oct. 27 – Dec. 15, and the second session Jan. 5 to Feb. 23, 2026. The fee for the season is only \$36 plus HST and equipment costs are minimal. The game teaches teamwork, etiquette, commitment, sportsmanship and gets them thinking and talking to each other. Best of all you can watch from behind the glass and stay warm, or better yet learn the game yourself so you can play with your kids in the future. It is a game for all ages and skill levels. Check the

website for more info.

One of our club members has had an early start to her season and she has done it in a very exciting way! Tracy Beattie travelled with her sister Wendy Young and her nephew and his husband, Justin and Derek McBride to Viry Chatillon France in the beautiful French countryside just south of Paris to curl in the world-famous Margarita Bonspiel. Every year the members of the Margarita Curling Club come together to a participating country to curl for all the old values of the game: fair play, friendship on and off the ice and international goodwill. It is a not-for-profit organization consisting of 200 members from 17 countries and four different continents.

This year in France, 70 different teams participated in the international event. The team went 2-2 playing games against teams from Monaco, France and a combination of France and Philadelphia. They finished 28th out of 70 teams. Along with their on-ice games the team gets to spend time with other teams at special tours, dinners and even a fancy dress dinner event. Wendy's home club in Collingwood hosted the event last year and this year they renewed and enjoyed old friendships. They were all very happy with their event. There's another reason to learn to curl- see the world.

Next week there will be interesting upcoming bonspiel news, and don't forget the first Progressive Euchre Night of the season Saturday, Nov. 1 7 p.m Cost is \$15 per person.

Curling Rocks! Go Blue Jays!



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Club Oxford hockey gears up for the season

JEFF GWYN

Post Contributor

A Division

ReMax 6, Fody's 3

ReMax has two powerful scoring lines. They used their speed and had a strong net front presence all game. Fody's seemed caught off guard and don't usually give up that many goals. This will light a fire on the offence for sure.

Josh Soares and Parker Terryberry had three points each for ReMax. Christian Clifford had two goals for Fody's.

Health Hut 5, Apple Shack 1

The top guys are doing what they do for Health Hut. They picked their spots and had some nice breakouts. Apple Shack was missing some guys, so the cohesiveness wasn't there. A new team will take a couple games to get into it.

Spencer Meron had three assists for Health Hut.

B Division

B-Line 6, Airmount 1

B-Line looked strong at both ends of the ice. They have scoring on two lines, which is key for the long term. Airmount didn't play bad, but were hemmed in

their zone a lot. A short bench hindered the offence. Kurtis Bull had a four-point night for B-Line.

Source 4, Carquest 1

Source was able to breakthrough in the second with pressure in the last half. Shots on net helped their effort tonight. Carquest looked good to start, but scrambled a bit in the second. They will bounce back for sure.

Jamie Haines had two goals for Source.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

RUNNING FOR TERRY

Students at Monsignor O'Neil School recently participated in the school's annual Terry Fox Run to raise money for the Terry Fox Foundation and cancer research. The event involved running or walking circuits on the school's sports field.



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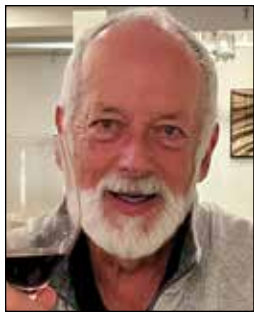
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Standing in the footsteps of Vincent Van Gogh



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

PAUL KNOWLES

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Over the years, I have become increasingly intrigued by the paintings of Vincent Van Gogh. His story is a terribly tragic one, as the artist struggled with mental illness, and almost complete failure, in a commercial sense. There is a myth that he sold none of his approximately 2,000 works while he was alive, but that's undoubtedly an exaggeration. But he most certainly was not a highly successful artist.

Multiplying the tragedy, he died, perhaps of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, at age 37. More of this, below.

Today, of course, it's a whole other story. Van Gogh is recognized as perhaps the most

important Post-Impressionist artist. And his paintings have sold for more than \$150 million Cdn. None of which goes to Van Gogh's estate, of course.

