

The Paris Independent

Issue #224

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2025

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DONATED BIKES WILL BRING CHRISTMAS JOY (CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTO)
Giving the gift of wheels this Christmas. Steve from Steve's Recycle Bicycles delivered 10 refurbished, like-new bicycles to the Paris Community Christmas Hamper Program on December 14, continuing his annual tradition of helping ensure local children wake up to a shiny bike under the tree on Christmas morning. Donations have been pouring into the Paris Fairgrounds over the last five days, where more than 100 volunteers are sorting, organizing and packing hampers ahead of distribution day on Dec. 19. Pictured left to right are Christmas Hamper committee members Lisa Lewis and Laura Bowlby, hamper volunteer Addison Percival, and Steve from Steve's Recycle Bicycles.

Happy Holidays from The Paris Independent!
We're taking a short winter break — our next edition arrives December 31st, complete with our Year in Review highlights.
Warm wishes to all our readers!



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Paris north-end expansion wins OLT approval

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

A large residential development proposed for the north end of Paris has cleared a major hurdle after the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) issued a written decision approving the project, following a negotiated settlement between the County of Brant and the developer.

The decision, released October 27 and circulated to council through a Friday File on December 5, confirms that the draft plan of subdivision and zoning bylaw amendment for the lands at 184 Pinehurst Road, known locally as Cordon Farm, meet provincial planning policy and fall within the County's settlement boundary. The approval allows the project to move forward subject to a series of conditions related to infrastructure, servicing and phasing.

The developer, MLB Holdings Ltd. (Cedar North Development), had appealed to the OLT in 2025 after council failed to make a decision within the statutory timelines under the Planning Act.

The public first saw plans for the project in December 2022, when Cedar North Development proposed rezoning 121 acres of farmland at Pinehurst Road and Watts Pond Road to allow between 776 and 984 residential units across two phases. The concept envisioned low-, medium- and high-density housing, parkland, stormwater facilities, mixed-use

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



John M. Hall

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Preliminary parking study projects need for up to 416 new downtown spaces by 2050, councillors hear

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

County of Brant councillors received a detailed look at long-term parking pressures in downtown Paris on Dec. 9 as staff presented the Preliminary Downtown Paris Parking Needs Assessment, a first step toward determining how much parking the core will need as redevelopment accelerates over the next 25 years.

The assessment, presented by Manager of Corporate Initiatives Halie Gilmore, analyzes current utilization, anticipates future growth, and models four scenarios that forecast the number of additional public parking spaces required through 2050. Even under the status quo, where no residential growth occurs on existing municipal lots, the County would still need to add more than 100 new spaces over the next quarter-century.

“It’s a preliminary model that is based on existing data and feedback from the community to get an understanding of our current condition in downtown Paris and start to understand what demand and supply could look like over the next 25 years,” Gilmore told councillors at the December 8th Administration and Operations meeting.

She emphasized that the document is not a final strategy but an evolving foundation that will be updated as the County refines forecasts, gathers more data, and hears from the public. “It’s important to realize this is preliminary and things are changing and evolving – so it can be updated over time, as feedback is submitted from the community,” she said.

According to the assessment, downtown Paris has 420 public parking spaces, 286 in lots and 117 on-street, with average lot utilization around 75 per cent, below the industry threshold of 85 per cent. But the average masks peak pressures: lots closest to the commercial core, offering 24-hour parking, regularly operate near capacity.

Data and community feedback “show our current parking is nearing capacity,” Gilmore said, noting high demand in lots closest to Grand River Street North and increasing strain from tourism, seasonal events, and commercial activity.

The reconstruction of Grand River Street North, which replaced angled parking with parallel, resulted in the loss of 34 on-street spaces, though the construction of Lot 11 on the former OPP site at Mechanic and Broadway St offset that, resulting in a net gain of 45 spaces since 2022.

The report models four growth scenarios, forecasting the number of additional public parking spaces required by 2050:

- **Status quo (no residential growth):** 107 spaces
- **Low growth (150 new units):** 283 spaces
- **Medium growth (225 units):** 323 spaces
- **High growth (300 units):** 416 spaces

These projections reflect not only increasing population and tourism, but also the likelihood that municipal lots

could be redeveloped to accommodate growth, removing between 34 and 186 public spaces depending on the scale of development. The assessment notes that densification is positive for the community and economy, but it requires a strategy to maintain and expand parking supply.

Providing adequate public parking is key in our downtown core, so we need to make sure we are providing adequate parking, and we are preserving what we have, Gilmore stated.

Councillors pressed for clarity on how and when residents and downtown business owners will be consulted.

“This is an important first step in the parking conversation,” Gilmore said, noting that the County’s downtown liaison “is positioned to have conversations with folks in the new year,” noting it would be a very forward-focused discussion asking what people want to see in the future, as opposed to what worked in the past.

Paris Coun. Steve Howes said residents need the key points from the report distilled: “I’m wondering if our communications department will condense these 35 pages into some key bullets,” also noting the importance of highlighting that the county has gained 45 spaces of the last few years, despite losing spaces when angle parking was removed.

Paris Coun. John Bell said the report should acknowledge that people may be willing to walk a few extra minutes, pointing to large public lots at Syl Apps Community Centre, Penman’s Pass and Lions Park.

Bell also acknowledged the importance of making plans to make sure parking is adequate before continuing to approve development, saying there must be a sensible timeline to executing growth.

Bell also suggested it may be time to tell the community definitively that the long-debated parking structure at the Council Chambers lot “is not going to happen.”

Ward 1 Coun. Jennifer Kyle supported expanding the definition of available parking to include nearby public lots but noted that “Lions Park for example only has about 50 spaces that are only accessible for half the year,” she said, citing that the gates at Lions Park were closed for Jingle Bell Night, so seasonal parking and limitations must be considered.

Councillors also raised the issue of 90+ County staff who currently park downtown. Off-site staff parking or relocating office space could reduce demand, some suggested, though Ward 5 Coun. David Miller cautioned that if County offices are relocated, whatever replaces them downtown will also require parking.

Council voted to receive the assessment and directed staff to:

- Consult with the BIA, downtown property owners, residents, and businesses.
- Enumerate specific parking needs for staff, customers, and residents.
- Investigate additional parking locations and poten-

tial partnerships with private lot owners; and

- Report back with options for addressing capacity challenges.

The findings will inform the 2026 update of the Downtown Paris Master Plan, and a forthcoming zoning review intended to support residential intensification.



Warm Christmas Wishes from the Paris Optimist Club!

May your season be bright, joyful, and filled with community spirit. Thank you for helping us support the children and youth of Paris all year long.

Cheers to a wonderful New Year — and don’t forget to watch for our Bottle Drive on January 10!



Restoring small-town journalism, one community at a time!

The Paris Independent

Publisher

Stewart Grant • stew@granthaven.com

Editor

Chris Whelan • editor@theparisindependent.com

Managing Editor

Cassandra Turnbull • managingeditor@theparisindependent.com

Graphic Design

Michelle Foster • parisindependentnews@gmail.com

Business Development

Heather Dunbar • heather@granthaven.com

Billing Administrator

Jen Gaetan • jen@granthaven.com

Contributors

Michelle Malvaso, George Le Gresley, Ruby Jones, Stephen L., Jacob Gaudet, Heidi Pfleger, Tiffany Martin, Jim Brown, Scoop Stewart, Paul Knowles, Karon Sinning, Jeff Johnston, Wayne Wilkinson, Emma Bowman, Edward Lander

36 Water St. St. Marys, ON, PO Box 2310 N4X 1A2

info@theparisindependent.com | 519.655.2341 | granthaven.com



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North Cedar subdivision clears OLT, paving way for major north-end expansion

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

blocks and a commercial area.

At the time, county planning staff cautioned that wastewater capacity and water servicing upgrades would be required before any new subdivision in that area could proceed, work then estimated to take 5-7 years to complete.

The developer signaled early that approximately 50 per cent of future residents would occupy affordable or attainable forms of housing, including apartments, stacked townhouses and units to be built by Habitat for Humanity.

The OLT decision followed a written settlement hearing, where expert testimony from the applicant and minutes of settlement were reviewed by Tribunal member Eric S. Crowe. According to the County's summary, Member Crowe found that the zoning amendment and draft plan of subdivision were consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement 2024 and aligned with local planning objectives.

Under the order, the appeal was allowed in part, permitting the subdivision to advance once all draft conditions are satisfied. A school block, identified as Block 164 in Phase 1A, must be secured as part of the approvals. Draft plan conditions related to water, wastewater and emergency access must be met before registration.

A detailed phasing schedule sets maximum unit counts per stage, beginning with 218 units in Phase 1A, followed by additional stages contingent on available servicing capacity.

The project has drawn strong public reaction, particularly regarding traffic congestion and servicing limits in north Paris. Councillor Steve Howes said he understands residents' mixed feelings.

"As someone who has lived here almost 60 years, I per-

sonally share in the frustration at the idea of 900+ additional homes at the north end of Paris," he wrote when sharing news of the settlement. "That said, I have to acknowledge that this development will, over time, deliver some housing types that we need AND... allows land for a new elementary school that we absolutely need."

Howes emphasized that the subdivision will be built over several years, paced by required infrastructure upgrades.

Traffic concerns also resurfaced, with many residents referencing a long-debated bypass bridge connecting Watts Pond Road to Green Lane. Councillor Lukas Oakley noted he and other Paris councillors, Howes, John Bell and John Peirce, previously supported advancing the Environmental Assessment for the bypass under the 2022 Transportation Master Plan, but the proposal was defeated 7-4, putting the issue to bed during this term of council.

