

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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Ontario expanding community access to long-term care services

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

The Ontario government is expanding the Community Access to Long-Term Care program to Woodstock's Woodingford Lodge.

"Our government is protecting our long-term care system by getting people the right care in the right place," said Natalia Kusendova-Bashta, Minister of Long-Term Care. "Providing services at long-term care homes to people in the community helps them age comfortably in their own homes, while giving them access to the services they need."

Following the launch of the first round in September of last year, the program helps people on the long-term care waitlist, those eligible for long-term care and those who will soon become eligible, access services in the community while living at home, including clinical and personal care, nursing support, dementia care and wound care.

"Woodingford Lodge has been selected as one of three Ontario long-term care homes to participate in Year 2 of the Community Access to Long-Term Care (CALTC) Pilot Program, receiving \$1,067,645 in funding," said Mark Dager, Director of Long-Term Care.

"The investment expands the Adult Day Program to seven days a week and enhances access to physiotherapy, personal care and bathing, foot and hair care, health and wellness education, and caregiver supports. These services will support seniors awaiting long-term care to remain safely in the community longer, reduce caregiver strain, reduce ED visits, and support smoother transitions to long-term care," he added.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



(FACEBOOK SCREENSHOT)

TORNADO CONFIRMED IN WOODSTOCK

Woodstock was hit with a severe summer storm on Aug. 8, which resulted in an EF0 tornado. Story below.

Tornado hits Woodstock and area with minor damage reported

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

The Northern Tornadoes Project (NTP) has confirmed that a tornado did touch down in Woodstock on Saturday, Aug. 8.

The weather incident came 47 years and one day after a devastating F4 tornado tore through Woodstock and the surrounding area on Tuesday, Aug. 7, 1979. It was an F4 on the Fujita scale, killed two people, injured 142 and caused more than \$100 million in property damage at the time. Just to put that number in perspective – in today's econo-

my it would have been roughly \$270 million.

"We are now confirming a weak tornado at Woodstock, ON this afternoon. There were many photos and videos, including one video showing the tornado doing minor damage. We are assigning a preliminary EF0 rating to both this Woodstock tornado and the Lindsay, Ontario tornado from earlier in the day," said a statement from NTP.

It added because the damage reported so far is minor, they are not planning to send a survey team.

"That could change if evidence of more significant damage emerges. You can send reports of significant damage to us at ntp@uwo.ca," added the statement.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3



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Woodingford Lodge benefits from move

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The other two sites are Craigholme in Ailsa Craig near London and Four Seasons Lodge in Deep River.

"Woodingford Lodge is proud to expand our role beyond the walls of long-term care and bring our expertise, services and supports directly to people living in our community," Dager said.

The funding will include hiring one support service worker, two personal support workers and two recreational aides. The current Adult Day Program supports 13 to 15 people on a daily basis. Currently, there are 80 people on the wait list.

"The original concept and scope for the Family Transition Program, the first program of its kind in Canada, was in 2018. In 2022, through support from the provincial Local Priorities Fund and recognition of the value of offering this model of care, the Adult Day Program launched as a pilot

to provide care to seniors in the community waiting for long-term care placement," explained Dager.

"During the program's first year, these sites delivered more than 10,000 visits for clinical care, personal support, and social and recreational programming, helping more seniors receive the care they need while remaining safely in their own homes," said an Ontario press release.

The project is part of the Ontario government's broader plan to build 58,000 new and upgraded long-term care beds across the province.

To qualify for Community Access to Long-Term Care, people must be on a long-term care waiting list, eligible for long-term care, or be eligible for long-term care in the near future. For information on eligibility and how to apply, contact Woodingford Lodge.

Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. Albuquerque is located on the shores of what river?
2. What are baby Koalas called?
3. What is the most spoken language on Earth?
4. The deficiency of which vitamin causes scurvy?
5. What is the term for the maximum amount of oxygen the body can use during exercise?
6. The "Hollywood" sign originally spelled out what word?
7. What's the name of the pig in the book "Charlotte's Web"?
8. How many points does the Star of David have?
9. Which dinosaur is famous for having three horns?
10. What is the term for being romantically or sexually unfaithful to a partner?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31



Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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Memories of 1979 in the back of people’s minds

CONTINUED FROM FRONT



(FACEBOOK PHOTO)

Parts of Woodstock experienced flooding during the Aug. 8 storm and tornado. Several large trees also came down causing property damage.

Residents took to social media, posting videos and photos of downed trees, flooded roads and other damage.

The Echo reached out to Oxford County and the City of Woodstock for reports of damage.

“Storm impacts for Oxford County roads and operations were minimal, limited to a small number of shoulder washouts on County roads in the west, and minor clean-up at the Oxford Road 2/Dundas Street construction site,” said Frank Gross, the county’s senior manager of transportation.

City crews responded to several downed trees and localized street flooding following Saturday’s storm. Staff worked throughout the weekend to clear debris from city roads, sidewalks, and hydrants, and that cleanup is now largely complete.

“Work is now focused on downed trees



(FACEBOOK PHOTO)

in parks and remaining limbs and branches on boulevards. We are also inspecting playgrounds and parks for flood-related issues, including areas where mulch was washed out and will need to be repaired. The fence at the cricket pitch was damaged and will be fixed. Stumps from removed trees will be addressed, though they may remain in place for a short time,” said a city statement.

“We have been made aware of some damage to private property, including several vehicles struck by falling trees and homes with minor damage. Those city-owned trees have been removed, and we expect additional private property reports as the week continues. Staff are still assessing the overall impact and continue to inspect standing trees in the storm area,” it added.

The storm was part of a broader severe-weather system that moved across southern Ontario. A muggy air mass, a westward-moving cold front and lake-breeze boundaries helped create an environment favourable for thunderstorms and rotation. Several tornado warnings were issued during the afternoon.

The first reported tornado Saturday was near Lindsay, shortly after 1 p.m. The Woodstock report came around 3:30 p.m. The NTP subsequently confirmed both as EF0 tornadoes. Anywhere from 55 to 65 mm of rain fell on Saturday afternoon.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

A photograph showing the damage on Manitoa Road looking towards Parkinson Road in Woodstock following the 1979 tornado.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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My son's acquittal taught me to check the police's work. Civilian oversight taught me no one else really does.

So I checked 10 years of police budgets. Spending is growing more than twice as fast as the city is, and almost three times faster than consumer inflation.

By Mario Spina, Woodstock

Three years ago, my son was acquitted of every charge against him. I won't retell that story, the London Free Press already did (lfpres.com/news/local-news/accused-over-thumbnails-inside-one-family-digital-nightmare). Here is what I did next: learning how policing and oversight in Ontario work, and what they cost us.

First, what I am not saying. I am not out to discredit our police or to defund them. I understand we pay a hub-city policing premium at the 401 and 403, that policing carries real risk, and that recruiting is hard. Today's mental health and opioid crises are nothing like ten years ago, and our police are the only ones answering the phone at 3 a.m.

This is not a risk problem. It is a math problem.

I compiled ten years of data from WPS annual reports, board budget documents, Stats Canada and city records. The police budget was \$12.9 million in 2016. In 2026, it's \$24.3 million, up 88.6%. Population grew 32%, consumer inflation up 31%, my property taxes up 34%. The budget rose over 2.5 times each. Calls for service are back to 2019 levels. Policing takes 28.34 cents of every tax dollar, up from 25.91 in 2019. That works out to roughly \$451 per resident (high). The Association of Municipalities of Ontario has warned for years that policing costs are fiscally unsustainable.

Where does the money go? Over 85% of any police budget is salary, set at a bargaining table the city does not sit at, between police association and police board. Comparator city settlements become the floor for the next contract and leap-frog across the province. Mandatory OMERS pension matching adds 9 to 15% on top of officer salary. Retention pay clauses the boards' own provincial association argued in 2013 serve no purpose yet survive in every contract. If council rejects the resulting budget, the board can take the city to binding provincial arbitration. Council's hands are tied. The new policing act of 2024, CSPA, adds paperwork, and paperwork costs money. But budgets were rising steeply years before it arrived, so the board should itemize those new CSPA costs annually and let the numbers speak. I am okay with officers earning what they negotiated. When a highly trained officer spends the shift on paperwork and mental health calls that need a specialist, the serious crime travelling the 401 and 403 waits. That is not a failure by our police. It is a design flaw. There has to be a better answer to this crisis than our most expensive resource.

Then there is transparency. Our board ratified a new five-year police contract in October 2025, in closed session. Other boards like St. Thomas, Waterloo and Toronto published their terms on ratification. Ours still has not. In an election year. On the single largest line item in our city budget.

I have tested oversight from the inside: every civilian review body, plus six freedom-of-information requests. I eventually received everything, but "eventually" meant 5 to 14 months and appeals to the privacy commissioner. I commissioned a report from a retired 33-year detective sergeant, a pioneer of Ontario's strategy against Internet Child Exploitation, one of their own, and asked to present his findings to the

board. Not to relitigate, but so the service could learn. I was stonewalled. An FOI of the board's own emails show no one from the public has delegated to it since at least 2019. One member objected that I shouldn't speak for my son "because he's 18" (he was 19 when charged and 21 when I asked). As far as I can tell, the only version of my son's case this civilian board ever heard came from the police themselves, through my complaint against them that was investigated internally. If a board will not hear a respected policing expert offering lessons learned, who can? The hardest lesson is that unless a case is black and white, with serious violations, everything grey disappears into a black hole. The system processes complaints. It does not resolve them. Privacy law protects people. It should not shield institutions from accountability, and the default answer to a citizen should not be no. Transparency is not a courtesy. It is what makes democracy function.

I will say this, too. Recently the Mayor and our chief administrator spent an hour with me on my analysis, the first time in three years any city official has spoken with me. My family thanks them. I learned things, and I think they did too. I have faith in our city officials. As a lifelong resident and Realtor, I am proud to call Woodstock home.

This October, we vote. I pay premium tax dollars for adequate, effective, qualified policing. I will keep paying it. But when the qualifications failed, when a police forensic examiner the court ruled unqualified nearly cost my son his future, nobody owned it. The police cannot have it both ways: more money every year, and no answers when it matters. Ask your candidates about both. Before you vote, not after.