The finest collection of Van Gogh paintings is on display at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam – which seems appropriate enough, since Vincent was born in the Netherlands. If you are in Amsterdam, it's a must-see.

But I have enjoyed seeing Van Gogh paintings and sketches in locations as diverse as the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, and a very surprising small gallery in Solothurn, Switzerland, among other cultural institutions. Outside of Amsterdam, the best place to enjoy Van Gogh's work – and that of other Impressionists and Post-Impressionists – is the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, which we had the chance to visit a couple of weeks ago. (Hint to travellers – use the Paris City Pass, a great deal that admits you to many wonderful attractions).

My biggest surprise, though, was that I really felt I touched Van Gogh's life and times in a city in southern France, where no gallery, in fact, nobody, owns a Van Gogh.

The city is Arles, in Provence, where Vincent lived for more than a year, creating a new painting or drawing nearly every day. Many of his best-known works, including two of the three “Starry Night” paintings, were created right here. We visited Arles as part of a wonderful Viking cruise on the Rhone River.

Our guide on the unusual, almost disjointed, city tour – lots of Roman stuff, and then lots of Van Gogh – explained that Van Goghs have become so expensive that there would be a taxpayer revolt if public money was used to purchase one. So Arles has none.

But what Arles has done, and done well, is create a Van Gogh route, erecting poster boards with the images of his paintings, in the precise locations where he placed his easel. And for anyone who is a fan of the artist, there is something magical in standing in the actual footsteps of Van Gogh.

Easily my favourite location was Le Jardin de la Maison de Santé a Arles. It's an enclosed garden, and the municipality has restored it to look precisely like it did when Van Gogh painted the scene in 1888. I could not resist grabbing my smart phone and trying to replicate the painting. Van Gogh did it better. (I will admit it's wise to consider the scene from Van Gogh's perspective. If you walk to the other side of the garden, the view includes a plethora of souvenir shops.)

There are plenty of other explanatory plaques along the route. Vincent's famous painting of his own house, La Mainse Jeune (The Yellow House), is erected at a busy corner. The house, sadly, is gone, but the other buildings in the painting remain, including a café that Van Gogh often frequented.

The locale that has changed even more is the site where he painted the hugely famous “La Nuit Étoilée” (The Starry Night). The view when we visited (admittedly not at night) showed mostly the top decks of docked cruise boats, impeding the view of the Rhone. But none the less, Vincent had produced his fabulous work, right here.

Our very well-informed guide told us two stories that really caught my attention. First, despite overwhelming consensus, she said that Van Gogh's death might not have been suicide... she suggested it could have been an accident involving some children playing with a gun.

The other story is both rather sad and



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

Panels identifying Van Gogh's precise location when he made his now-famous paintings abound in Arles. This is the garden of the institution where he stayed, dealing with mental illness.

rather amusing. She had led us to the exact café depicted in the artist's “Café Terrace at Night.” It's now the Café Van Gogh... but it's closed. Why? Because after years of the owners asking to be paid in cash because “our credit card machine is broken”, the authorities cottoned on, examined their books, and the owners went to jail for tax evasion.

Our guide is sure the café is awaiting some clever entrepreneur, as one of the most visited sites in Arles, but she cautioned that there is undoubtedly red tape involved – which is something of a national sport in France.

Until then, art lovers can enjoy the scenes that inspired this brilliant, troubled, artistic icon. To quote songwriter Don McLean, “But I could have told you, Vincent, This world was never meant for one as beautiful as you.”

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.



The author's attempt to recreate Van Gogh's creation in 2025.

(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

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MUSIC CORNER

The Mahones bring 35 Years of Irish punk to Paddy's Underground



BEN ADDRESS

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Tillsonburg is about to get a taste of true Celtic punk history. On Saturday, Oct. 18 the legendary Irish punk band The Mahones will roll into town as part of their 35th Anniversary Tour bringing decades of whiskey fueled an-

them, gritty storytelling and foot-stomping energy along with them.