Oakley encouraged residents to treat north-end transportation planning as an election issue in 2026.

According to figures published by the developer on its website the project is expected to include:

- 151 low-density units
- 72 townhomes
- 263 medium-density units
- 244 high-density units
- 40 mixed-use residential units
- 193 mixed-use buildings

Shortly after the tribunal ruling, the historic farmhouse on the property was removed through a controlled burn with the County's fire department.

The OLT ruling does not authorize immediate construction. The County must still confirm available water and wastewater capacity before each phase proceeds, and the

developer must meet all technical conditions, including stormwater management, road connections, and emergency access requirements. Planning staff will also bring future subdivision agreements and phase-by-phase registrations back to Council as required.

Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. The Four Horsemen of the _____ appear in the Book of Revelation.
2. What is the largest 2nd Hawaiian island?
3. What year were seatbelts made mandatory in Canada?
4. What do Americans commonly call Emmental cheese?
5. The flowers on the St John's Wort are which color?
6. Who originally sang "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer"?
7. What year was the Toonie introduced?
8. What part of the body is affected by glaucoma?
9. What is the capital of Norway?
10. Which star guided the three kings to Baby Jesus?



This week's answers are found on pg. 23

2025 Golden Spatula Awards Winner



We have a winner! Thank you to everyone who took part in the annual holiday cookie challenge at St. James Anglican Church in Paris. The 2025 Golden Spatula Award goes to Margie Gabriel - a result no one who has sampled her baking would dare dispute. Although, we're still trying to figure out how the ketchup fits into all of this.



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EDITORIAL

Support local – before another light goes out



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CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The recent announcement that one of my favourite food joints in town is closing really hit home just how important it is that we support small businesses.

La Trenza Taco announced on social media late last week that it will close as of Dec. 21. For many regulars, it felt personal — because it was.

Carolina and Carlos, the heart behind La Trenza Taco, shared a message filled with gratitude and pride.

“Running our small business and sharing our passion for food has been the best journey,” they wrote. “We have not only met the absolute best people but also felt a sense of belonging in our community for the first time as immigrants in Canada after 20 years. We close this chapter with our hearts full of gratitude and love.”

They went on to thank The Paris Wincey Mills Co., fellow vendors and suppliers, and, most importantly, their customers — the people who kept them motivated to share their food with pride.

That message says a lot about what small businesses really are. They are not just storefronts or menus. They are families, risks taken, long hours worked and, often, a deep desire to belong and contribute to a community.

The decision to close did not come from a lack of love for what they did, nor from a lack of loyal customers. Rising food and supply costs, combined with the inevitable lull during off-season months, all led to a heartbreaking — but very real — business decision. It’s hard to run a small business. It’s even harder to run one in a small town.

And it’s especially difficult when business booms are seasonal. Anyone who has tried La Trenza Taco knows the food is outstanding. They could easily make diners happy in a full-scale restaurant. But expansion brings higher rent, staffing costs and overhead — a vicious cycle many small operators simply can’t afford to enter.

And they are far from alone.

Statistics Canada data from early to mid-2025 shows that business closures continue to be a reality across the country. Monthly closure rates hovered between 4.7 and 5.0 per cent of active businesses, roughly matching opening rates and keeping overall numbers stable. But that stability masks what’s happening on the ground.

Retail trade, accommodation and food services, and professional, scientific and technical services were among the sectors seeing the largest decreases in active businesses due to closures. While business insolvency filings declined in the second quarter of 2025 compared to last year, they remain above pre-pandemic levels — a clear sign that strain continues, even if the crisis headlines have faded.

All of that brings us to now.

We are in the midst of the busiest shopping season of the year. There is no better time to make a conscious effort to support local businesses. Buy Christmas gifts and stocking stuffers from local merchants. Eat locally. Shop locally. Share posts. Tell friends. Show up.

Big box stores won’t miss our presence. But Carolina and Carlos will. So will the friendly faces downtown Paris and across the County of Brant who open their doors every day hoping it’s enough to keep the lights on.

And while you still can, stop by Wincey Mills. Enjoy one last taco. Wish Carolina and Carlos well in their future endeavours. Thank them for bringing the flavours of Mexico — and a sense of community — to Paris. Grab a dog treat for your furry family member, pick up some fresh meat from the butchers, pair that meat with fresh produce from Van Laeken Farms, grab some

dessert, a coffee, or a grilled cheese. Wincey Mills has a lot to offer. And when your bag is full venture to Grand River Street N and see what treasures await you.

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Brant wary of province's conservation authority shakeup

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The Ontario government's plan to dramatically consolidate the province's 36 conservation authorities into seven regional bodies has prompted caution from County of Brant officials, who say the proposed restructuring could weaken local expertise, dilute municipal representation, and complicate watershed management efforts.

At the December 9 Administration and Operations Committee meeting, councillors received a detailed staff report outlining the province's proposal and its potential impacts. The province is seeking input through an Environmental Registry posting as it prepares legislation for spring 2026. The restructuring would not take effect until after the October 2026 municipal election.

The County's report provides both background on the province's approach, divided into two phases, and an analysis of risks and opportunities associated with the consolidation. Councillors voted unanimously to support the report, with one amendment correcting wording in the accompanying resolution.

The first phase, already approved through Bill 68, will establish the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA), a new centralized body empowered to issue binding directives, set province-wide standards, and oversee conservation authorities. No public consultation was sought for this component, staff noted.

The second phase proposes merging existing authorities into seven regional entities aligned with major watershed

systems. Under the draft boundaries, Brant would be absorbed into the proposed Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority, an amalgamation encompassing 81 municipalities from Kitchener-Waterloo to Windsor, far larger than the current Grand River and Long Point systems.

The staff analysis raises several concerns, including the potential loss of localized ecological expertise that supports emergency management, flood mapping, and development review. The Grand River Conservation Authority and Long Point Region Conservation Authority currently work closely with County departments on projects such as flood zone mapping, municipal drains, and source-water protection, partnerships that could be strained by a larger, more centralized structure.

Staff also noted risks of:

- Reduced municipal influence under a much larger board,
- Slower permitting and enforcement response times,
- Uncertainty around future funding models, and
- Possible impacts on non-mandatory programs such as the Rural Water Quality Capital Grants Program and the Brant-Brantford Children's Water Festival.

"The proposed boundaries are expansive and encompass diverse ecosystems," the report states. "Effective watershed management requires localized knowledge... Consolidation could weaken protections against flooding and erosion, particularly as climate change and extreme weather events demand strong local expertise."

Staff acknowledged the province's intent to modernize permitting, standardize practices, and improve consisten-

cy. Larger regional authorities could also distribute technical resources more equitably among municipalities. But they stressed that these benefits hinge on how the consolidation is implemented.

To reduce risks, the County supports the GRCA's recommendation that any new structure mirror existing source-water protection regions, creating smaller regional authorities rather than the sweeping proposed mergers.

During committee discussion, Coun. Robert Chambers praised the staff report as "very comprehensive and excellent," adding that GRCA board members would likely agree. However, he flagged an inaccuracy in the draft resolution stating that "municipalities have governed their respective conservation authorities for decades."

"Municipalities have never governed their conservation authorities ever; they are governed by the boards of conservation authorities," Chambers said. The committee unanimously supported his amendment, after which he endorsed the full staff analysis.

Council is expected to submit the County's feedback, along with any additional comments, to the province before the December 22 deadline. The government has signalled further consultation before a final model is implemented.

In the meantime, conservation authorities will continue to operate under existing boundaries and mandates while municipalities await clarity on governance models, funding formulas, and how local priorities will be protected in a vastly expanded regional structure.

Task Force issues formal call for land for future Brantford-Brant hospital

MEDIA RELEASE

The independent task force overseeing the site identification process for a new Brant Community Healthcare System (BCHS) hospital has issued a formal call for land, inviting property owners to submit potential sites for consideration.

The call was announced on December 5th, opening a two-stage submission process that will determine where the new regional hospital serving Brantford, Brant County, Six Nations of the Grand River, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and surrounding communities will be built.

Landowners interested in having their properties evaluated must submit a Stage 1 proposal through the BCHS Bidding portal before February 10, 2026 at 3 p.m. Sites meeting all mandatory criteria will move to Stage 2, where they will be scored against a broader set of evaluation measures.

"We're asking landowners across Brantford-Brant who have sites that meet the criteria to put forward their sites for consideration," said Don Shilton, chair of the task force. "The community has helped us define what matters most, and now we're ready to find the site that will serve our region for generations to come."

The criteria were finalized following a month-long consultation in September that invited input from residents, health-care staff, local organizations, municipal partners, subject-matter experts and Indigenous communities. Feedback gathered during that process helped shape the measures that will be used to assess each site.

A recommendation on a preferred location is expected to be brought to the BCHS board in spring 2026.

The new hospital is one component of the Reimagine BCHS initiative, which aims to modernize local health-care infrastructure and address the needs of one of the fast-

est-growing regions in southwestern Ontario.

More information on the site identification process and project updates is available at reimaginebchs.ca.



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The Santa who watches over Paris

This story originally ran in December 2024, but its message of community, tradition and holiday cheer is too special - and too uniquely Paris - not to share again.

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

High above the treeline at night stands a Santa shining bright, bringing the town seasonal delight and guiding folks with his holiday light.