Mario Spina

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Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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OPP West Region Civic Holiday Traffic Campaign results

Police lay nearly 2000 charges

LEE GRIFFI
Editor

West Region members of the Ontario Provincial Police laid 1815 charges following 2107 traffic stops across the region during the August long weekend campaign. The operation, which ran from July 31 until August 3, focused on the negative

driving behaviours that contribute to traffic collision deaths, injuries and property damage on our roadways. They include speeding, failure to wear a seatbelt, distracted driving and impaired driving. The Oxford OPP detachment has seen the most traffic deaths in the region with 12 to date. While that number may seem high, there were 14 at this point in 2025. Police also enforced Ontario's Move

Over law, which is designed to provide emergency personnel with the safe space they need to assist motorists and perform other roadside work. The infractions included 856 for speeding, 178 seatbelt charges, 14 for distracted driving, 45 impaired driving charges and 11 move-over infractions. "Our officers will continue to educate drivers and make speed enforcement a priority in the communities we serve," said acting traffic inspector Tara Bolstad.

Oxford County OPP media relations officer Randi Crawford said the number of charges laid is very concerning. "Absolutely, we are worried. We hope to always have low numbers, meaning we increase our patrols but genuinely find few people disobeying the rules of the road. It is always disappointing to see so many drivers still taking unnecessary risks." Despite the high number of infractions, Crawford does want to encourage those following the rules to keep it up. "Our message to good drivers is thank you and please keep up the good work. Please continue to drive alert and be prepared to drive defensively. A driver needs to know what is in front, behind and around them at all times."

Crawford's message for those driving irresponsibly is also right to the point. "Please stop taking risks. You are not only putting others at risk with your poor driving choices, but you are putting yourself at risk as well. You may have been lucky so far to avoid a collision, but you are not invincible." She added police do want to hear from motorists witnessing bad actors, but not on every occasion. "Yes, please report. If it is a dangerous driving behaviour happening at that moment, such as a suspected impaired driver or dangerous driver, please call 911. If it is something that isn't happening at the moment, for example a car that sped past you but you can no longer see where they went - if you were able to get the licence plate, you can call our non-emergency number at 1-888-310-1122 and report a traffic complaint. We record those occurrences and are often able to send a warning letter to the registered owner of the observed offence.

Crawford said motorists need to remember driving is a privilege and not a right. "Reducing your risk of a collision comes down to three simple behaviours. Drive safe, drive smart and drive sober."

Update to Thames River Regulated Area

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) is updating the regulated area maps for the South Thames Study Area. This area includes the Thames River from Pittock Dam in the City of Woodstock downstream to the easterly limits of the City of London.

Visit Engage Thames River (<https://engage.thamesriver.on.ca>) to learn more.

Project information will also be shared at a South Thames Study Area Public Information Meeting:

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POLICE BRIEFS

Woodstock Police Service briefs

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Police seize suspected Fentanyl during downtown bike patrol

Members of the Woodstock Police Service cracked down on open-air drug use in the city recently.

An officer on bike patrols the morning of Aug. 5 located two individuals in an alley near Dundas Street and Huron Street.

During separate interactions, the officer seized approximately five grams of suspected fentanyl, along with drug-use paraphernalia. The substances were seized for destruction.

“We hear the concerns being raised by residents and businesses regarding open-air drug use, and we are taking action. Everyone deserves to feel safe in our community,” said a police press release.

It added that while substance use disorder is a serious health issue, possession of illicit drugs remains a criminal offence.

“This includes amounts intended for personal use. Officers will continue to assess each situation individually, exercise discretion and take enforcement action where appropriate, including seizing illicit substances from public spaces,” it added.

Police said small quantities of fentanyl should not be considered harmless or insignificant.

“The unpredictable and increasingly toxic illicit drug supply can result in overdose, death and significant demands on police, paramedics and firefighters.”

Anyone seeking help with substance use can contact the Oxford County Community Health Centre’s Rapid Access Addiction Medicine Clinic for treatment, support and referrals.

Police issuing vehicle theft alert after increase in crime

The Woodstock Police Service is advising residents of a recent increase in vehicle thefts, particularly involving motorcycles.

Fourteen vehicles, including six motorcycles, were reported stolen in the city in July. During the same month, police recovered 10 stolen ve-



(WPS PHOTO)

Woodstock Police seized illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia near Dundas and Huron Streets recently. No arrests were made, but what was confiscated will be destroyed.

hicles, although those recoveries were not necessarily connected to the thefts reported in July.

Police say motorcycles can be quickly moved or loaded into another vehicle.

“Owners are encouraged to take extra precautions, including parking inside a locked garage or secure structure overnight whenever possible. Use a quality disc lock, wheel lock or heavy-duty chain secured to an immovable object,” according to a police news release.

“Use multiple anti-theft devices to make the motorcycle difficult to move. Consider installing a concealed GPS tracking device, park in a well-lit, visible area covered by security cameras and never leave keys in or near the motorcycle,” it added.

Police also advise owners to record the VIN, licence plate and identifying features, and keep current photographs of the motorcycle. They also advise residents are also reminded to lock

their vehicles, remove valuables and report suspicious activity immediately.

“Make your vehicle difficult to steal. A few extra security measures can help prevent an easy opportunity for thieves,” said police.

Three men charged with driving violations

Woodstock Police responded to a driving complaint involving a vehicle allegedly travelling at an extremely high rate of speed and nearly striking a pedestrian early in the morning on July 31.

Officers located the vehicle in the area of Adelaide Street and Victoria Street North and conducted a traffic stop. During the investigation, the driver was administered a roadside screening test and failed.

A 25-year-old Woodstock man has been charged with impaired driving, dangerous driving and common nuisance – endangering life.

Just after 10 p.m. on the same day, an officer conducted a traffic stop in the area of Sixth Avenue and St. Andrews Road after observing a vehicle being operated contrary to road conditions.

The driver was administered a roadside screening test and failed.

A 72-year-old South River man has been charged with impaired driving and dangerous driving.

Both accused were released from custody and are scheduled to appear in court at a later date.

An officer on Peel Street observed a motorcyclist commit a traffic infraction on the evening of July 30 and attempted to conduct a traffic stop. The motorcycle failed to stop, but a pursuit was not initiated due to concerns for public safety.

Through the investigation, police identified the alleged rider and located the motorcycle at a Woodstock residence. The next day, police attended the home and charged a 43-year-old city man with flight from a Peace Officer, operation while prohibited under the Criminal Code, failure to comply with a probation order, driving while under suspension, driving with no plates, and disobeying a stop sign.

The accused was held in custody for a bail hearing.

Oxford OPP briefs

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Police searching for suspect in another grandparent scam

Members from the Oxford detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police are seeking help in identifying a suspect who attended a residence in Oxford County as part of a Grandparent Scam.

“On July 31, an alleged scammer contacted a South-West Oxford Township couple and claimed their grandson had been arrested. The suspect convinced the victims that their grandson required bail money and instructed them to gather approximately \$6,900 in cash,” said an OPP press release.

The suspect further advised them not to call anyone else as it could interfere with

the proceedings.

“The victims were asked to place the cash in an envelope and write a reference number on the outside. The suspect advised that a representative would attend their residence to collect the money,” added the release.

Sometime between 5:25 p.m. and 6 p.m. on July 31, a male attended the residence, collected the cash and left in a passenger vehicle.

The suspect is described as having brown skin, being 30 to 40 years old, approximately 5-foot-6 to 5-foot-8 with a slim build, a short beard and a moustache. The suspect vehicle is described as a newer-model black Audi sedan with dark-tinted windows.

Members of the public are asked to contact Oxford OPP at 1-888-310-1122 if they

have any information about this incident, including video footage of the suspect or suspect vehicle. If you wish to remain anonymous, you can call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

Members of Oxford County are reminded that a legitimate organization, like a police service, would never come to your home to collect money for any reason.

To help educate yourself and your loved ones about scams, visit <https://antifraudcentre.ca>.

SIU invokes mandate following Embro incident

The province's Special Investigations Unit (SIU) has invoked its mandate following an incident in Embro.

On Sunday, August 9, 2026, shortly before 4:40 a.m., Members of the Oxford

OPP received a call for assistance from emergency medical services for a person in medical distress. Police interacted with the individual, who was transported to hospital for treatment.

The OPP notified the SIU, which invoked its mandate. As a result, the OPP will not be able to provide further information. The Echo did reach out to the SIU and received the following statement from spokesperson Monica Hudon.

“At approximately 4:45 a.m. on August 9, OPP officers were dispatched to a medical assist call at a residence in the area of 37th Line and Commissioner Street. A man was having a medical episode and refusing assistance. Officers took control of the man and handcuffed him. He was then taken to a stretcher and transported to hospital.”

CAA survey shows dangerous driving common on provincial roads

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Nearly every Ontario driver has witnessed dangerous driving in the past year, but many do not believe they contribute to the problem, according to a new survey from CAA South Central Ontario (CAA SCO).

The survey found 96 per cent of Ontario drivers have observed dangerous driving behaviours, including speeding (78 per cent), aggressive driving (69 per cent), unsafe lane changes (68 per cent) and distracted driving (67 per cent).

However, only 57 per cent admit to engaging in at least one dangerous driving behaviour, revealing a disconnect between what drivers see on the road and how they assess their own actions. This number rises to 62 per cent among drivers aged 18 to 34.

"Most Ontario drivers can identify dangerous behaviours when they see them, but many don't realize they may be contributing to the problem themselves," says Michael Stewart, a community relations consultant from the CAA SCO. "The good news is that small changes in driver behaviour can make a big difference. By slowing down, staying focused and making safe choices behind the wheel, we can help create safer roads for everyone."

The Gazette reached out to the Oxford detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police for its thoughts on the survey. Const. Randi Crawford said local driving behaviour has become a growing concern, with police laying a high number of careless and dangerous driving charges. She said the trend reflects increasingly unsafe driving habits on local roads.

"Careless is the Highway Traffic Act high charge, with

dangerous being an actual Criminal Code offence. We are getting to the point where people aren't deterred by getting a ticket. When they continue to be disrespectful and disregard the rules of the road, they are acting in the criminal element."