Formed on St. Patrick's Day in 1990 in Kingston, Ontario, The Mahones began as a one-off bar band meant to celebrate Irish heritage with a punk-rock twist. The fun and chaos of that first show sparked something real, including a fresh sound that fused the raw spirit of bands like The Clash and The Pogues with the storytelling heart of Irish folk. What started as a few friends jamming in a pub quickly evolved into an international phenomenon. Over three-and-a-half decades, the band has toured relentlessly across North America, Europe and Asia leaving behind a trail of green beer, sweat and roaring choruses in packed

venues around the world.

Frontman Finny McConnell, the heart and soul of the band since day one, says it is the passion for the craft that keeps him going after all these years.

"I just love making and playing music so that is what keeps me going. The amazing worldwide success we have achieved is very satisfying and I love playing shows all over the world," McConnell says with a grin.

The Mahones have always carried the torch for Irish punk by blending traditional Celtic instrumentation with the ferocity of punk rock long before it became a global trend.

"We were one of the bands that created Irish Punk and it has gotten heavier over the years with

many more bands now in the scene worldwide," McConnell explains. "You can expect us to play a career spanning best Of set for our 35th anniversary shows. All killer, no filler non-stop Irish punk."

Known for their high-octane live shows, The Mahones have performed everywhere from European festivals to rowdy pub stages across Canada and the band agrees that both have their magic.

"They are both completely different kinds of gigs. The big festivals are loud with thousands of people and I truly love those shows, but the small ones are intimate and you get close to the crowds and really soak up the energy," McConnell says.

With 21 albums under

their belt and a career that has seen them share stages with the likes of Dropkick Murphys, The Pogues and Stiff Little Fingers, The Mahones are still charging forward.

"It feels very accomplished to have 21 Mahones albums and 35 years of touring the world," McConnell reflects. "Next up is our Shane MacGowan Tribute Shows and recordings and then we tour the world in 2026 to celebrate our 35th Anniversary. After that we are not sure, but we can promise it will be very exciting. We've only just begun and it's a long journey we are on with The Mahones."

If you've ever wanted to experience an authentic Irish punk party without hopping on a plane to

Dublin, then Paddy's Underground is the place to be this weekend. Expect friendship, singalongs and a celebration of 35 years of music that refuses to slow down.

The Mahones perform live this Saturday, Oct. 18 at Paddy's Underground. The band will be joined with local opening act The McBains. Doors open at 8 p.m. with \$25 advanced tickets available at The Mill or online at www.eventbrite.ca and \$35 night of at the door, limited to availability. This is an all ages/licensed event and wheelchair accessible. To stay up to date with new music and tour dates you can follow The Mahones on social media at www.facebook.com/TheMahones

UPCOMING SHOWS

OCT. 16 - OPEN MIC W/ BILLY GIBBONS
Paddy's Underground
No Cover - 7:30 p.m. - All Ages/Licensed

OCT. 16 - JAW RAWK
The Copper Mug
No Cover - 8 p.m.

OCT. 17 - CRUSH
The Copper Mug
No Cover - 9 p.m.

OCT. 18 - BACK TO THE 50'S CONCERT
St. Paul's United Church
\$50 - 2:30 p.m. - All Ages

OCT. 18 - THE MAHONES W/ THE MCBAINS
Paddy's Underground
\$25 - 8 p.m. - All Ages/Licensed

OCT. 22 - OPEN MIC NIGHT
The Copper Mug
No Cover - 6:30pm

OCT. 23 - WITCHES NIGHT OUT
The Copper Mug
No Cover - 5pm

OCT. 23 - OPEN MIC W/ BILLY GIBBONS
Paddy's Underground
No Cover - 7:30 p.m. - All Ages/Licensed

NOV. 1 - FERAL MINKS W/ GRAVELY
Paddy's Underground
\$15 - 8pm - all ages/licensed



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Weekend Quiz

by Jake Grant

1. What musical is the sequel to "The Phantom of the Opera"?
2. Who saves the girl in the first printed edition of Little Red Riding Hood?
3. What is the Hawaiian word for "hello"?
4. How many days are there in a fortnight?
5. What was Norm's last name on the TV show "Cheers"?
6. What rock band is led by Bob Dylan's son, Jakob?
7. Acadia was the original name of which Canadian province?
8. Which four US states share a border with Mexico?
9. What was the first video game to be played in space?
10. What was London Airport renamed to in 1966?