Perched high within a 90-foot-tall evergreen overlooking King Edward Street, Santa Claus shines for all to see. If you're new to town or just didn't notice before, this traditional decoration brings joy to so many residents each holiday season. In fact, it has overlooked the town for more than 35 years.

When the tradition looked to be in jeopardy in 2024, one brave soul stepped up — and up and up and up — to make sure the Christmas custom would live on.

The story dates back to the 1990s — perhaps earlier — when Michael and Benita Vlasic, full of Christmas spirit, placed the custom-made Santa in what would become its permanent home: an evergreen tree at 61

King Edward St.

"My dad is a jack of all trades. He's a maintenance millwright by trade. I don't think there is anything he can't fix or modify. He loves Christmas. To him Christmas is more about making memories and happy times than it is about the gifts," said Michelle Sass, sharing the story behind the famous decoration that has very much become a part of Paris' fabric.

Each year Michael climbed up that tree, to change the bulb and light Santa, a somewhat unofficial sign that Christmas is near. As the years passed, the task became more difficult to manage and this year Michelle said her father was unable to make the climb. She thought it might be an end of an era until last year when her brother Eric decided to brave the climb. Armed with a safety harness and a whole lot of guts, Eric followed in his father's footsteps and saved Christmas! That may be a bit of an exaggeration, but the deed did not go unnoticed.

When Michelle announced Santa's return on social media last year, a flood of comments soon followed.

"Thank-you for the joy this has brought to our family and the community over many, many years," commented Aileen Costigan.

"Thank-you so much for doing this. It is iconic in our town and my kids look for Santa every time we pass by," said Jessica Bartlett-Howells.

Terri Thompson shared, "I noticed last night that Santa was lit up! The Christmas season is here!"

And this year was no exception. As soon as Santa's light was on, folks were discussing the tradition, some wondering the story, others happily sharing the history. It is guaranteed to start a discussion each December.

Michelle hopes Santa will continue to bring joy to the town, a shining light and perfect way to keep Michael and Benita's Christmas spirit alive.



(MARGARET SANTOS PHOTO)

Do you spot Santa Claus at the top of this 90-foot evergreen tree? He lives on King Edward Street but overlooks the entire town — and is quite the talk of the town each December.

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Enbridge partners with Fire Department, donates life saving fire and carbon monoxide detectors

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The County of Brant Fire Department is partnering with Enbridge Gas Ontario and the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council to improve home safety and reduce fire- and carbon monoxide-related deaths to zero.

The collaboration was announced Dec. 10 and includes the distribution of combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms through Safe Community Project Zero, a provincewide public education campaign.

As part of the initiative, the County of Brant Fire Department received 264 combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. The broader campaign will provide more than 14,200 alarms to residents in 75 communities across Ontario.

This year, Enbridge Gas invested \$450,000 in Safe Community Project Zero. Over the past 17 years, the program has supplied more than 115,000 alarms to Ontario fire departments.

When properly installed and maintained, combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms provide early warning to allow occupants to safely escape a house fire or carbon monoxide exposure. Carbon monoxide is a toxic, odourless gas produced by the incomplete combustion of common fuels.

"Carbon monoxide alarms play a vital role as a second line of defence against this invisible threat, often called 'the silent killer,'" says Desirée Swance, Advisor, Municipal and Stakeholder Engagement, Enbridge Gas. "Proper maintenance of fuel-burning appliances is the most effective way to prevent carbon monoxide exposure. We're proud to support our communities by raising awareness and helping Ontarians take simple, proactive steps to stay safe in their homes."

"Each day, fire departments focus their efforts on educating the public about the importance of having working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in their home. The objective of Safe Community Project Zero, is to deliver these alarms to areas where they are needed most," says



(COUNTY OF BRANT PHOTO)

Back row (left to right): Jamie Kovacs, Executive Director, Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council; Desirée Swance, Advisor, Municipal and Stakeholder Engagement, Enbridge Gas; County of Brant Mayor David Bailey; Fire Chief Darren Watson, County of Brant; Cindy Stevenson, General Manager of Emergency and Protective Services, County of Brant; Michael Owen, Chief Fire Prevention Officer, County of Brant.

Front row (left to right): Carly Murray, Fire Prevention Officer, County of Brant; Lisa Herbert, Fire Prevention Officer, County of Brant.

Jon Pegg, Ontario Fire Marshal and Chair of the FMPFSC. "It is a program that not only helps fire departments raise awareness about the legal requirement to have working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms installed in all Ontario homes, but also reinforces the critical role they play in saving lives."

"Having the right safety tools in place can save lives, and this contribution helps us get them where they're needed most," says Darren Watson, Fire Chief for the County of Brant. "It's a meaningful step toward reducing preventable emergencies in our community and we are so grateful."

"The Safe Community Project Zero campaign aims to help our most vulnerable residents receive free smoke and CO alarms which can help save lives," says MPP Will Bouma, Brantford-Brant. "Through community partnerships and collaboration, this program will help raise awareness for the importance of having working smoke and CO alarms in homes. With the crucial efforts made through this campaign and our community partners, I believe that tragic fire and carbon monoxide related deaths can be reduced."

The County of Brant Fire Department operates eight stations across the county, providing fire prevention, public education and emergency response services supported by a fleet that includes pumper, tankers, an aerial truck, rescue boats and ATVs.

The Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council was established in 1993 and works to promote fire prevention and public education through partnerships and sponsorships across Ontario.

Enbridge Gas Ontario is Canada's largest natural gas storage, transmission and distribution company, delivering energy to more than four million customers across the province.

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**



WILL BOUMA
MPP, Brantford-Brant



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HISTORIC PARIS

PARIS PAST: The rise and fall of King's Ward park's "Christmas Island"



By Chris Whelan

Paris, Ontario has long been a town where community spirit shines brightly—quite literally, during the holiday season. A look back at the years following 1965 reveals the inspiring, though ultimately temporary, legacy of the Paris Beautification Society and its most ambitious project: the "Christmas Island" in King's Ward Park.

The seeds of the Paris Beautification Society were sown in May 1965, when Mayor Melvin Sharpe issued a town-wide invitation to form a citizen's committee. The initial goal was focused: to organize a beautification program for the town's upcoming centennial year.

Out of a series of meetings emerged an executive led by President Oliver Mulholland. Driven by a desire for a "more permanent and long-range program," the group officially became the Paris Beautification Society. They swiftly secured town council support and launched their first project—a tulip planting program—raising funds by selling memberships at the Paris Fall Fair, which helped purchase 1,000 bulbs for three flower beds.

It was at a September meeting that the idea for a spectacular holiday display was conceived. With an advance on their 1966 grant, the Society decided to create a per-

manent feature: "Christmas Island."

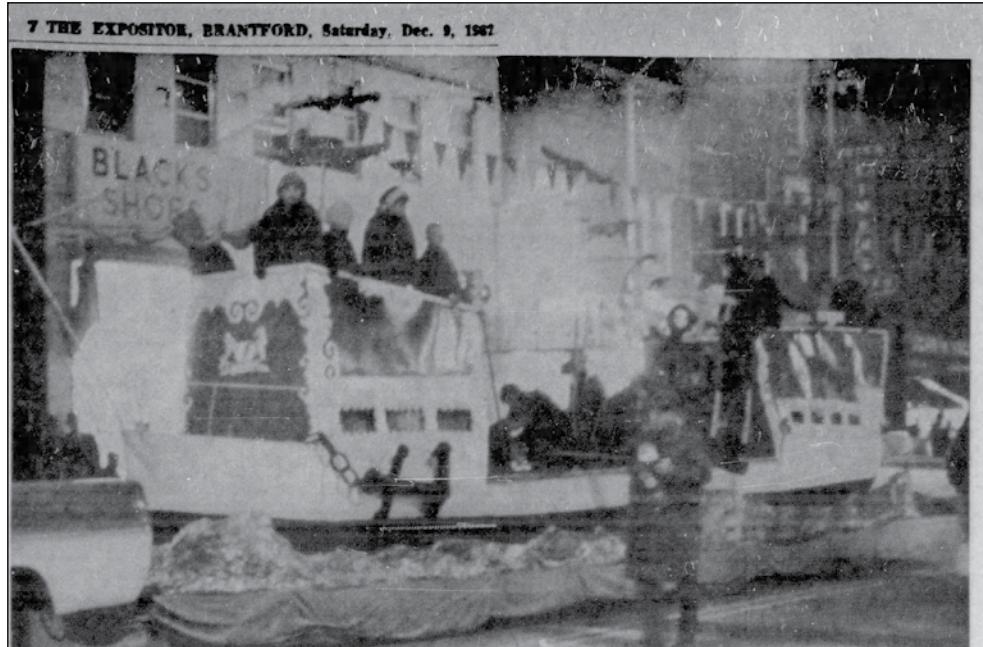
The committee immediately got to work, purchasing more than \$600 worth of used Christmas decoration material from the city of Kitchener (aided by a \$500 town council grant). The centerpiece of the attraction was a nativity scene, built by the boys of the Paris District High School industrial arts classes under the supervision of teacher Foster Scott.

The inaugural Christmas Island proved to be an instant hit. On Friday night of the 1965 Santa Claus Parade, which was sponsored by the new Society and featured the Paris Citizen's Band and several floats, Santa himself distributed candy to the children right at the newly established "Christmas Island."