Crawford added the number of fatalities and injuries in the county can be attributed to a lack of

"A vehicle is a weapon and some drivers are hurting and even killing people. People need to realize how much of a privilege it is to drive – it isn't a right. Vehicles are killing more people than guns. Drivers need to be mindful that when they get into a vehicle it is their responsibility to keep themselves and everyone around them safe."

The threshold to move from a careless charge to a dangerous one depends on the situation, but Crawford said it isn't difficult to distinguish the two.

"Careless could be when you are driving too close to the shoulder and catch the edge of a wheel and wind up in the ditch. Dangerous could be when you are speeding, passing a bunch of vehicles and driving recklessly and endangering those around you. It usually has a higher opportunity to cause bodily harm or death."

In Ontario, using a hand-held cellphone while driving is considered distracted driving under the Highway Traffic Act. For drivers with a full licence, the penalty is a \$615 fine if paid out of court. Crawford said the behaviour has become a habit for many drivers.

"I think people have almost become addicted. It's almost like it's second nature and it's a behaviour we all have to break. People are also distracted by a big meeting at work or the events of the weekend they need to prepare for. Drivers need to make sure that when they are driving, they are focused on where they are going and what

they are doing."

Crawford is also encouraging drivers to utilize hands-free options in their vehicles by installing a phone holder and using options like Android Auto by Google and Apple CarPlay.

Speeding remains the most common dangerous driving behaviour among Ontario drivers. More than one-third (38 per cent) admit to speeding, and more than half of those say they typically drive 10 to 19 km/h over the posted speed limit. Even relatively small speed increases can significantly raise both the risk and severity of collisions. Many drivers may also be unaware that speeding fines increase with the severity of the offence and can be doubled in designated community safety zones.

On the positive side, most Ontarians say they slow down when they realize they are speeding, suggesting awareness and education can play an important role in changing behaviour. According to the survey, 87 per cent of drivers support fines and penalties for speeding, while 37 per cent said those penalties influenced their driving behaviour over the past year.

A separate survey conducted by CAA SCO found 16 per cent of Ontario drivers have been involved in a collision caused by distracted driving, a number that has gradually increased in recent years. Rear-end collisions remain the most common type of crash associated with distraction, according to the study.

"Distracted driving is preventable, yet it continues to put lives at risk every day," says Stewart. "Whether it's checking a notification, interacting with in-vehicle technology or taking your eyes off the road for a few seconds, the consequences can be devastating. The safest choice is to stay focused on driving."

OFA VIEWPOINT

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture's economic story goes far beyond the farm

ETHAN WALLACE

Vice President, Ontario Federation of Agriculture

There has been a noticeable shift in recent months in how governments are talking about agriculture.

As we navigate trade uncertainty, tariffs and a changing global economy, conversations about food security, domestic manufacturing, supply chain resilience and economic growth have taken on new urgency. More and more, agriculture is being recognized as an essential part of Ontario's and Canada's future.

That's encouraging to see. Those of us in the agriculture sector have long made the case that agriculture is far more than simply what happens on the farm. Ontario's agriculture and agri-food sector is one of the province's largest economic drivers, supporting businesses, creating jobs and producing the food, fuel, fibre and flowers people depend on every day.

I farm near Seaforth by Lake Huron and serve as vice-president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), where I represent farmers in Huron and Perth counties. Even after a lifetime in agri-

culture, I can't claim to know every commodity, every business or every challenge across this province firsthand. Neither can the other directors around our board table.

That's why OFA's annual summer board tour is so valuable.

Each year, directors spend time in a different agricultural region, meeting the farmers, processors, manufacturers and rural businesses that make Ontario agriculture so diverse. It gives us a broader perspective when we return to the board table and helps ensure our discussions are informed not only by reports and presentations, but by conversations with the people living those realities every day.

This year's tour took us to Perth County, where agriculture is the biggest pillar of the local economy and supports an impressive network of businesses and jobs that extends well beyond the farm.

Our first stop was Millbank Hardware, a locally owned rural business that has grown into a destination for customers across southwestern Ontario while continuing to serve the needs of farm families and rural communities.

At Mapleview Agri, we saw how a homegrown company has built a reputation for producing milk replacers for calves, sheep and goats that are sold well beyond Ontario.

Nuhn Industries demonstrated how Ontario manufacturing and engineering expertise have created equipment used by livestock farmers here and around the world to manage manure efficiently and responsibly.

We also visited Kampkreek Dairies, where we saw the investment, innovation and commitment that define today's family farms, and Gray Ridge Eggs, where millions of Ontario eggs are graded, packaged and distributed to consumers every year.

All our stops were very different businesses, and that's precisely the point.

Together, they demonstrate the remarkable network of farms, manufacturers, processors, suppliers and entrepreneurs that makes agriculture such an important economic engine. It's a story that's repeated in every corner of Ontario, even though the businesses

themselves may look different.

Today, Ontario's agri-food sector contributes more than \$51 billion annually to the provincial economy and supports approximately 867,000 jobs — about one in every 10 jobs in the province. Those jobs span farming, food processing, manufacturing, transportation, retail, hospitality, research and countless other sectors connected to getting Ontario food, fuel, fibre and flowers from the farm to consumers here at home and around the world.

Strong farms support manufacturers, processors, transportation companies, veterinarians, mechanics, feed suppliers and many other businesses. In turn, those businesses create jobs, invest in their communities and give Ontario farmers the products, services and expertise they need to compete.

That interconnected strength matters at a time when governments are looking for ways to build a stronger, more resilient economy. Food security, domestic manufacturing, supply chain resilience, innovation and economic growth are all priorities for Ontario and Canada — and agriculture contributes to every one of them.

Our annual board tour helps OFA directors better understand those contributions in different parts of the province. What we learn firsthand helps shape the policy positions we develop, the conversations we have with government and the decisions we make on behalf of members across Ontario.

Figure 1: Board members from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and Perth County Federation of Agriculture visited Mapleview Agri during OFA's annual summer board tour.

But the biggest lesson from Perth County reaches well beyond our own board table.

When we talk about supporting agriculture, we're not only talking about farms. We're talking about manufacturing, food processing, exports, innovation, small businesses, good-paying jobs and the economic vitality of communities across this province.

That's why agriculture belongs at the centre of every conversation about Ontario's economic future.

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My thoughts on the passing of Lloyd Robertson



LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Lloyd Robertson was the reason I got into journalism. Period. He passed away at the age of 92 last week, surrounded by his family.

It was about 10 p.m. last Tuesday. I was lying in

bed thinking about the stories I was working on and brainstorming new ones when an alert flashed on my phone. He was not a young man, so his passing did not come as a surprise, but wow, the memories that came back at that second were fast and furious.

I spent the first 27 years of my life as a Stratford boy, and I started watching the news with my mom when I was about 12. I knew at that point I wanted to be a TV news anchor. I watched every newscast Lloyd anchored when I wasn't on the ice, the golf course, or a basketball court somewhere, and I was hooked.

While I wasn't fortunate enough to reach that plateau in my career, I start-

ed at CJCS in Stratford as a newscaster/reporter at the age of 22. I have been a journalist and communications professional ever since. I did have an interview at the old CKCO TV in Kitchener when I was in my late 20s but didn't get the gig.

Lloyd's first radio job, just like mine, was at CJCS, which I believe was located on Ontario Street in Stratford. I spent 10 years in the business before moving on to a communications and health care career for 15 years. But here I am, back in the industry I started in 35 years ago.

CJCS had a party at the Stratford Festival a few years after I started (I can't remember exactly why), and Lloyd was there. He

made a point of introducing himself and his lovely wife to every single person in the room, and what stood out most to me was that he didn't once talk about himself. He asked questions about me and everyone else there.

I was covering a bank robbery at the Stratford Mall in the late 90's along with Art Baumunk, a great reporter from CTV in Kitchener. Someone yelled, "Stop that man" while I was walking back to my 1993 Chevy Cavalier to head to the station after talking to some witnesses. I ran him down, tackled him, and held him until police arrived, all while Art's cameraman was filming. The story made the national news with Lloyd Robert-

son. Oh, and no, it wasn't the bank robber, just a shoplifter.

Lloyd came over to me at the party and asked me all about that day and my radio career. To say the least, I was shocked. Here is my idol standing right in front of me and asking me questions about the incident and my job. That is the kind of man he was. Curious, engaging and sincere.

The man was built for journalism and just may have been the most trusted person in Canadian history – and for good reason. Our politicians and many current big-name journalists could take some lessons in integrity from him. I think he can teach all of us a lesson – have integrity, tell the truth, and the world

will be a far better place.

I do some freelance work for Vista Radio, which now owns CJCS. They asked me to write a few words about my memories, which led me to write this column. The station used some of my comments on the air and online, and I quickly heard from CTV News in Kitchener, where a young reporter named Colton Wiens asked if I would share some of my Lloyd memories. I gladly agreed.

If you watched and read the coverage, even if you didn't know who Lloyd was, you would have been impressed by how many people he touched. You only had to meet him once to figure out what kind of person he was.

Woodstock Art Gallery's Taste of Art to feed art enthusiasts Sept. 19

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

A celebration of local arts and culture in Oxford County will return just ahead of the autumn equinox.

The Woodstock Art Gallery will host its 11th annual Taste of Art event on Sept. 19 from 7 to 10 p.m. and will feature live music by CCI's jazz duo and singer-songwriter Jack Redman, a DJ, photobooth, 15 local food vendors, a silent auction, and of course, visual art made by local artists.

"We really encourage everyone to come out, especially supporting the local

artists," said Keziah Hope, facility rentals and special events coordinator.

There will be an opportunity to listen to music and sample food from vendors such as My Kitchen, Reel Treats Popcorn and Sweets, and Amicucci's on each of the gallery's three floors. The silent auction bidding takes place online, but Taste of Art guests can see the items in person. Pieces featured in this year's Visual Elements Exhibition will also be for sale.

Hope has watched the Taste of Art expand over the past few years. Her involvement in the event also grew over time.

"It's really exciting to see how the event

has grown and branched out over those last three years, going from helping out, serving some samples and stuff to fully taking over and planning the event and branching it out, especially with Alex's [Hartstone] help, our new director and curator, being able to branch out our event even more," she said.

Proceeds from the Taste of Art fundraiser will support the Woodstock Art Gallery's programming and initiatives.