This week's answers are found on pg. 22



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Shriner Roses offerings being expanded



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Tillsonburg Shriner Dave Palmer displays the new birthstone design roses that he will be selling as a fundraiser for the Shriners Hospital in London.

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

The Shriner Roses fundraiser for the Tillsonburg Shrine Club is being expanded.

Shriner Dave Palmer, who came up with the concept of selling 3-D printed roses as a fundraiser for the Shrine Club, is now offering birthstone roses. Twelve different colours, representing the birthstones for each month, will be available.

Palmer explained beyond the concept of giving a gift of a birthstone of the recipient, the idea was to give birthstone roses to, for instance, a mother that represent the birth months of her family.

"I'm hoping it will catch on," he said.

Palmer will be in the Tillsonburg Town Centre on Saturday, Oct. 18 sell-

ing birthstone roses, as well as orange and black Halloween roses. Free delivery will be offered for birthstone rose orders within Tillsonburg, with shipping available for out-of-town orders.

Also new is a web site that Palmer set up for rose sales, charity3drose.ca. Orders can be placed through the web site and e-transfers will be accepted. Palmer will also be in the mall on Dec. 20 selling roses.

All of the proceeds from the sales go to the Shriners' Hospital in London, as Palmer pays for the cost of the materials.

The Tillsonburg resident was inspired to raise money to help the Shriners Hospital after he went to the orthopedics hospital in Montreal. He was impressed with the facility, which has 22 beds and helps 1,000 youth per year. The hospital also has eight labs for research.

TILLSONBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT OPEN HOUSE



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

There is an old saying about doing is believing and that was the case when this crew of young helpers used the leverage provided by the pulleys to assist with lifting firefighter Jarrett Parker in the air using the rope rescue equipment.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

The Tillsonburg Fire Department's annual open house is always a hit with young and old. Besides being informative, the evening is educational with information being provided about fire prevention, smoke detectors and the techniques firefighters use when fighting fires.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Demonstration of the Tillsonburg Fire Department's rope rescue team, was one of the unique features of this year's open house. Firefighter Jarrett Parker was hoisted in the air with a series of ropes and pulleys along with a stretcher to rescue victims from either a roof or who are injured in a gulley.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Colouring is always fun, but when it's colouring at the fire department's annual open house it's educational as well. Avery Hawel was amongst those taking her turn colouring the fire safety pictures.

AUGUST 28 - OCTOBER 20



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Saturday, October 18: 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.
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Friday, October 24: 1-4 p.m.
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TILLSONBURG SENIOR CENTRE MONSTER MASH DANCE

October 25: 6:30 p.m.
 Costumes not required but encouraged!
 Prize for best costume. Call 688-2520 for
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KIDS HALLOWEEN BINGO AT THE TILLSONBURG LEGION

Sunday, October 26: 1 p.m.
 Kids ages 5-14 can dress up in their best
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OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY CIRCUIT BOOK FAIR

October 25: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
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November 1: 10 a.m.-12 noon.
St.Paul's United Church,
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PEGGY & MICHAEL HAMILTON
WWII - Army - CWAC & RCCS
Frank & Bobbi Moore

 **Legion**

John Michael Hamilton and Grace Lilian Hamilton

Mike was born in Bristol England on June 17, 1922 and Lilian was born in Quebec on Nov. 14, 1922. Both enlisted in the army, with Mike joining in Kirkland Lake and was trained in Kingston Ontario. He was shipped overseas and served in Italy from November 1943 to March 1945 and took part in the liberation of Holland from March 1945 to May 1945. He served with the Algonquin Regiment HQ Signals and the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals 1st Canadian Infantry Division. After his service he was employed in the mining industry and then moved into the construction industry as a superintendent.

Lilian served at Fort Henry, where she was assigned to the Quartermaster's Stores. After her service she became a legal secretary.

Both Mike and Lilian joined the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 213 in Weston Ontario where they both served as president and both awarded their Life Membership Service Medal. Mike passed in 1986 and Lilian in 2009 and both were laid to rest in Kingston.