The enthusiasm of the Society spurred a town-wide lighting renaissance. In 1966, while the Christmas Island was enlarged and maintained by the committee, residents across Paris—from Grand River Street North to the Capron Survey and Highbury Heights—began trying to outdo their neighbours in lighting arrangements as part of the Society's home lighting contest. The town had become "increasingly brighter."

The success continued into 1967 when the Society partnered with the Penman's Employees Recreation Association (PERA) for the annual Santa Claus Parade. The parade, featuring cash prizes for the best-decorated floats, wound its way through the streets and culminated at the Christmas Island in King's Ward Park, across from Central School.

However, by November 1968, the massive undertaking began to show strain. President Oliver Mulholland noted



SHIP AHOY — A pirate ship sailed up the main street of Paris, Friday night. The ship was a float owned by George Young of Mount Vernon. The float was an entry in the Paris Santa Claus parade. The parade was sponsored by the Paris Beautification Society and the Penmans Employees' Recreation As-

sociation. The parade proceeded through town to Christmas Island in King's Ward park where Santa Claus talked to the children and gave each a treat. There were 18 floats in the parade plus several clowns and individuals. Master of ceremonies was Richard Foulds.

that the Society's active membership had dwindled to about six workers, making the erection of the complex display—which required about 12 people—a major challenge.

Mulholland stressed the importance of their work: "The town isn't big enough to support a park program, so it has to rely on civic programs." Thankfully, the Paris Lions Club and the Jaycees stepped in to offer assistance, saving the popular display for one more year.

Despite the tireless efforts and community praise, the difficulty in maintaining the momentum proved too much. The last article found about the project, dated December 9, 1969, announced the cancella-

tion of the Christmas Island display.

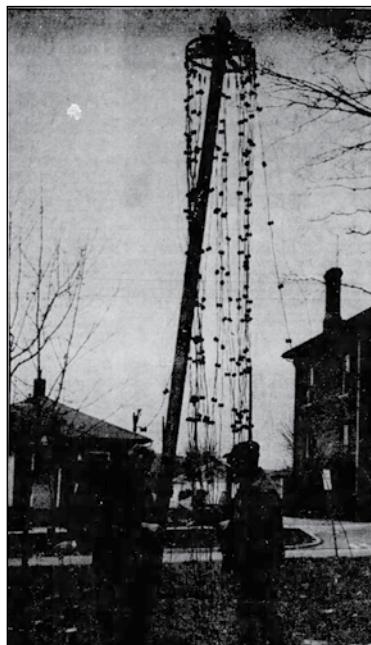
"We are short on membership," Mulholland stated, "or we would have had it on the go before now." He also noted the significant amount of repair needed for the equipment. The Christmas Island—a beloved Yuletide attraction for four years, conceived to celebrate Canada's centennial and sustained by pure civic pride—was no more. Though the lights dimmed on this particular project, the story of the Paris Beautification Society remains a powerful reminder of how a few committed citizens can successfully transform a town, proving that community effort is the best kind of decoration.



LAMP LIGHTERS — Men from the Public Utilities Commission of Paris are shown above erecting giant candles at King's Ward Park. These decorations are part of a set purchased by the beautification committee last year for Christmas Island which is located in this park. Members of the beautification committee have been putting up other decorations in their spare time.



CHRISTMAS IN PARIS — Paris is donning its Christmas finery as public utilities commission workers deck the town with decorations. The Yuletide season was purchased from Kitchener by the town's beautification committee last month. Hard at work at their annual task are Ken Sinclair (top) and Jack Foote. — (Expositor photo by Bill Gilchrist)



YULE POLE — Members of the Paris Beautification Society started to erect Christmas Island Saturday. They are shown above setting up a may pole in King's Ward Park, the nucleus of the Christmas display. The project is scheduled to be complete by Saturday.



CHRISTMAS ISLAND — Members of the Paris Beautification Society are once again assembling its decorations. Shown above on the maypole is Oliver Mulholland, chairman of the beautification society. (Photo by Gilchrist)

Street Beat

GEORGE LE GRESLEY

Paris Independent Columnist

Lauralai Burton
Cobblestone Elementary



a pony

Henry Stuart
Blessed Sacrament



a remote control car
and a moonball

Travis Stuart
Blessed Sacrament



a World Cup
2026 ball

Olivia Stuart
Blessed Sacrament



art set, new back pack
and an American Girl
Doll Ice Cream truck.

Rilynn Johnston
North Ward



a talking doll

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Landen Johnston
North Ward



Nora Hassan
Greenbriar School



Jack Johnston
North Ward



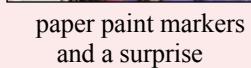
Will Zulaf
Paris Central School



Alina Hassan
Greenbriar School



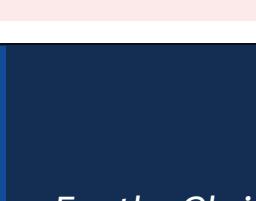
Lashvika Thota
Local Daycare



a Whoopie cushion



paper paint markers
and a surprise



a Lego Nintaga set
from Santa

art stuff



Merry Christmas to
you and yours
- from Dan & Tracy

For the Christmas season and
into 2026, I encourage you to
continue to Shop Local. Paris
and Brant County merchants
and local businesses support
our sports teams, arts and so
many community events.

Dollars are kept in the
community and support local
jobs. Let's pay it forward!

Dan Muys, MP for Brant North

Office: 6 Main St. S., St. George | Mail: Box 1100, St. George, ON N0E 1N0
519-448-1483 | dan.muys@parl.gc.ca | DanMuysMP.ca



Dan MUYS
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
FLAMBOROUGH-GLANBROOK-BRANT NORTH

Paris Horticultural Society honoured for community impact



(AWARD PHOTO BY DOUG HANNA / PLANTER DECORATION PHOTO BY MARGARET COLLINS)

The Paris Horticultural Society was honoured at the County of Brant's 2025 Volunteer Recognition Ceremony on December 5 at the Warren Group Cainsville Community Centre. The society received a Community Impact Award for its innovative, collaborative contributions that enrich the community. Several members also earned individual Community Leader Awards in recognition of their mentorship and volunteer service. Pictured are award recipients Dave Collins, Brenda Hunt, Dorothy Lanyi, Bob Hasler and Pat Hasler-Watts. And just one example of the group's impact can be seen in the festive decorations throughout downtown Paris, they are the volunteers behind the beautiful planters residents enjoy each season. Pictured is Tricia Cressman, Liz Hopkins, Liz Geffros, Nancy Chipman, Deb Vickers, Pat Moore, Cathy Mayled, Janet Snaith, Janine Heather, Shirley McAlpine, Edith Stone, Patti Gladding and Doug Hanna

COUNTY OF Brant Simply Grand

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The Winter Guide arrives December 18

Registration opens:

Programs: January 5, 2026 at 6:00 pm
Summer Camp: January 12, 2026 at 6:00 pm

Community 2026 Winter Community Services Guide

Holiday Skates

brant.ca/Skates

Burford Community Centre
 14 Potter Drive, Burford
 • Dec 22, 4:00 - 5:00 pm
 Dec 23, 2:00 - 3:00 pm
 Dec 29, 4:00 - 5:00 pm
 • Dec 30, 2:00 - 3:00 pm
 Jan 2, 2:00 - 3:00 pm
 Sponsored by Miles Flowers/Scoop It Up
 Sponsored by the Woodstock Truck Show



Brant Sports Complex
 944 Powerline Rd, Paris
 • Dec 22, 10:30 - 11:30 am
 • Dec 23, 10:30 - 11:30 am
 • Dec 23, 6:30 - 7:30 pm
 • Dec 30, 10:30 - 11:30 am
 Sponsored by the Lions Club of Paris
 Sponsored by Elementary Occasional Teachers, GEDSB

Along with special holiday skates, you can still enjoy our regularly scheduled drop-in skates!

Gaukel Memorial Community Centre
 7 Gaukel Dr, St George
 Dec 22, 9:00 - 10:00 am

New Years Eve Skates

December 31, 2025
 Brant Sports Complex
 Beginner Skate, 9:30 - 10:30 am
 Public Skate, 10:00 - 11:00 am

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GRANTHAVEN.COM

County of Brant celebrates volunteers at 3rd Annual Recognition Ceremony

MEDIA RELEASE

The County of Brant celebrated the contributions of local volunteers on Friday, December 5, during its third annual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony at the TF Warren Group Cainsville Community Centre. This year's event recognized 57 individual volunteers along with five community groups for their service.

"Volunteers bring so much to Brant, and I cannot begin to express how grateful and lucky we are to have the support of the individuals and organizations that donate their time in our communities," said County of Brant Mayor David Bailey. "Thank you for your commitment and for making a difference in Brant."

For the third consecutive year, the event took place on International Volunteer Day, providing an opportunity for the County of Brant to celebrate both individuals and groups in the community. Residents were encouraged to nominate an individual, group, committee or club that has contributed in a meaningful way to the County.

Nominations were submitted for the following categories: Community Leader (individual) and Community Impact (group). Awards were also presented to 37 Simply Grand Volunteers, recognizing individual citizens who have dedicated 15 or more years to a longstanding community group or service club.

2025 Volunteer Recognition recipients include:

Community Impact (Group)

- Paris Horticultural Society
- 1st Paris Scouters
- Brant for Nature
- County of Brant Public Library Board
- Paris Soccer Club

Community Leader (Individual)

- Dave Collins - Paris Horticultural Society



Ron Moore is recognized for 66 years of volunteer service with the Paris Lions Club, presented by County of Brant Councillor John Bell. The Paris Lions Club has a list of long-serving volunteers. During the ceremony 16 volunteers were recognized for a combined 498 years of service.