"We are a city-funded facility, but these events really help us raise funds to help us branch out our facility even more and provide more public events, more public programs, different exhibitions and ba-

sically just grow and expand our operations in general," Hope said.

Early-bird tickets are still available for \$65 to artists participating in the Visual Elements exhibition and previous Taste of Art attendees. The gallery, located at 449 Dundas St., is also holding a draw, with visitors able to enter for a chance to win a pair of Taste of Art tickets at the end of August.

After the early-bird period, tickets will be \$75 each and can be purchased in person at the gallery or online through the Woodstock Art Gallery's website at <https://www.woodstockartgallery.ca/tasteofart>.

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Line dancing at Woodstock's South Gate

Urban Cowboy Line Dancing brought boots, rhythm, and plenty of country flair to the South Gate Centre on Friday, Aug. 7. The event delivered an energetic evening that drew dancers of all ages and experience levels.

It featured line dancing lessons offered every 30 minutes. Newcomers stepped confidently into their first routines while seasoned dancers sharpened their moves under the guidance of enthusiastic in-

structor Mario.

At 9 p.m., the evening shifted into a spirited Open Dance that carried on until 11 p.m. as participants filled the floor with synchronized steps, laughter, and the unmistakable camaraderie that line dancing inspires.

By the end of the night, guests left with tired feet, wide smiles, and a shared appreciation for Woodstock's growing line dancing community. (RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Selling 50/50 draw tickets were Rick, Donna and Bev.



A large crowd kicked up their boots, moving in sync as they line danced to the rhythmic soundtrack.

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will be offering Communion.

New Proxi Travel Stop opens in Woodstock

Proxi celebrated the official launch of its new location at 535 Mill St. in Woodstock on Saturday, August 8. It is located at the former TA location near the Sweaburg Rd. 401 cutoff.

The full day Opening Party & Customer Appreciation Event welcomed residents, families, and supporters from across Oxford County and offered activities, giveaways, and opportunities for guests to meet the team behind the brand.

The celebration marked Proxi's introduction to the Woodstock community, giving visitors the chance to explore the new space, learn about available services, and experience the company's customer first approach in a warm, community focused environment.

Proxi is committed to serving the Woodstock community with reliable service, friendly support, and a welcoming environment for all. (RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Welcoming customers were Trish, Michelle and Filad from Proxi 230 Travel Stop as they handed out 10 cents off per litre for gas coupons to appreciative customers.



Santa paused for a family photo as he had made a stop at Proxi for gas and snacks on his summer vacation getaway along the 401.



Customers filled the building as they purchased their gas and stocked up on the wide variety of items and snacks available.

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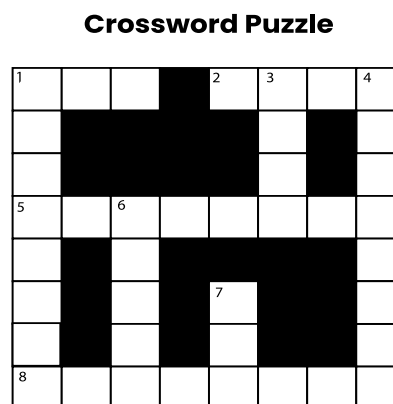
Food FACT:

This food is popular at fairs and carnivals. It features a common barbecue food in the middle of a batter coating.

Answer: Corn dog

“How they say that in...”

English: Prize
Spanish: Premio
Italian: Premio
French: Prix
German: Preis



Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. Feline
2. Neatens hair
5. A citizen from a particular country
8. Site or monument

DOWN

1. Traveling fair
3. Not closed
4. Baseball stadium
6. Bird's claw
7. Precious stone

Answers:
Across: 1. Cat 2. Comb 5. National 8. Landmark
Down: 1. Carnival 3. Open 4. Ballpark 6. Talon 7. Gem

CANADA



HISTORY

1923

The Department of National Defence comes into being. This department supports the Canadian Armed Forces.

NEW WORD

CARNIVAL

a public event or celebration that is typically held outdoors



Many fairs have competitions that locals can enter, including events that recognize people who are good at raising livestock.

Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Ride ticket

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Woodstock Ingersoll Echo SPORTS

Queen of 2026 Ringsteken competition ascends throne via wardrobe malfunction

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

It was an awkward time for Dieuwke Stewart's oorijzer to act up. It shouldn't have directly affected her Ringsteken capabilities, but its proper alignment, in conjunction with accompanying flodder mut, were integral parts of her 1800's Friesian wardrobe.

And so, with the other competitors literally chomping at the bit, a quick substitution was made.

"We had to start the program," said Karin van Wely. "So, it was like, 'Karin, go up, you have to go up.'"

van Wely's subsequent shared Friesian Horse Show (FHS) Ringsteken victory Saturday, July 18 at the Schuurmans dairy farm south-east of Woodstock did originate with a wardrobe malfunction. But it was well and truly earned through previous experience with driver and event host, Jisk Schuurmans.

Friesian horses are named after their northern Netherlands province of origin, black in colour with a long, flowing mane and tail and 'feathering' on their legs. Reputedly originally valued as a war horse for their ability to carry a knight in armour, that strength combined with a ge-

nial temperament also made them ideal agricultural work animals.

"They're such a good-natured horse," says van Wely, who admires Friesians for both their power and looks. "Beautiful."

With the advent of mechanized agricultural equipment, the breed came close to dying out. However, it has experienced a revival as a pleasure horse, ridden and driven, often with farmers connected to Friesland.

van Wely, who was born in the western section of the Netherlands, grew up in the central 'polder' region where she met and married dairy-farming husband Marius. Always a fan of horses, Karin previously owned a Dutch Warmblood before purchasing her first Friesian and falling in love with the breed.

"And now we have four."

In a classic remake of a husband buying his wife a power tool or set of snow tires, she gifted a Friesian to Marius, encouraging equine harmony between the couple.

"We were driving right beside each other," she said.

van Wely, who emigrated to Canada in 1992, is part of a FHS organizing committee made up of Friesian enthusiasts, who in this area tend to be dairy farmers of Dutch origin. The third biennial show



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

A 4-in-hand performance was a highlight at the Friesian Horse Show near Norwich.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Karin van Wely, a dairy farmer from just north of Woodstock, drives her Friesian-drawn Sjezen during the Friesian Horse Show musical presentation.

featured Friesian-related events including a coordinated Sjezen ride to music, team racing, 4 in-hand driving performances, an exhibition from the Ohio-based Friesian Heritage Drill Team, and the Ringsteken competition.

The sport originated as a military exercise, evolving into a social event over the years. In very basic terms, two-member teams, a male horse and a two-wheeled Sjezen carriage driver and female companion armed with a small wooden 'pistol' resembling a corn cob pipe with an extended bowl in shape, proceed at a steady trot down a course with four rings mounted on the hands of large wooden figures. Points are typically awarded for each ring the woman spears cleanly with her 'pistol', one point per ring in the first round, two per in the second, three in the third and four in the fourth, with a potential perfect score of 40.

"Just do it," van Wely explained of her tactical approach. "Drive your horse pretty straight and just do it."

Many competitors wear era-appropriate garb, the men resplendent in dark breeches, white shirts, a vest and top hat. The women typically wear long dresses trimmed with lace, and on their heads, oorijzers, a Dutch term translated literally and admittedly less romantically as 'ear metal', ornamental headgear made historically from thin gold or silver leaf. Oorijzers are covered with lace fludder

mutts - white caps, an ensemble which Stewart's experience indicates is prone to disarray.

She had planned to compete with her father, Jisk. But with Stewart momentarily out of commission pending wardrobe repairs from Dieuwke's mother Klaske, Karin stepped up. She wasn't going in cold, having competed with Jisk years previously, in place of Klaske, who may love horses, Ringsteken not so much.

"It's not her thing," Karin explained.

The FHS featured an abbreviated five-team, three-pass competition, illustrating the trickiness of keeping original or replica 18th-century carriages whose suspension is two leather straps, steady throughout. van Wely showed no signs of rust, shrugging off years of inactivity to earn 12 points and capture the title along with Jisk Schuurmans. Klass Steenbeek and Douwina Rietsma and Bouke Freenstra and his lady friend tied for second with 11 points; Andre and Lisanne Vanderkooi were in third with eight, and Nico Vanden Akker and his granddaughter got on the board with two.

"It's not about the winning, it's just the fun," said van Wely, pleased with the reception for an event which drew an estimated 400-500.

"We had so many positive reactions from all the people; they all loved it," she concluded. "You don't have to be a horse lover to enjoy the day."

A quarter century of Dragon Boating in Woodstock



The breast cancer survivor teams held a moving display for current and past members at the start of the competition.

The Woodstock Dragon Boat Festival celebrated its 25th anniversary at the Pittock Conservation Area on Saturday, Aug. 8.

Organized by the Rotary Club of Woodstock, the landmark event brought together paddlers, volunteers, and spectators for a full day of racing, fundraising, and community spirit. All scheduled races were completed before a fast moving storm system arrived later in the afternoon, allow-

ing teams to finish their heats and the final distance challenge without interruption.

Teams from across Oxford County and beyond competed in three 500 metre heats on Pittock Lake, with the top performers advancing to the demanding 2,000 metre final. Divisions included community, industrial, emergency services, financial services, breast cancer survivor teams, women's crews, university groups, and youth challenges. The 25th anniversary also

marked the continued partnership with Pharmasave as title sponsor, supporting the festival's role as a major Rotary fundraiser for local charities and community initiatives. A total of 33 registered teams took part in this year's festival, filling the north shore of Pittock Conservation Area with colour, energy, and the unmistakable rhythm of dragon boat drumming.

Spectators enjoyed free admission and gathered along the shoreline to cheer on

paddlers. Food trucks, local vendors, and Rotary volunteers helped create a lively festival atmosphere, making the event a highlight of Woodstock's summer calendar. The Rotary Club expressed gratitude to sponsors, volunteers, paddlers, and spectators whose support has sustained the festival for a quarter century.

Planning for the 2027 Woodstock Dragon Boat Festival will begin later this year.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Gathered were members of team Knot A Breast from Hamilton. It was formed in 1997 with a total of 74 members. 25 were present in Woodstock.



The Junior Dragon Boat Team from Woodstock prepared to head to their race.