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9. Tetris
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SUDOKU

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

CLASSIFIEDS

TREES

Hundreds of shade trees, fruit trees, apples, pears, peaches, plums, sweet and sour cherries, apricots, nectarines, blueberries, haskapp grapes, raspberries, elderberries etc. Lots of spruce, pine, cedars for windbreak and privacy hedges. Sizes 1-8 ft. in containers ready to go. Flowering shrubs and much more. Mon-Sat 7:00am to 6:00pm. Martin's Nursery, 42661 Orangehill Rd Wroxeter, ON N0G 2X0 (1 Conc. North of Wroxeter on Belmore Line)

HELP WANTED

PART-TIME DELIVERY DRIVER

We are looking for a delivery driver to join our team at the Tillsonburg Post.

Responsibilities would be taking receipt of bundles of the newspapers from our courier service on Wednesday mornings (delivered to your home) and then distributing the bundles to our various drop-off locations in Tillsonburg and surrounding area on Wednesday and Thursday so that our readers can obtain their weekly news. Our driver shall also take note of which drop-off locations require more or less copies so that quantities can be adjusted in future weeks to meet reader demand.

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To apply, please contact Stewart Grant at stew@granthaven.com or text 519-868-1290.

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GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

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About Grant Haven Media: At Grant Haven Media, we are committed to delivering top-quality news and information to our readers. As a leading newspaper company, we take pride in our dedication to journalistic excellence and community engagement. As we continue to grow, we're looking for enthusiastic individuals to join our dynamic sales team.

If you are interested, contact Heather Dunbar at: heather@granthaven.com

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OBITUARY

MURRY LEROY DAWSON



Murry Leroy Dawson, a great man full of kindness, humour, and gentleness, passed away peacefully with his family by his side on September 30, 2025, at the age of 74, at Sakura House. Born on August 22, 1951, in the heart of Tillsonburg, Ontario, Murry's journey began on a dairy farm in Mount Elgin, where his gentle demeanour and infectious laughter became the hallmark of his character.

In the embrace of his beloved wife, Linda Dawson (née Kershaw), Murry found a partnership admired by all. Linda was not only his wife but his best friend and confidante. Together, they built a life filled with love, laughter, and shared dreams. Their bond was further enriched by the arrival of their precious daughter, Jodi, who brought immeasurable joy to Murry's life. Through Jodi's marriage to James Donck, Murry gained the son he never had — a union that extended the family and gave him peace of mind, knowing they were in good hands.

Murry cherished his role as a grandfather. His grandchildren, James Donck Jr. (Alexis) and Jennifer Donck, were the light of his life. He shared wisdom, jokes, and unforgettable stories, creating memories that will be fondly remembered for years to come. His gentle guidance and unconditional love shaped their lives, leaving an indelible mark on their hearts.

To his Aunt Margaret Dawson, Murry was more than a nephew—he was a cherished friend. Their relationship, rooted in mutual respect and shared experiences, was a testament to the idea that family is not just about blood, but about the bonds we choose to nurture.

Murry's life was a testament to the power of kindness. He approached each day with a gentle heart and a generous spirit, always ready with a kind word or a helping hand. His presence was a source of comfort, and his legacy reminds us of the profound impact one person can have on the lives of many.

His warmth drew people in, and his humour brightened even the dullest of days. He left a lasting impression on everyone he met—friends, family, and even strangers.

As we bid farewell to Murry, we take solace in knowing his spirit lives on in the many lives he touched. He found joy in the simple pleasures and taught us to do the same. His laughter, wisdom, and unwavering love will remain forever etched in our memories.

We honour Murry's life by following his example: to live with kindness, laugh often, and love unconditionally. Though he may have left this world, his spirit will continue to inspire all who knew him. He was a true gentleman, whose memory will be cherished and whose absence will be deeply felt.

A celebration of Murry's life will take place on Saturday, November 1st, 2025, from 1-4 p.m. and as Murry requested, we will be holding a 3:00pm toast for sharing stories & memories, to be held at the Tillsonburg Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 153 at 16 Durham Dr., Tillsonburg - Cash Only Bar.

Online condolences may be shared with the family on Murry's Tribute Wall at www.mountpleasantcemeterylondon.ca

LOCAL MATTERS.



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