- Bob Hasler - Paris Horticultural Society
- Dorothy Lanyi - Paris Horticultural Society
- Brenda Hunt - Paris Horticultural Society
- Pat Hasler-Watts - Paris Horticultural Society
- Laura Ritchie - St. George Lawn Bowling Club
- Mike Harp - Paris Soccer Club
- Kevin Noseworthy - Paris Soccer Club
- Martina Sooksbirsingh - Paris Soccer Club
- Margaret Knill-Wilson - Paris Lions Club / Christmas Hamper
- Vera Abbott - Scot-Oak Seniors
- Janette Schieman - Scot-Oak Seniors
- Marie Thornton - Scot-Oak Seniors
- Jerry Thornton - Scot-Oak Seniors
- Diane Patenaude - Optimist Club of Scotland and District
- Shirley Simons - Girl Guides/Christmas Hamper

Simply Grand Volunteers – 15 years+ Burford Lions Club members

- Al Piggot – 52 years
- Bob Foster – 45 years
- Dave Thomas – 44 years
- Joe Kloepfer – 34 years
- Brian Spivey – 30 years
- Garry Givens – 30 years
- Al Clack – 18 years

Optimist Club of Scotland and District members

- Mary Poss – 32 years
- Cindy Ross – 32 years
- Kathy VanBerlo – 32 years
- John VanBerlo – 32 years
- Al Shepherd – 32 years
- Don Patenaude – 32 years
- Sylvia Meggs – 31 years
- Mary Patenaude – 30 years
- Bob Hevesi – 24 years
- Donna Crawford – 17 years
- Heather Poss – 16 years

Mt. Pleasant Optimist Club members

- Tom Tamm – 31 years
- Walt Vogt – 27 years
- Amanda Campbell – 20 years
- Jeff Overeem – 20 years
- Mary-Jane Hart – 18 years
- Greg Campbell – 17 years
- Brian Englefield – 15 years

Paris Lions Club members

- Ron Moore – 66 years
- William Kipp – 43 years
- David McLean – 42 years
- David Arsenault – 38 years
- Airie Kloss – 38 years
- David Shewfelt – 36 years



(COUNTY OF BRANT PHOTOS)

2025 Volunteer recognized during the county's annual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony held on International Volunteer Day, December 5.

years

- Derrick Porter – 35 years
- Bruce Falkiner – 32 years
- Herb Thompson – 32 years
- Louie Alamo – 28 years
- Ken Linington – 27 years
- Dwayne Budgell – 26 years
- Gerry Runstedler – 26 years
- Robert (Ted) Bickell – 22 years
- Ken Cox – 18 years
- Philip Raney – 15 years

Thank you to everyone who gives back in the County of Brant - your efforts make our communities wonderful places to call home. We also extend our appreciation to all who submitted nominations, helping us shine a spotlight on these deserving individuals and groups. To learn more about the Volunteer Recognition Awards and view photos of this year's recipients please visit www.brant.ca/Volunteer.

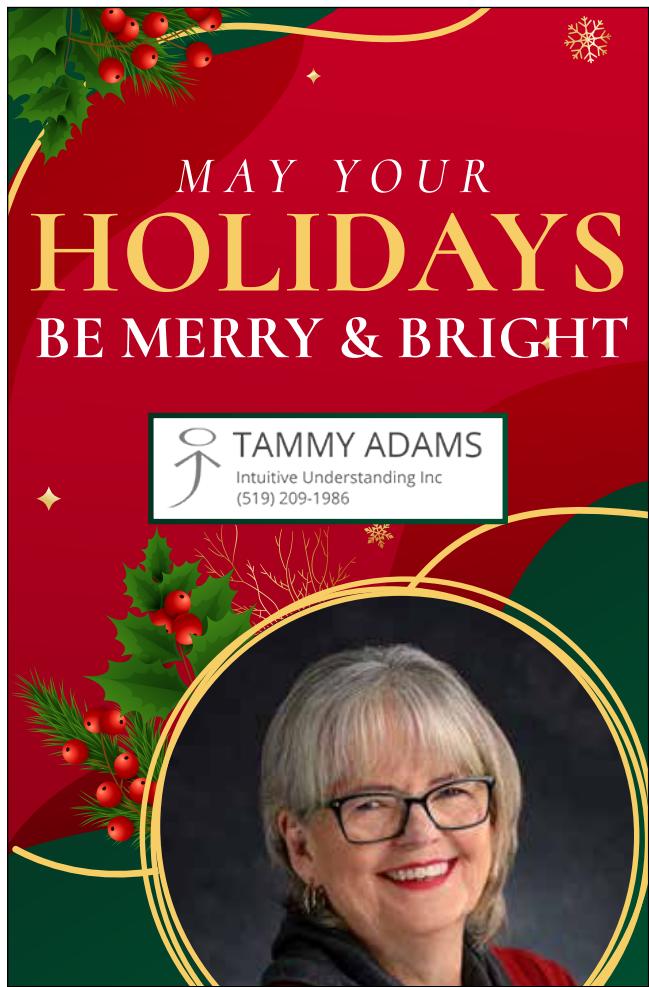
sobeys

**Here's to shared meals,
cherished memories &**

a wonderful year ahead!

Thank you for letting us be part of your everyday moments, your holiday traditions, and the meals that bring everyone together. We are truly grateful to serve the Paris community and look forward to another year of fresh food, friendly faces, and familiar favourites.

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Rachel Lunam's unstoppable Ironman journey

SCOOP STEWART

Paris Independent Columnist

Paris native Rachel Lunam - Sweeney, 56, is no stranger to setting high goals and tackling them head-on. As the eldest of four children and mother to five (Mandie, Amber, Denny, Riley, and Molly), this self-proclaimed Type A, "go big or go home" athlete has completed 10 full Ironman triathlons, all while secretly battling a debilitating and rare vascular condition. Her incredible journey culminates in a historic comeback at the 2025 Ironman Canada in Ottawa, exactly one year after lifesaving, reconstructive surgery.

Born and raised in Paris, Lunam always led an active lifestyle. Following success in bike racing, a move to triathlon felt like a "natural progression." Her first season in 2012 proved she was a natural, securing the Multisport Canada Overall Series award after winning the short-course try-a-tri in Coburg and achieving three other top four finishes.

"After my first season of short course races in 2012, I set my goals high for the following season. Admittedly, most athletes take a longer/slower build to the full Ironman distance (usually years); but I tend to have the 'go big or go home' mentality lol."

The goal she set was the Ironman—a grueling full-distance triathlon consisting of a 3.8 km swim / 180 km bike / 42.2 km run, which must be completed in under 17 hours. After 12 months of training, she self-coached her way to the finish line of her first Ironman in Mont Tremblant, Quebec (2013).

Just months before her first Ironman, Lunam experienced the initial symptoms of claudication—muscle pain caused by a lack of oxygen—in her right calf. Initially attributing the pain to the sheer training volume, she persevered. However, the symptoms spread over the next decade, appearing in both calves while running and even in her quadriceps while cycling. The pain was so debilitating it forced her to step away from training with her friends and leave her role as a founding board member of the Brant Cycling Club.

For years, she sought answers, enduring a misdiagnosis of chronic compartment syndrome and spending "thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours" on treatments like physical therapy, acupuncture, and massage. Nothing worked. Lunam continued to race the longer, slower endurance events, finding the symptoms marginally more manageable, completing a remarkable roster of Ironman events:

2015: Niagara Falls Barrelman & Ironman Lake Placid, NY (Coached by Jeff Kehler)

- 2017: Ironman Mont Tremblant & Niagara Falls Barrelman (Coached by Angela Quick)
- 2018: Ironman Chattanooga, TN (Coached by Angela Quick)
- 2019: Ironman Cozumel, Mexico (Coached by Angela Quick)
- 2021: Ironman Chattanooga, TN & Ironman Arizona (Coached by Angela Quick)
- 2022: Ironman Cozumel, Mexico (Self-Coached)
- 2023: Ironman Chattanooga, TN (Self-Coached)

The breaking point came after the exceptionally painful Ironman Chattanooga in September 2023. Weeks later, she hit a wall, unable to walk more than 100 meters without severe claudication pain extending from hips to toes.

A vascular ultrasound, ordered to rule out peripheral artery disease (which her mother suffers from), revealed a shocking truth: a complete occlusion of both external iliac arteries. After Googling her symptoms, Lunam discovered an article about External Iliac Artery Endofibrosis (EIAE), or "cyclist's iliac syndrome," a rare disease primarily found in young, elite male athletes. EIAE is not caused by plaque but by the thickening and fibrosis of the artery wall, believed to be triggered by the hyper-flexed hip position in cycling.



(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Rachel at the athlete village of Ironman Ottawa

Referred to one of the few Canadian specialists, Dr. Prasad Jetty at the Ottawa Civic Hospital, Lunam's diagnosis was confirmed. Her case was unlike any he had seen: the disease had affected both sides bilaterally, and the entire length of both arteries were completely occluded. Dr. Jetty admitted he had "absolutely no idea" how she had completed an Ironman.