Echo

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Woodstock Triathlon Club supports competitors of diverse ages, goals

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

Age, it is said, is only a number. There are those of us however, for which that number is an annual reminder the warranty on original parts including knees, hips and backs is running out.

But for 76-year-old triathlete Janet Thompson, that number's ascension provides both an opportunity to be a young member of an older age class, and also add to the gap where she can still be competitive against much younger racers.

Laughing, she recalled an old TV commercial in which the fitness levels of Canadians was compared unfavourably to Swedes.

"I like to think, I don't see any 70-year-old Swedes here - the Canadians are doing pretty good."

A varsity women's hockey player during her time at the University of Western Ontario, Thompson also ran track including hurdles and the 4-by-400-metre relay. Graduating to a teaching career in phys-ed, math and science, she was a long-time cross-country running and skiing and track coach at Woodstock CI and Ingersoll DCI.

Introduced to five and 10-kilometre runs by male teaching counterparts, she decided to try a triathlon toward the end of her teaching career.

"I'm a runner, own a bike and

thought I could swim," she explained, diving into her first sprint event, a 750-metre swim, 20K bike ride and 5K run at Lakeside.

"I wasn't that bad," she assessed, "I just wasn't that good."

Looking to up her game, Thompson joined the Woodstock Triathlon Club (WTC). Founded in 2015 by retired educator Dave Jenkin, the organization is home to over 35 members. The club provides mutually-supportive shared training opportunities including long ride Saturdays, lane swim Mondays, track Tuesdays and open water swim Wednesdays, along with access to professional coaching. Jenkin, WTC head coach and membership director is a convert from hockey who began his triathlon journey at 42, advancing to become a National Coaches Certification Program instructor for Triathlon Ontario. The WTC hosts an annual kids' duathlon in June and its membership provides volunteer support for area events. More information is available by visiting the website <https://woodstocktriathlonclub.ca/> or emailing woodstocktriathlonclub.ca.

"We have everyone from beginners doing a tri-a-tri (400 metre swim, 10K ride, 3K run) to world champions," said Jenkin. "And everything in between."

Triathlons can be a bit addictive he admitted, but in balance, are a very healthy pursuit.

"It's about a lifestyle, you choose to stay healthy, eat healthy and exercise."

Jenkin has competed in 'seven or eight' world championships, winning his age division sprint title in Montreal in 2022. He has done numerous half-ironmans, a 1,900 metre swim, 90K ride and 21.3K run and one full event - twice those distances, once being enough for him - in Lake Placid. Jenkin enjoys pushing himself, competition and the inherent challenge of setting and achieving a goal, elation mixed with pain at each finish line.

"And you feel great at what you accomplished - and you should."

Thompson competes in around 10 triathlons a year, linking many events to locations where she has friends. The majority are sprint distance (750, 20 and 5) although she does one Olympic-distance event annually: 1,500 metre swim, 40K bike ride and 10K run. Her training routine is swimming two or three times a week, cycling around 100K and running '30-ish' kilometres. In competition, she worries about the swim the most, going out hard to keep some separation.

"The bike is just go hard, keep going and don't have a flat."

Thompson's anchor leg is her strongest, as a runner, she considers that the 'fun' part, an attitude which generates some skepticism



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Seventy-six-year-old retired educator Janet Thompson competes in around 10 triathlons annually.

among compatriots in the transition zone.

"They look at me like I'm nuts," she smiled.

Thompson also competes regularly at the world championship level at locations including Rotterdam, Holland; Lauzon, Switzerland; Hamburg, Germany; Montreal, and Ponte Vedra, Spain in 2023. Her focus in Ponte Vedra was the super sprint event, a 300-metre swim, 5K ride and 1.5K run, in which she finished second. Feeling good about her performance there, Thompson entered the Olympic distance race, winning the 70-74-year-old division title at the age of 73.

Thompson is also consistently in the top five in more localized events, which should be noted, usually have an age division of

50-plus. In one race, she was able to take a 'loss' to a 51-year-old philosophically.

"She's 25 years younger than me - I don't feel a whole lot of shame losing to her."

WTC membership ranges in age as well as goals, club president Brandon Shearing who started at 14, now in his early 20s. But as both Jenkin, who will be competing in the 75-year-old division next year and Thompson are proving, it's a sport whose enjoyment can last well beyond official retirement age.

"It's a challenge to try and push yourself so you push the clock back a bit," said Jenkin. "You can do it right through to you're 76," he added, smiling at Thompson.

"Or 80," she responded, smiling in conclusion.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Dave Jenkin (left) and Janet Thompson prove age is not a limiting factor when it comes to triathlons. Jenkin founded the Woodstock Triathlon Club (<https://woodstocktriathlonclub.ca/>) in 2015 and along with Thompson, continues to compete at the world championship level.

GOHL releases 2026-27 hockey schedule

Navy Vets celebrating inaugural season and 60th anniversary

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

The Greater Ontario Hockey League has released the schedule for the 2026-27 regular season.

The 600-game schedule opens on Thursday, Sept. 10 when the Ayr Centennials host the Pelham Panthers.

The new Woodstock Navy Vets franchise will play their first-ever GOHL game on Friday, Sept. 11 when they visit the Listowel Cyclones. The team's home opener takes place the following night against the Stratford Warriors.

The 2026-27 season will mark a milestone in Woodstock hockey history as the Navy Vets celebrate our 60th season.

"Since 1966, generations of players have proudly worn the Navy Vets crest, supported by coaches, volunteers, sponsors, families and fans who have

helped make this organization what it is today," said a statement on the team's website.

To celebrate the milestone, the team has unveiled its 60th anniversary patch, which will be on display throughout the upcoming season as a tribute to six decades of Navy Vets hockey and everyone who has been part of that history.

"This is another incredible milestone for our organization and an opportunity to celebrate the generations of Vets who have made the organization what it is today," said Navy Vets President Devon Young. "To the players, coaches, volunteers, sponsors, families and fans who have been part of this organization over the past 60 years — thank you. This history belongs to all of you, and we're incredibly proud to carry it forward into the next chapter."

23 of the 24 teams will open their respective 50-game sea-

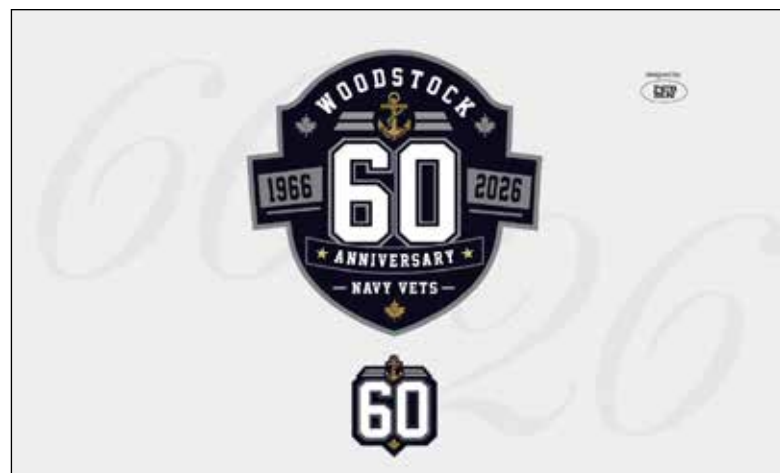
sons during the 21 games scheduled for the opening week of Sept. 10-13. The Sarnia Legionnaires open their season with a visit to LaSalle on Wednesday, Sept. 16.

The 2026 Sutherland Cup champion Cambridge Redhawks will begin defence of their title on Saturday, Sept. 12 when they host the Hamilton Steel.

GOHL play returns to Stoney Creek after a 13-year absence when the Stoney Creek Generals host the Fort Erie Meteors on Tuesday, Sept. 15.

With the addition of the Navy Vets, the league now has two 12-team conferences, allowing for a fully balanced schedule. Each team will face every opponent in its conference four times, accounting for 44 of its 50 regular-season games.

The remaining six games will be inter-conference matchups between Eastern and Western



(CONTRIBUTED IMAGE)

Conference teams. The first two of those 72 games are scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 20, when the Komoka Kings host the Caledonia Corvairs.

Friday is the most frequent day of the week with 151 games scheduled, followed by 150 on Saturdays, 141 on Sundays and 80 on Thursdays. The league continues its tradition of play-

ing on Family Day with 11 games scheduled for Monday, Feb. 15.

The season ends with three games on Sunday, March 7.

To view the entire 2026-27 regular season schedule, visit the league website at <https://www.gohl.ca/stats/schedule/all-teams/100/all-months?league=1>.

Art social at Deep Purple Lavender Farm



Despite the season winding down, the Deep Purple Lavender Farm plants still stood in vivid, eye catching colour.

The tranquil fields of Deep Purple Lavender Farm came alive with artistry and inspiration as guests gathered for Lavender Evening: A Creative Experience in the Lavender Fields, hosted by Dawna Thurtell (dawnathurtell@gmail.com) of The Art Social. The event, held on July 29, offered participants a chance to sip, paint, and connect amid the fragrant blooms of over 4,000 lavender plants. Nestled in a scenic valley surrounded by a natural spring and wooded ravine, the family run farm provided a serene backdrop for the evening's activities. Attendees arrived to find rows of English

and French lavender swaying gently in the summer breeze, their soft hues mirrored in watercolour palettes and sketchbooks spread across rustic tables. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming, inviting both seasoned artists and first time painters to explore their creativity. Throughout the two hour session, participants engaged in guided art exercises designed to capture the delicate beauty of the lavender fields. The Art Social's facilitators encouraged experimentation and self expression, reminding guests that no prior experience was needed—only a willingness to create. Laughter



The artists, seated at the rustic art tables, settled in to learning and painting the vibrant colours of the farm's scenery.

and conversation flowed easily as brushes met paper, and the scent of lavender infused every moment with calm. As twilight settled over the valley, the event concluded with a quiet reflection period, allowing guests to share their finished pieces and exchange stories about their creative process. Many remarked on the therapeutic nature of painting outdoors and the sense of community that emerged among strangers united by art and nature. Organizers expressed gratitude for the enthusiastic turnout and the support of residents who helped make the evening a success. The \$35 admis-

sion contributed to ongoing art programs and future creative gatherings planned by The Art Social, which continues to champion accessible, soulful experiences that connect people through creativity.

Deep Purple Lavender Farm is located in Embro at 355548 35th Line. It is a beautiful family-owned farm featuring over 4,000 lavender plants, a natural spring, and a wooded ravine.

The Lavender Evening proved to be more than just an art workshop—it was a celebration of mindfulness, beauty, and shared inspiration under the soft glow of a midsummer sky.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)

Indulge in a Delicious Comedy

SATURDAY, SUNDAY, MONDAY



KATARINA FIALLOS, GORDON S. MILLER, EMILIO VIEIRA, ROSE NAPOLI, GRAHAM ABBEY, SEANA MCKENNA, JOSUE LABOUCANE AND MICHELLE GIROUX. PHOTO: DARIANE SANCHE.

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Pittock hosts Birds-of-Prey

Pittock Conservation Area welcomed visitors on Saturday, Aug. 1, for a dynamic wildlife showcase as the Canadian Raptor Conservancy returned to deliver its popular Live Birds of Prey Presentation at the Rec Centre. Guests enjoyed an engaging educational experience featuring some of North America's most iconic raptors. The Conservancy's expert handlers introduced a diverse lineup of species, including the Harris Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Eastern Screech Owl, American Kestrel and Bald Eagle. Attendees learned about each bird's behaviour, ecological role, and conservation

needs, gaining a deeper appreciation for the importance of protecting natural habitats. "This was a fantastic opportunity for families, nature lovers, and photographers to see these incredible birds up close," said staff at Pittock Conservation Area. "The Canadian Raptor Conservancy always delivers an engaging and informative show, and we were thrilled to host them again." The presentation was included with regular park admission, and many visitors arrived early to enjoy Pittock's scenic trails, waterfront views, and recreational amenities before the show. (RON YUZARK PHOTOS)

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Movie night celebrated Woodstock's birthday

Woodstock's Southside Park turned into an open air theatre on the evening of July 30 as part of ongoing 125th-anniversary celebrations, with families, friends, and movie lovers gathering for the community's latest Movies in the Park feature: Disney's animated hit Zootopia. The warm July night set the tone early. By dusk, blankets and lawn chairs stretched across the grass, children chased fireflies between picnic baskets, and the smell of popcorn drifted from the concession area. As the sun dipped behind the trees,

the giant inflatable screen lit up, and the crowd settled in for the show. Hosted as part of Woodstock's ongoing summer events series, tonight's screening offered a relaxed, family friendly outing that drew residents from across the city. Occasional cheers rippled through the audience during favourite scenes, adding to the communal feel of the night. Volunteers and city staff were on hand throughout the event, helping with setup, guiding families to seating areas, and keeping the atmosphere welcoming and safe.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Despite the season winding down, the Deep Purple Lavender Farm plants still stood in vivid, eye catching colour.



A fun movie night came together thanks to the teamwork of Reta, Kristen and Blair.

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Cripps turning focus on education to Ingersoll Town Council

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Dave Cripps is well known as being a Thames Valley District School Board trustee, but he is hoping to land a spot as an Ingersoll councillor.

"I have proudly called Ingersoll home for nearly 30 years. Professionally, I work as a consulting director within the insurance industry where I lead teams responsible for delivering large-scale technology and business transformation initiatives."

He added he's learned the importance of listening, bringing people together, making informed decisions, and ensuring that both strategy and projects deliver real value for the people they serve.

"Outside of my career, I am a husband, father, local business owner, community volunteer, and someone who genuinely enjoys being involved in the life of our town. Through my family's event business, my work with the Downtown Ingersoll BIA,

Library Board, Community Futures and as one of Oxford County's public school board trustees, I've had the opportunity to work alongside local businesses, volunteers, community organizations, and families who care deeply about Ingersoll's future," he added.

Whether I'm supporting community events, spending time with family, or simply enjoying our parks and downtown, I value the sense of community that makes Ingersoll such a great place to live.

Cripps said he made the decision to run because he believes Ingersoll has tremendous potential and wants to help ensure we continue growing in a thoughtful, responsible way.

"My campaign isn't about politics, it's about our community. Over the coming months, I want to hear from as many residents as possible about what matters most to them. My role, if elected, would be to listen, ask good questions, evaluate information carefully,

and work collaboratively with fellow members of council, partners and staff to make decisions that serve the long-term interests of our community."

He said municipal government is responsible for delivering the services people rely on every day, from roads and infrastructure to recreation, planning, and public spaces.

"Those decisions deserve careful governance, transparency, and respect for every taxpayer dollar."

Like many growing communities, Ingersoll is balancing growth with affordability. Cripps explained residents expect reliable infrastructure, well-maintained roads, quality recreational facilities, strong community services, and responsible financial management.

"As our community continues to grow, we need to ensure those services grow with it while keeping taxes sustainable. Supporting local businesses is equally important. A vibrant downtown and a strong local economy create

jobs, attract investment, and contribute to the quality of life that makes people proud to call Ingersoll home."

Cripps added he believes council must continue to build trust through openness, transparency, collaboration respectful decision-making.

"Residents deserve to understand not only what decisions are being made, but why they're being made."

When it comes to why residents should vote for him, Cripps he brings a combination of professional leadership experience, community involvement, and a collaborative approach to problem-solving.

"Throughout my career I've developed strategic objectives, managed complex projects, balanced competing priorities, worked with diverse groups, and been accountable for delivering results. Those skills translate well to municipal governance."

More importantly, he added, he doesn't believe elected officials

should have all the answers before they begin.

"I believe they should have the willingness to listen, learn, ask thoughtful questions, and make informed decisions after hearing from the community. And do so with empathy! My commitment is to represent everyone with professionalism, integrity, and respect, regardless of whether we always agree. I want residents to know they have a potential councillor who is approachable, accessible, and genuinely interested in hearing their perspectives."

Cripps said he'll be knocking on doors, attending community events, and having conversations throughout Ingersoll.

"I hope residents will introduce themselves, share their ideas, and tell me what they believe our priorities should be. Building a stronger community starts with listening. I look forward to earning the opportunity to serve the residents of Ingersoll and to help build our town's next chapter together."

Wilson seeks re-election as Ingersoll deputy mayor

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Lindsay Wilson is looking to represent the people of the Town of Ingersoll for a second term.

"My husband Mike and I are parents to two hockey-loving girls. They enjoy being active in other sports too, so we spend a lot of time together in arenas, sports fields and parks. I can't say I have a ton of time for hobbies lately, but I love walking our sweet yellow lab, Honey, and enjoying my husband's cooking."

Wilson had worked in the economic development field when she first started on council, supporting small businesses and community recovery through the challenges of the pandemic.

"This gave me a deep appreciation and knowledge of our local community and what conditions are needed for people and businesses to thrive. Three years ago, I transitioned from that role into a Community Impact Manager at a local charity. I saw a disconnect between the effort being put into economic development and how people experienced the local economy in their everyday lives."

She added the shift from that

sector to a charity that aims to solve social issues has given her incredible insight into the interconnectedness of economic health and social health. She has also served on many boards, committees and working groups over the years and continues to do so.

Wilson explained she is seeking re-election as Ingersoll's deputy mayor because she believes there is still a need for the experience and perspective she brings to the role, particularly as several key projects already underway move from planning to implementation.

"Whether it's the MURC, Downtown Enhancement Plan, Health Strategy, etc., these plans will need to be realized with time and resources. I want to be at the table during the pivotal moment for our community when we may have some growing pains and certainly affordability challenges complicate everything. We are also in a unique position to build on the many opportunities and assets that not every community is lucky to have. At a very basic level, I love serving my community and being involved in politics in a way that can really change how we experience everyday life."

Wilson said affordability re-

mains a concern for residents.

"We may experience it on different scales, but few are immune. While the cost of groceries and gas is far beyond our control, I really believe we need to increase our focus on local economic development. Attracting industry is important, and the town has talented staff who I'm confident will continue those efforts successfully, as we must. In addition, I'd like to see more support provided to small and medium businesses. These are our neighbours, sports team sponsors, service club members and job creators. The revenue generated by small businesses tends to circulate more locally, so we all benefit from their success. As Canada has done as a country, we can as a small town look inward for opportunities to grow and prosper."

She said she often hears people want to feel more connected to their community, know their neighbours, see kids playing in the street and have things to do without having to leave town.

"That connection is not just a nice-to-have. It's crucial to our physical and mental health and feeling like we are safe and that we belong, especially as we age.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Lindsay Wilson.

We need to strengthen our local economy - that must be a priority. At the same time, we need to focus on ensuring that residents have the support systems in place to navigate turbulence today because the other factors take time to feel, and people deserve some relief sooner rather than later. We may not have the tools for them to feel immediate financial relief, but we can provide places, spaces and services that ensure they are safe and connected."

Wilson explained she would

love to see Ingersoll be a place where people can age well.

"In the past, we heard a lot about housing, and that is still a concern, but the services older adults need, like health care and transportation, really aren't where they need to be. We must play a role in ensuring the safety and well-being of older adults where we can, or advocate to other levels of government where the services are falling short."

She added she hopes the residents of Ingersoll will re-elect her because of the trust she has built over the past four years.

"I hope they believe how genuinely I want to serve my community and that they value the perspective and experience I bring to the table. I think the news makes it look like politics is all about the person who yells the loudest to get a soundbite on their social media or has a feed full of great photo ops. That's really not how the actual, meaningful work is done. Work gets done when we are prepared, when we have respect for the seat we are given and when we work tirelessly to get what the residents need, and that is what they can continue to expect from me."



WOODSTOCK MUNICIPAL ELECTION

CANDIDATE PROFILES

Bloxside running for a seat on Woodstock council

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Dave Bloxside and his wife have lived in Woodstock since 2008, where the couple are raising their two children.

"Both my wife and I are from Beachville, and we both attended WCI for High School. I grew up in my family's manufacturing business where I learned that hard work and perseverance matter. One of my hobbies is cars and all things automotive. My wife and I enjoy watching F1 races, and I am a bit of a manufacturing nerd, so I find engineering fascinating. My family loves a good story, whether in the movie theatre, a good series or movie at home or sometimes the theatre, as both my son and wife are involved with our community theatre."

Bloxside said he is running for city councillor because, despite preparing his children for the future, he looks around and sees a city in which he has deep-seated roots, but he isn't confident they will get the same opportunities here.