On July 24, 2024, Lunam underwent a high-risk, 6-hour surgery—a complete aortobifemoral bypass. Surgeons replaced the full length of her diseased iliac arteries with synthetic dacron arteries, a procedure that came with a 10% risk of amputation, paralysis, or death.

Released from the hospital on August 3, 2024, Lunam immediately set her sights on the inaugural Ironman Canada in Ottawa scheduled for August 3, 2025—exactly 365 days post-op. Despite acute nerve trauma in her right leg and months of painful setbacks, she accomplished her goal.

"Nothing will ever replace the first time I rode my bike or laced up my running shoes and could exercise again pain-free!!! Having my family and friends at that finish line was the best feeling in the entire world."

With 10 Ironmans completed, Lunam is considering her long-term goal of 12 to qualify for the Kona World Championships Legacy program, while remaining mindful of her health. However, her new, pain-free body is already tackling new frontiers.

She recently participated in her first 10km trail running race and has been given the green light by Dr. Jetty to sign up for a 50 km ultra trail running race in Tennessee next November. She also has a 20 km swimming race around the island of Key West on her radar.

Lunam is now dedicating herself to advocacy, educating health professionals on EIAE to ensure other young, healthy athletes don't suffer the same decade-long diagnostic delay. Her message aligns with her ambassadorship for "Rent Rich Threads": "Paying dues and Reaping rewards."

"This life is rented and we pay our dues in discipline, patience, resilience and hard work when no one is watching. There are no shortcuts and no handouts; and the rewards are earned through sweat, grit and pure determination."

Rachel Lunam's triumph is a testament to determination, family support, and the enduring strength of the human spirit. She is a true Paris sports hero.

*Always a pleasure,
Scoop Stewart*



BRANT BATTALION

SCOREBOARD - WEEK OF DECEMBER 7TH

Sunday, December 7

- U10A Battalions lose 4-0 against Norfolk Knights
- U11A Battalions win 3-2 against St Marys Rock
- U12A Battalions tie 4-4 against South Oxford Storm
- U15B Battalions win 3-0 against Delhi Norwich 59ers
- U13A Battalions lose 7-1 against Strathroy Jr. Rockets

Monday, December 8

- U16A Battalions lose 9-0 against East Lampton Eagles
- U18A Battalions lose 8-1 against South Oxford Storm
- U14A Battalions lose 4-3 against Delhi Norwich 59ers

Tuesday, December 9

- U15B Battalions win 4-2 against Twin Centre Stars

Wednesday, December 10

- U16A Battalions lose 4-2 against Norfolk Knights

Thursday, December 11

- U12A Battalions win 8-0 against New Hamburg Huskies
- U10A Battalions lose 6-0 against South Oxford Storm
- U18B Battalions win 4-3 against Plattsburgh Rage

Friday, December 12

- U11B Battalions win 5-0 against Norfolk Knights

Saturday, December 13

- U11A Battalions tie 2-2 against Stratford Warriors
- U15A Battalions lose 3-2 against Norfolk Knights
- U13A Battalions lose 5-0 against Cambridge Hawks
- U15B Battalions tie 3-3 against Norfolk Knights
- U13B Battalions win 3-1 against Norfolk Knights 1



HARSH UPADHYAY
DIRECTOR

parispestcontrol.ca

548 328 4966

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info@parispestcontrol.ca

2 McGovern Lane, Paris ON, N3L 0K3

Community support grows for Live 2 Play campaign



More donations continue to flow into the Live 2 Play Campaign in community effort to raise money for an expansion at the North Dumfries Community Centre in Ayr. A donation was received for Services in Kind, on behalf of CCG Honorary Advisor Don Eby, Councillor Rod Rolleman, Heidi Schmidt from the Ayr News, Travis Sedore from KW Cambridge Web & Design, Jason Charrette from Ayr Financial Services, CCG Communications Chair Jenny Charron Absent: Steve Greer from Abracadabra.



J&R Hall Transport presented a \$50,000 donation. Pictured are CCG Honorary Advisors Patrick MacNeil and Don Eby, Pam and Jeff Hall from J&R Hall Transport, CCG Community Engagement Chair Cathy Tohovsky, CCG Deputy Chair Russ Hutchings

Tiny Titans of the Ice: Paris Ringette's Fun 2s shine at their first tournament



(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

The Paris Ringette Association's Fun 2 (U8) team hit the ice in Ajax on December 6 for their very first tournament — and they couldn't have smiled bigger if they tried! While no scores are kept at this age, coaches say the players skated their hearts out, learned lots, and soaked up every minute of the experience. For some, it was their first-ever tournament, making the day a milestone to remember. Members of the Fun 2 include: Quinn Perry, Parker Hodgson, Amelia Sippel, Sammy Rawlings, Avery Stelpstra, Lainey Berkmarotel, Fiona Potter, Laura Briggs, Saoirse Carter, Sloane Davis, Livie MacDonald, Claire Doherty and Elisa Croome.

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Panthers stay competitive in hockey, basketball and volleyball

GEORGE LE GRESLEY

Sports Correspondent

Girls Hockey

The Panthers continued their winning streak by defeating the St John's Eagles 3-1. On Wednesday, the Panthers took their first loss of the year, losing 4-1 to Assumption College. Reagan Charter was the lone scorer for Paris.

Boys Hockey

The Panthers took a 4-3 loss to the St John's Eagles, their first loss of the year. Cohen Vanderhook scored two goals, and Ryker Hockman scored the third goal.

Boys Basketball

The teams travelled to Pauline Johnson last Tuesday, with the Juniors suffering a 67-53 loss. Leading scorers for the Panthers were Blake Cruickshank, Rex Savage, and Sawyer Mead. Meanwhile, the Seniors won their game 70-66. Leading Panther scorers were Canaan Sherbino, Eoin Wright and Nathan Brewster.

GUESS WHO?

Drafted 199th overall in 2000, I went from underdog to GOAT. With seven Super Bowl rings, I've led unforgettable comebacks and shattered countless NFL records. I spent two decades turning the New England Patriots into a dynasty before taking my talents to Tampa Bay and winning yet another championship. Love me or hate me, you can't argue with the scoreboard.

Who am I?

Answer: Tom Brady

Last Thursday, the Panthers played North Park at home, with the Juniors taking a loss. Leading scorers for the Paris side were Blake Cruickshank, Rex Savage, and Eesa Ansary. Later, the Seniors won their second consecutive game, defeating the Trojans 70-62.

Girls Volleyball

Last Tuesday, the Panthers hosted the Pauline Johnson teams and the Juniors lost a close one, three games to 2. They dropped the first two games of the match but came back to win the next two, tying the match at two games each, before losing the tie-break 15-12.

The Senior side earned its first win of the year, defeating PJ 3-1. The girls have great potential, and this win should get them on a positive trajectory.

On Thursday, the Juniors played the Trojans and won their first game of the year by a score of 3 games to 2. Meanwhile, the Trojans shut out the Panthers 3 games to 0.

Birthday bullseyes light up Paris Legion Women's Dart League night

The atmosphere was energetic at the Paris Legion Women's Dart League this week, with the league celebrating a memorable birthday performance that was nothing short of a spectacle.

Birthday girl Patti led the charge, turning her special day into a dominant display at the boards. She showcased remarkable consistency and poise, successfully doubling out in four of her five games and punctuating her night with a well-earned bullseye.

The competition was fierce, with several players stepping up to hit critical doubles and high scores. A total of ten other players

secured key doubles throughout the evening: Gail, Kris (aka Booner), Debi P, Bryanna, Cynthia, Arlene, Nancy, Liz, Kim, and Jennifer. Gail and Kris (Booner), and Debi P all doubled out twice this night.

The standout performance belonged to Jennifer, who not only doubled out for her team's pivotal victory, but also threw the highest score of the night: an amazing 134! Close behind was Nancy, who impressed the crowd with a powerful throw of 132!

Next week is the Christmas celebration for the league and we can't wait to see the seasonal attire and treats for all to enjoy!

Paris duo takes over Bulldogs duties while Cook works world juniors

GEORGE LE GRESLEY

Sports Correspondent

For several years, the Brantford Bulldogs Equipment Manager, Chris Cook, has travelled to the World Junior Hockey Championships as the team's equipment manager, this time to Minnesota. Taking over his duties during this time will be Paris' own Dave Curtain, currently with the Bulldogs, and Doug Green, currently with the Paris Titans. Curtin has been involved with Par-

is hockey for many years, starting with the Wolfpack, being named the "best Junior hockey equipment manager" by the Mounties owner, Todd Wood, with the Titans, and now primarily with the Bulldogs as the assistant equipment manager. Assisting Dave will be Doug Green, who started in Junior hockey with the Mounties and is now the current Paris Titan equipment manager. Good luck Davey and Greener, especially on those road trips riding on the bus!



Wishing you a Christmas filled with warmth, laughter, and special moments. From our home to yours — Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Extendicare

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Helping people live better

County supports Festive R.I.D.E. program ahead of provincial grant announcement

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The County of Brant will once again back the Ontario Provincial Police's Festive R.I.D.E. program, approving funding for a paid-duty contract even though provincial grant allocations for 2025-26 have not yet been announced.

At last Tuesday's Administration and Operations Committee meeting, councilors received a staff report recommending that the County authorize the contract in advance, as it has in previous years. The annual Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere (R.I.D.E.) campaign is a long-standing holiday initiative aimed at removing impaired drivers from roads while increasing police visibility and public education.