"I want to make sure we have the best community possible for the next generation. I could sit and complain, or I can help be part of the solution. I want to future-proof our community, help bring good, stable jobs to Woodstock, housing for all economic demographics, and all the amenities that are needed to live a healthy life in Woodstock. I want a place for my kids to be able to find a place to live, raise a family and grow old here too."

Bloxside believes one of the biggest issues the city faces is



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Dave Bloxside.

value.

"With the debt forecast climbing to \$150 million by 2030, we need the best value for our tax-

es. We need the best value for the homes we are living in. Be it geared to income homes up to multigenerational homes. The value of a good, stable job with good work at fair pay is important to our area; we are hardworking people who want to work and be able to live."

He added many people come to the area for what locals have always known: we are in an area rich with opportunity.

"However, I feel the value has dropped for what you get, and that's what we need to fix. Now that alone is very broad, but that should be part of the focus when we look at community safety, community well-being, and fiscal responsibility."

Bloxside explained the city needs people who can make decisions based on common sense

and integrity.

"I have treated every business we deal with, from the little guys with a small fleet to the Fortune 500 companies, as equals. All while also navigating ever-changing international free trade agreements, for a small company to stand in a sea of giants, my integrity is my north star and delivering the value they expect from my company and myself. That is what I bring to the voters of Woodstock and ask them for their vote to trust me with their voice at that table."

He added most Woodstock residents simply want to go to work, raise their families, watch their children enjoy their childhood, and have the peace of mind that the generation before them is doing okay, without the constant struggle and worry.

Chowan seeking council spot in EZT

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Don Chowan has spent his career building relationships. As a self-employed retail design professional, he understands the importance of listening to people, finding practical solutions, and delivering on commitments. Those are the same values he hopes to bring to East Zorra-Tavistock Council in Ward 3.

Don and his wife, Mary, have been married for 46 years. More than eight years ago, they chose to make Innerkip their home because they were drawn to the warmth and charm of small-town living. Since then, Don said he has become an active member of the community, believing that giving back is one of the best ways to strengthen the place you call home.

"If you've spent time around

Innerkip, there's a good chance you've seen me walking my two Goldendoodles, Bentley and Willow, through the village. Those daily walks have become more than just exercise—they've provided countless opportunities to stop, chat with neighbours, hear their ideas, and listen to what matters most to the people who call this community home."

Chowan currently serves as chairman of the board of directors for the Innerkip Seniors Apartment and is a board member of two woodturning clubs.

"Through his involvement with the Bravery Bead Bowl Program, I help provide handcrafted wooden bowls to children receiving treatment at Children's Hospital in London and SickKids Hospital in Toronto. The bowls are used to hold the beads children receive after each medical procedure, creating a lasting reminder



Don Chowan. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

of their courage throughout their healthcare journey."

He added when the couple aren't volunteering, they enjoy travelling and have explored many parts of the world.

"While those experiences have

been rewarding, they have also reinforced just how special it is to live in a close-knit community like Innerkip."

Chowan said his decision to run for council comes from a desire to serve his community and help shape its future.

"Our township is growing quickly, and with that growth comes both opportunities and challenges," he says. "I want to be a voice for everyone—long-time residents who want to preserve the character of our community, and new families who have chosen to make East Zorra-Tavistock their home."

If elected, Chowan wants to focus on responsible long-term planning that keeps pace with the community's growth.

"My priorities include improving traffic safety, working toward solutions for ongoing power outages, supporting investments in

parks, recreation, libraries, and community facilities, and exploring better transportation options for seniors and youth to connect with services in Woodstock."

Above all, he believes a councillor's most important responsibility is to listen.

"Council works best when residents know they're being heard," he says. "I want to be approachable, accessible, and committed to bringing the concerns and ideas of our residents to the council table."

Chowan believes his years of business experience, volunteer leadership, and commitment to the community have prepared him to serve Ward 3 with integrity and common sense.

"I care deeply about this community and the people who live here. I would be honoured to earn your trust and your support as your next Ward 3 Councillor."

Echo

Contribute to your local community newspaper! Send articles, sports or event recaps, and photos to info@theecho.ca



Seasonal allergies: understanding symptoms and natural ways to find relief



REBECCA KITCHEN

Echo Contributor

As the weather changes throughout the year, many Canadians find themselves dealing with seasonal allergies. Sneezing, itchy eyes, congestion, headaches, fatigue, and even poor sleep can all be signs that your body is reacting to allergens in the environment.

Seasonal allergies, also known as allergic rhinitis or "hay fever," occur when the immune system overreacts to substances such as pollen, mould spores, grasses, or weeds. While allergies are not usually dangerous, they can significantly impact quality of life, energy levels, sleep, work performance, and overall well-being.

Common allergy symptoms

Seasonal allergies can cause:

- Sneezing
- Runny or congested nose
- Itchy nose, throat, ears, or eyes
- Red, watery eyes
- Post-nasal drip
- Coughing

- Headaches or sinus pressure
- Fatigue and brain fog
- Poor sleep quality
- Worsening asthma symptoms in some individuals

Which allergies are most common during each season?

Spring (March – June)

Main allergens:

- Tree pollen
- Shrub pollen

Common allergy-producing trees include birch, oak, maple, elm, and poplar. Many people notice symptoms as soon as temperatures begin to rise and trees start releasing pollen.

Summer (May – August)

Main allergens:

- Grass pollen
- Weed pollen
- Mould spores

Freshly cut grass, outdoor activities, and increased humidity can make symptoms worse for sensitive individuals.

Fall (July – October)

Main allergens:

- Ragweed pollen
- Mould spores

Ragweed is one of the most common causes of seasonal allergies in Canada. A single ragweed plant can release millions of pollen grains, which can travel long distances in the wind.

Winter

While outdoor pollen levels are low, indoor allergens can become more problematic:

- Dust mites
- Pet dander
- Indoor mould
- Dry indoor air

People may notice allergy

symptoms persist throughout the winter due to increased time spent indoors.

Natural ways to help reduce allergy symptoms

While natural remedies cannot cure allergies, many people find they help reduce symptoms and improve comfort.

1. Rinse your sinuses

Using a saline nasal spray or saline rinse can help wash pollen, dust, and other irritants from the nasal passages.

2. Shower after being outdoors

Pollen sticks to hair, skin, and clothing. Showering and changing clothes after spending time outside can reduce ongoing exposure.

3. Keep windows closed

On high-pollen days, keep windows and doors closed and use air conditioning if possible. Pollen levels are often highest on dry, windy days.

4. Use a HEPA air filter

High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters can help remove airborne allergens from your home. Regular vacuuming with a HEPA-filter vacuum may also help.

5. Monitor indoor humidity

Keeping indoor humidity between 30 to 50 per cent can help reduce mould growth and dust mites. Repair leaks promptly and ensure bathrooms and basements are properly ventilated.

6. Stay hydrated

Drinking adequate water helps keep mucus thinner and may support sinus drainage and overall comfort.

7. Support your immune system

Eating a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, fibre, and omega-3 fats may help support healthy immune function and reduce inflammation.

8. Wear Sunglasses Outdoors

Sunglasses can help reduce pollen exposure to the eyes, decreasing irritation and watering.

9. Wash bedding frequently

Pollen, dust, and pet dander can accumulate on bedding. Washing sheets and pillowcases weekly in hot water may help.

10. Avoid outdoor yard work during peak pollen times

If possible, avoid mowing lawns, raking leaves, or gardening during high pollen periods. Consider wearing a mask if these activities cannot be avoided.

Wellness therapies that may help you feel better

Although wellness therapies do not treat the allergy itself, many people find they help manage stress and discomfort associated with allergy season.

Some supportive options include:

- Massage Therapy to reduce tension headaches and neck tightness
- Reflexology to promote relaxation and overall

well-being

- Fascial Stretch Therapy to improve mobility and reduce tension
 - Gentle exercise and walking to support circulation
 - Stress-management techniques such as meditation, yoga, and deep breathing
- Reducing stress may also help support healthy immune system function and improve sleep quality.

When should you see a healthcare provider?

Consider speaking with your healthcare provider if:

- Symptoms interfere with daily activities
- You have persistent sinus infections
- You experience wheezing or difficulty breathing
- Over-the-counter treatments are not helping
- You are unsure what is triggering your symptoms

An allergist can help identify specific triggers and discuss treatment options, including allergy testing and immunotherapy.

Final thoughts

Seasonal allergies are common across Canada and can affect people of all ages. Understanding your triggers, reducing exposure, and supporting your overall health can make a significant difference during allergy season. Small changes such as showering after outdoor activities, using air filtration, staying hydrated, and managing stress may help you enjoy the changing seasons with fewer symptoms and greater comfort.

Work with local media to distribute special discounts or offerings. This can help attract new customers and encourage repeat business. Want to learn more?

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ADVERTISE LOCAL

Big Cheese Days returns to Tillsonburg Aug. 22

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

Summer in the Tillsonburg area is about to get a little cheesier.

Tourism Oxford will hold a Big Cheese Day on Aug. 22, highlighting the seven Tillsonburg and area businesses included on the Oxford County Cheese Trail. Station Arts Centre, GoodPud, Coyle's Country Store, Red Dragon Dairy, New Galma Dairy, Makkink's Flower Farm and Bakery Cafe, and Dad's Ice Cream will either offer tasty treats and/or special activities available only on the upcoming Big Cheese Day, in addition to their summer programming and other services.

GoodPud will run mini dessert demonstrations and samples of their chilled chocolate dessert. Makkink's will serve a brie croissant sandwich. Dad's Ice Cream's big cheese butter tart sundae will include maple cream cookie ice cream topped with a maple drizzle, nuts, whipped cream, and a cube of local cheddar.

Coyle's customers can get a free third cheesecake fudge square when purchasing two squares of cheesecake fudge. Red Dragon Dairy will serve a Welsh rarebit grilled cheese made with sheep's milk and New Galma Dairy will have samples of the Dutch treat known as bitterball made with their own cheese. Station Arts Gallery will run a Bloom Bar featuring a pick-your-own

2D paper flowers activity where guests can pick, colour, and create their own bouquets.