According to the report, the program is expected to cost approximately \$15,000, an amount historically covered through the province's Festive R.I.D.E. grant. The County has received funding for the initiative in each of the last three years. Should the province not approve the 2025-26 application, staff note the cost can be absorbed through the OPP policing budget without impacting the overall tax levy.

In a letter to the County dated Dec. 2,

Brant County OPP said the Ministry of the Solicitor General has not yet released the call for applications, but detachments anticipate hearing about funding allocations "in the coming weeks." The detachment requested approval to proceed with the paid-duty contract in advance, noting that additional R.I.D.E. patrols are a "critical component in ensuring the safety of our community members during the holiday season."

Staff also recommended that beginning next year, the Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to approve the program annually as long as it continues to be fully funded by the province after year-end reporting. The timing of provincial announcements, the report notes, often falls after the start of holiday enforcement.

The committee endorsed the recommendation, sending it forward for final approval by council.

On November 20, 2025, Brant County OPP officially kicked off the 2025 Festive RIDE campaign, running until January 1, 2026. This annual initiative targets impaired driving and promotes safe, responsible choices during the holiday season.

The OPP remains committed to the Canada Road Safety Strategy 2025 through prevention, intervention, and enforcement.

Unemployment falls in November as fewer residents stay in workforce

MEDIA RELEASE

Brantford-Brant's unemployment rate fell by nearly one percentage point in November, but the decline coincided with an equal drop in the proportion of residents who were employed.

The local jobless rate dropped to 9 per cent last month, down from 9.9 per cent in October, while the employment rate declined to 61.9 per cent, according to the latest seasonally adjusted estimates from Statistics Canada. The shift reflects several thousand residents leaving the labour force.

"The decrease in the unemployment rate may appear encouraging at first glance, but the reality is more complex," said Danette Dalton, executive director of the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie. "The rise in the number of residents stepping out of the labour force shows the difficult circumstances many people are facing."

Statistics Canada estimates the number of Brantford-area residents not in the labour force — neither working nor looking for work — increased by about 2,400 in November, even as the area's population grew by approximately 300.

"As economic challenges continue, we are fortunate to have many organizations, known as service providers, in Grand Erie (Brantford, Brant, Six Nations, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Haldimand and Norfolk) working to support job seek-

ers with career coaching, skill building, resume writing and interview preparation, and more," Dalton said.

"Online tools on the Workforce Planning Board website — www.workforceplanning-board.org — such as the Workforce Gateway and Newcomers Gateway help residents find and connect with employment service providers close to home."

Canada added 54,000 jobs in November — the third consecutive month of growth — bringing the national unemployment rate down to 6.5 per cent. Most of the job gains came from youth aged 15 to 24 in part-time positions. Ontario's unemployment rate fell to 7.3 per cent as fewer people searched for work.

Dalton said the planning board's website also hosts Grand Erie Jobs, which includes the area's most comprehensive job board, typically listing more than 1,000 positions.

"It's important that job seekers know that they aren't alone, now or at any time," she said. "There's a large network of community agencies, training providers and schools that offer so much more than job search help. They can help build someone's confidence, enhance their skills, add to their education, access job training and open up new career pathways." The Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie is one of 26 non-profit organizations in Ontario that provide leadership in labour-force planning and is funded in part by the governments of Canada and Ontario.



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Ontario 

GrandBridge Energy partners with IESO to bring expert support and rebates directly to homes and businesses

MEDIA RELEASE

GrandBridge Energy is pleased to announce a new partnership with Ontario's Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) to help customers access Save on Energy conservation programs that reduce electricity use, access rebates and realize potential savings. The partnership is part of GrandBridge Energy's approved electricity Demand Side Management (eDSM) plan, which supports local marketing, customer education and business outreach in our service territory.

Through Save on Energy, eligible homeowners can receive rebates when improving home efficiency, including upgrades to insulation, windows, doors, HVAC systems, energy-efficient appliances and incentives for solar panel installation. These programs support everyday energy savings that help reduce energy consumption and save money over time.

In addition to residential rebates, Save on Energy offers an array of small business, commercial, industrial and institutional programs designed to achieve verified energy savings and improve day-to-day operations. Businesses can receive support for lighting upgrades, energy assessments,

building optimization, and other solutions that lead to lower operating costs.

GrandBridge Energy will provide local support to guide customers through program requirements and application processes, making it easier to access available incentives.

"At GrandBridge Energy, our priority is helping customers lower their energy costs with solutions that make sense for their homes and businesses," said Tyler Tracey, Vice-President, Customer Experience & ITS. "Save on Energy programs offer real benefits from improved comfort at home to long-term operational savings for small and large businesses alike. Our team is ready to assist, answer questions, and help customers find the incentives that best fit their needs."

This partnership strengthens GrandBridge Energy's commitment to supporting community growth, smart energy use and guiding a sustainable future. Locally, the hydro utility services residents in the County of Brant.

For more information on available Save on Energy programs and how to apply, customers are encouraged to visit www.grandbridgeenergy.com, email saveonenergy@grandbridgeenergy.com.



2X
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Ontario Power Pets

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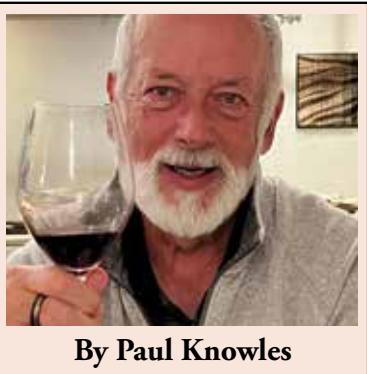


GrandBridge
ENERGY

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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: A qualified “yes” on visiting two popular Toronto attractions



By Paul Knowles

Their beginnings are almost a century apart, but the Royal Ontario Museum and Ripley's Aquarium of Canada have a lot in common. They are two of the most-visited attractions in Toronto. They both are part of the Toronto CityPASS program that provides some significant discounts on admission prices. And they both offer a blend of entertainment and education to people of all ages.

So, all that being said, should you plan to brave the horrendous traffic and head to Toronto right away, to take in these two attractions? My answer would be a qualified, “yes.”

Why “qualified”? Different reasons for the two places. Let's start with the ROM. Most of us remember school trips to the ROM in decades past. After all the Royal Ontario Museum has been open since 1914, so it predates all of us.

If you are like me, your three main memories are of dinosaur skeletons, Egyptian mummies, and row after row of jam-packed cases loaded with a mind-boggling assortment of historical artifacts.

That's not the ROM of today



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

A new, high-tech feature at the Royal Ontario Museum: a video featuring undersea creatures of the Cambrian period.

— although you can find most of these things in the museum, somewhere. The ROM is modernizing, big time. And this is actually the reason for my “qualified” yes — because the museum is smack in the middle of a three-year, multi-million-dollar revitalization of the main floor and some of the second floor. The “transformation” impacts 86,000 square feet on the main floor, and creates 6,000 square feet of new gallery space on the second floor. So lots of the building is closed to visitors.

Change is certainly in the air at the ROM, and not only concerning the physical space. After a decade in the position, Director and CEO Josh Basseches has resigned, and Yoke Chung and Jennifer Wild, already part of the museum's executive leadership team, are becoming

Co-Directors and CEOs, as of January 1.

So the ROM is in transition, and visitors need to be aware of this. That does not mean there is nothing to experience here — there is still a lot of the permanent collection on display, there are new innovations to enjoy, and there are many current, temporary exhibitions, ranging from “Saints, Sinners, Lovers and Fools: 300 years of Flemish masterworks”, to “Sharks”, to a. intriguing exhibition entitled “Layers in Time”, focused on southwestern Ontario's unique, meromictic lake, Crawford Lake.

And, in a slightly obvious segue, thinking of water takes us south from the ROM to Ripley's Aquarium.

It's a much newer part of the Toronto scene, having opened in 2013, 99 years after the ROM welcomed its first visitor. And while the ROM is working toward being a modern, state-of-the-art destination, Ripley's accomplished that goal from the get-go.

So why do I also give the aquarium a “qualified yes”. Here, it all depends on when you go. We visited recently, on a Saturday, and the place was jammed, wall to all with family groups. Great for the kids to be there, but a challenge to navigate. So my qualification is — Ripley's Aquarium is a terrific place to visit, but do avoid high-volume days. Ripley's recommends avoiding the hours of 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on weekdays, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekends and holidays. I agree!

But if you can miss the uber-crowds, there is a lot to love about the place. The moving sidewalk that carries you inside the aquarium, where you are surrounded by sharks, sea turtles, and dozens of species of fish, are amazing. The “Ray Bay” which allows visitors to actually touch a ray is magical. And while the big features draw the most attention, there are marvels in smaller exhibits as well — including sea horses and sea dragons.

Ripley's has also taken their Canadian location seriously, with really fine exhibits of Canadian species, both freshwater and ocean. Everyone loves the blue lobsters.

The attraction has, from the beginning, been over-the-top kid friendly. In fact, there are tunnels through water features, viewing areas and other nooks and crannies that are only accessible to children, which I personally think is very unfair. Heck, I'd like to crawl through a school of fish — except I would most certainly get stuck. So, let's leave it to the kids — who love it.

I mentioned the Toronto CityPass. Here's the current math, for one adult. The CityPASS costs \$129.96. (A child's pass is \$92.92).

That gets you into the CN Tower, Ripley's Aquarium, and three other attractions from a list including the ROM, the Toronto Zoo, Casa Loma, and more. If you did all five, you would be paying \$182 for an adult. Even visiting just three, you save money with the CityPASS.

But whether you use that pass, or simply plan a visit to one or two places, the aquarium is definitely worth a visit — away from peak hours — and the ROM, even under construction, still offers many of the wonders that we remember from when we were school kids — and promises a lot more to come.

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.



Visitors to Ripley's are always awed by the sight of sea creatures like these rays.

**Wishing you and your family
a safe and happy holiday season!**



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WEEKLY Horoscope

December 17- December 24 2025

ARIES

Mar 21 - Apr 20

Fresh motivation rises again, Aries. A quick choice clarifies your path and strengthens your confidence. Follow the flow—it's guiding you forward.



TAURUS

Apr 21 - May 21

Steady comfort surrounds you, Taurus. A familiar routine restores peace and reassurance. Stay grounded—your patience continues to pay off.



GEMINI

May 22 - Jun 21

Thoughts move quickly, Gemini. A lively conversation inspires fresh curiosity and unexpected insight. Follow what sparks your mind—it leads to growth and exciting new directions.



CANCER

Jun 22 - Jul 22

Emotional balance settles in, Cancer. Gentle support shows up right when needed. Move ahead with care and compassion.



LEO

Jul 23 - Aug 23

Attention finds you naturally, Leo. Confidence grows when you move with purpose, passion, and heart. Step fully into your spotlight—it's earned and shining brighter than you realize.



VIRGO

Aug 24 - Sept 22

Structure brings relief, Virgo. Completing one task restores a sense of control. Trust your system—it keeps you steady.



FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER 17

Eugene Levy, Actor (79)

DECEMBER 18

Brad Pitt, Actor (62)

DECEMBER 19

Criss Angel, Magician (58)

DECEMBER 20

Jonah Hill, Actor (42)

DECEMBER 21

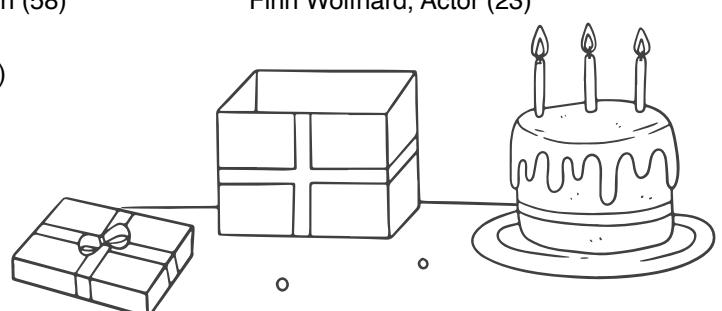
Samuel L. Jackson, Actor (77)

DECEMBER 22

Meghan Trainor, Musician (32)

DECEMBER 23

Finn Wolfhard, Actor (23)



RIDDLES

I sit at the top, not a fruit or a bell
— I catch the eye and complete the
tree's spell.

Tree topper (Star/Angel)

I hang above doorways where
couples may meet — a quick peck
beneath me makes the moment
sweet.

Mistletoe

I'm a message of good will, folded
or sent — I carry warm wishes and a
greeting intent.

Christmas card

I'm a chilly artist who builds with a
roll and a pat; with a scarf and a hat,
I stand where I sat.

Snowman

I bring evergreen scent and tinsel's
shine; people gather round me
when the lights align.

Christmas tree

I'm bright at night, strung along
eaves — I blink and glow in winter's
breeze.

Lights

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 23

Sponsored by:



PET OF THE WEEK



SOPHIE

Meet our Pet of the Week:

Sophie enjoyed sitting by the Christmas tree while waiting for her appointment this week. She was happy to receive a clean bill of health and is ready for the holidays!

We have it on good authority that Sophie's boyfriend and one true love Argo is proud of her Pet of the Week honour.

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



WORD SEARCH

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

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

Santa
Snowflake
Reindeer
Tinsel
Fireplace
Cocoa
Workshop
Carol
Jingle
Holly
Mistletoe
Chimney
Lights
Frosty
Bells
Nutcracker
Star
Cookies
Sleigh
Wrapping

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EMAIL TO INQUIRE INFO@THEPARISINDEPENDENT.COM

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19

Free photos with Santa Claus - At Scott's Family Restaurant from 4 pm to 7pm. Join us for a festive evening with holiday cheer and magical memories. Located at 74 Scott Ave Paris.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

Live Music Afternoon at The Paris Pub – In Support of the Food Bank - Join The Paris Pub on Sunday, December 21, 2025, for a festive live performance by The Kings of Adequate. Enjoy upbeat holiday tunes on the year's shortest day, with music playing from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM. There's no cover charge, but cash or food donations for the local Food Bank are warmly welcomed. For more information, please contact The Paris Pub.

DECEMBER 22, 23 & 30

Free Public Skates - Courtesy of Lions Club of Paris – All skates at Brant Sports Complex from 10:30 am to 11:30 am.

DECEMBER 21, 23 AND 24TH

Candlelight Service at Paris Community Church - J164 Grand River St N beginning at 6:30 pm- Join us in celebrating Christ's birth through song and reflection. Experience the Christmas story with family and friends at one of our candlelight services on December 21st, 23rd or 24th.

1 & 3 TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

The Brantford Stamp Club – In Support of the Food Bank - The Brantford Stamp Club meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday September to December and January to May as well as the 1st Tuesday in June and December. Meetings are held at The Branlyn Community Centre 238 Brantwood Park Drive in Brantford. Doors open at 7pm and meetings start at 8pm.

EVERY OTHER FRIDAY

Ingersoll Country Music Jamboree Meeting – In 2026 it's your fix! Ingersoll Country Music Jamboree meeting every other Friday 1-4 p.m. at Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St. S. Ingersoll. Join us, walk ins welcome. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Perform, listen, dance & enjoy! January 16 & 30, February 13 & 27, March 6 & 20, April 10 & 17, May 1, 15 & 29, June 5 & 19.

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You can **purchase to donate** or take your pie or pulled pork **home**. If you purchase to donate, we will fill the freezers of our local food banks and shelters and give your \$20 to help feed families in Haiti, plus we will issue you a tax receipt.



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Sojourn Church
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- More Information dreambigwithus.ca

Apple Pie

Beef Pie

Family Sized Container of Pulled Pork



OBITUARY

Margie McIntyre

August 28, 1959 – November 8, 2025



It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of Margie McIntyre, peacefully surrounded by her loving family at LHSC. After a short battle with cancer.

Margie was the beloved wife and best friend of Terry McIntyre with whom she shared 46 years of marriage. Together they built a life filled with laughter, deep love and happiness.

A devoted mother to their two daughters Carrie (Chris) and Lindsey (Paul) and four grandchildren Chelsea, Haley, Owen and Joshua and a great grandchild due in March.

Margie was the cherished daughter of Shirley (Tone) and Allan (2023) Pethick.

Margie was the loving sister of Kim (Dave), Wilcock, Brenda (John) Little, Paulette Campbell and the late Bruce, Bob (Connie) Pethick. Along with numerous nieces and nephews.

Daughter-in-law to Murray and Mildred McIntyre. Sister-in-law to Randy and Nancy McIntyre and the late Rick McIntyre.

Cremation has taken place. No formal memorial service will take place, but a Celebration of Life will be held at John Bayus Park, 1429 Sheffield Road, Cambridge on January 10, 2026 from 1pm – 4pm.

Donations to the Canadian Cancer Society would be appreciated by the family.

A New Way to Connect in the County of Brant



DGB Connect

Discover **DGB Connect**, a new initiative by Darmont GivesBack, in partnership with the County of Brant and Brant OPP, bringing people, partners, and purpose together to strengthen our communities.

Join us as we build stronger, safer, more inclusive communities.

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2025

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HOUR

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MUSIC

THURSDAYS 7-9PM

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NYE
2026

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↓ Indulge in a 3-course Dinner Party with
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HOURS

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PINTS

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MERRY
DAYS

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BEERS & GIFT CARDS

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BOOK A
TABLE HERE



QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Apocalypse	6. Gene Autry
2. Maui	7. 1996
3. 1976	8. The eyes
4. Swiss Cheese	9. Oslo
5. Yellow	10. Star of Bethlehem



HOMES OF HEROES:

If you have a story about a Paris Veteran, please email the committee at info@homesofheroes.ca. Let's work together to give all our veterans, living and fallen, in war and in peace, the recognition and honour they deserve. If you have any questions about the project, please email Neil Edwards at neiledwards51@gmail.com.

GUESS
WHO?

He is a famous reindeer with a glowing red nose. He was once teased for being different. He now leads Santa's sleigh on foggy Christmas nights. Who am I?

Answer: Rudolph

WANTED

I will pay cash for antiques and collectibles. Coca Cola, Pepsi or any pop company. Brewery items - Kuntz, Huether Labatts, etc. Old radios and gramophones, wristwatches, pocket watches, old fruit jars - Beaver Star, Bee Hive etc. Any old oil cans and signs - Red Indian, Supertest etc. Any small furniture. If you are moving or cleaning out stuff please contact me - 519-570-6920.

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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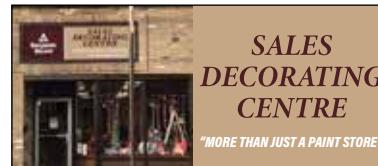
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Expanded Energy Management Program

The expanded Energy Management program offers financial support for industrial facilities as part of Natural Resources Canada's Green Industrial Facilities and Manufacturing Program.

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