"We've been playing around with the idea of offering a one weekend or one Saturday event for some time and we decided to try it out this year," said Meredith Maywood, tourism manager of Oxford County. "There's so much going on in Tillsonburg in the summer. We thought it was a great opportunity to see if there was an appetite for people to come out to another event later in the year in August."

Big Cheese Days, where Oxford County businesses and organizations on the cheese trail offer special products and promotions, is otherwise held every Saturday in May.

Maywood added that during the summer,

the seven businesses in Tillsonburg and area flourish.

"For instance, Dad's Ice Cream is very seasonal, flowers are in full bloom at Makkink's, the farmer's market is in full swing at the Station Arts Centre," she said.

The web page for Tillsonburg Cheese Days on the Oxford County Tourism website explained it should take about 30 minutes of driving to visit all places part of the Tillsonburg Hub.

"It keeps your drive time short while you check out the greatest number of attractions," Maywood said.

More information can be found online by visiting <https://www.tourismoxford.ca/big-cheese-days/august>.

Ingersoll Gets Ready for First Annual Hometown Hangout

KYRAH SMITH

Echo Correspondent

Ingersoll residents and local businesses are gearing up for the town's first annual Hometown Hangout, a brand-new community event created to bring neighbours, families and local businesses together for a day of celebration.

Taking place Aug. 15 from noon until 11 p.m., Hometown Hangout is free to attend and will celebrate the community, creativity and local spirit.

"The committee's vision was to build something positive for downtown Ingersoll," explains Shannon McKechnie, owner of Commonplace Books and a member of the event planning committee.

The committee is made up of several local business owners and community members, including Tyler Weale and Trish Near of Ingersoll Automotive, Sam Mansbridge

of Aftermath Tattoo Studios, Dave Cripps of All Celebrations, Scott Van Schnydel of Scotch & Ponder and Oxford Growth Co., Ingersoll Lions Club member Peggy Myall, Angela Neddo of the Ingersoll BIA and volunteer Jasmyne MacDonnell.

When asked what inspired the event, McKechnie says Hometown Hangout is intended to be "a celebration of community spirit and creativity that make Ingersoll a place we're proud to call home."

The event aims to support local businesses, tourism, live music, artists and community culture in a way that feels unique to Ingersoll.

More than 25 local businesses and organizations have sponsored the event, with their generous contributions helping make the day possible.

Several streets will be closed for the festivities, including Thames Street South and Water Street. Visitors can expect a

little something for everyone, with live bands, food trucks, a vendor market, the Lions Club Beer Tent, classic cars and a kids' zone.

Food Truck Alley, located along Water Street, will offer guests the chance to enjoy the "Taste of Ingersoll" food court, while live music will be featured across two different stages throughout the day.

Proceeds from Hometown Hangout will support the Alexandra Hospital Foundation and the Food Project.

Preparations for the event can already be spotted around town. A festive mural cre-

ated by artists from Aftermath Tattoo Studios, including Nanta Dumont, Izzy Skinner and Sam Mansbridge, can be found at the soon-to-be Auto Shop Stage, offering residents a preview of the creativity and community spirit visitors can expect to see throughout Hometown Hangout.

With local businesses, artists, organizations and residents coming together, Hometown Hangout promises to be a celebration of everything that makes Ingersoll feel like home.

For more event details, you can visit <https://hometownhangout.ca>.



(KYRAH SMITH PHOTO)

Festivities are underway as Ingersoll prepares for a brand new event. Pictured is a work in progress of a Hometown Hangout mural painted by artists Nanta Dumont, Izzy Skinner and Sam Mansbridge of Aftermath Tattoo Studios.

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Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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ROUTE TO THE PAST

HISTORY

Farmer to Judge to Gentleman

SCOTT GILLIES

Echo Contributor

Two hundred and eight years ago, in August 1808, a child was born in Preston England, who became a self-made man with great influence in Oxford County and Ontario for the next half century. That child; that man was Charles Eli Chadwick.

Charles was one of the children born to Reverend Eli Chadwick and his wife the former Margaret Weall. The good reverend immigrated to Canada in 1820 and attempted to homestead, but after only one year decided to return to his native Lancashire. This move, however, was to be short lived. The family returned to British North America and settled in the Long Point area of Norfolk District in 1827, setting up their new home in Vittoria. It was here that the Baptist minister established Chadwick Academy, one of the earliest schools in the district, and it was here that young Charles and his siblings were also educated.

Except for a two-year hiatus working for his uncle Ben in a dry goods store in Niagara, Charles farmed in Norfolk. In 1843, after taking a bride, (Jane McCartney) they moved to present-day South-West Oxford Township where they cleared and farmed some 500

acres and began to raise their family of nine children. It was here that he also became involved in local municipal affairs, serving as a school inspector (a role he must have been well equipped to perform due to his upbringing), and on township council – both as an elected official and later as township clerk.

In 1853 he was enticed to move into the town of Ingersoll, and it was here that his career and influence really took hold.

It was that year that the Great Western Railway was first constructed, with a station in Ingersoll. It was that year, that Charles was appointed Postmaster for the town; he would hold that position until 1861. He also became the manager of the local branch of the Niagara District Bank around the same time; one of the many privately funded banks then in existence. The building still stands today as the location of the wine and cheese shop on Thames Street, and from his office window he could keep an eye on the comings and goings at the post office directly across the street.

Ingersoll had been incorporated as a town in 1852 and in the short time following, there was much discussion about the need for a new town hall. Chadwick had an opinion about the design submitted by local contractor John

McNiven. He stated that it looked like a “slab sided Dutch barn” unbefitting the status of this new municipality. After considerable discussion, the design was modified to reflect a more Italianate style many of our readers will remember.

Having been a male and a landowner in Canada West he was obligated to be a volunteer member of the local militia. He rose through the ranks to become Lieutenant-Colonel of the Oxford Militia in 1860.

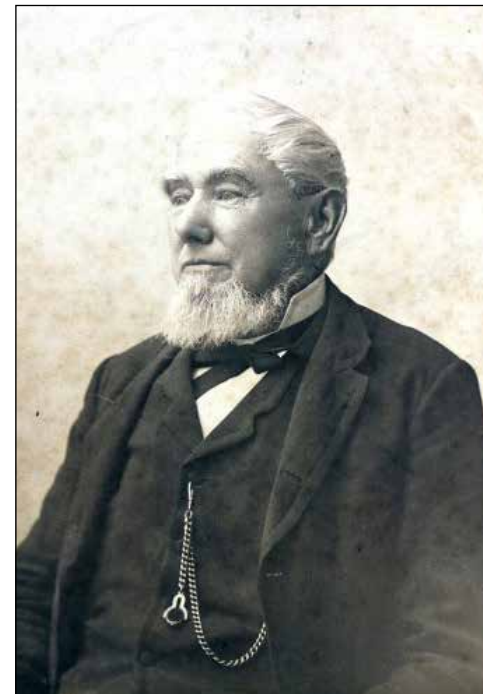
Having been active in the former Dereham Township, Charles Chadwick would also have been quite familiar with Hiram and Lydia Ranney, the super farmers of Salford. They had been producing vast quantities of milk and cheese on their farm since the 1840s. In 1864 all that was about to change with the construction of the first commercial cheese factory in Canada outside of Norwich. In 1865, Charles convinced other local businessmen and cheesemaker James Harris to form a partnership to produce cheese following the factory system. The result was the creation of the Mammoth Cheese in 1866. You can spot Charles standing near the big cheese in the one famous photograph. Next to him are consortium members Mayor Adam Oliver, former postmaster and businessman Daniel Phelan, and the Ranneys. The following year, Chadwick became secretary of the Canadian Dairymen's Association.

In later years, he branched out to other business interests, becoming president of The Beaver and Toronto Mutual Fire Insurance Company which had offices in the provincial capital.

Following the merger of the Niagara Bank with the Imperial Bank in 1877, Charles stepped down after 22 years as the local manager. He next devoted his time, talents and energies to town council. He became mayor of Ingersoll by acclamation in 1878 and again in 1879. During his term of office, he negotiated the construction of the Credit Valley Railway through town. This would later become Canadian Pacific Railway property.

Ever the student, Chadwick became chair of the local school board and served on that committee for some 20 years during which time he oversaw the construction of the Central Public School (which would later be replaced by Victory Memorial PS), and the Ingersoll Collegiate Institute.

Since moving to Ingersoll in the 1850s Charles Chadwick was also a



(OXFORD COUNTY LIBRARY IMAGE)

Charles Eli Chadwick.

frequent contributor to the local newspapers, writing a variety of articles for local consumption. A number of them were along imperialist-nationalist lines, which tied in with the local efforts at creating the national Imperial Federation League in the 1870s. He was also recognized as a good public speaker who was often called to the dais to address public events and community groups.

Having lost the bid for re-election in 1880 his supporters and his political enemies heartily endorsed his provincial appointment as police magistrate for Ingersoll, a role he maintained until shortly before his death. Looking towards eternity, he had also been, for a number of years, the secretary or chairman of the Ingersoll Rural Cemetery.

Of the nine Chadwick children, at least three died in infancy. Charles' namesake Charles Walter Chadwick arrived in Ingersoll in 1853, the same year as his parents. CW married Emelie Mason of Beachville and together they began married life with a daughter named Crete. She would go on to become an American stage actress. CW, his wife and daughter followed the growing development of Canada and headed north to the Lake of the Woods area and settled in Rat Portage! Here he too became a successful businessman and insurance broker, and like his father, served on municipal council and the local cemetery board.

Charles Eli Chadwick passed away on February 6, 1896, while living at the Thames Street North mansion of his daughter and son-in-law Aaron N. Christopher.

route2thepast@gmail.com





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Riddles

What has one eye but can't see?
A needle

What has an end but no beginning,
a home but no family, and a space
without a room?
A keyboard

What runs but never walks?
Water

What has a heart that doesn't beat?
An artichoke

What has ears but can't hear?
Corn

What building has the most stories?
The library

What can you catch but not throw?
A cold

What has a ring but no finger?
A telephoners?

What is easy to get into but hard to get
out of?
Trouble

Sudoku

by PeterS 2026

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Solution found on page 31

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LILO

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

Word Search

ON THE ROAD

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E	E	H	F	W	I	C	M	R	E	R	T	O	E	C	P	D	B	P	S
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- AMBULANCE
BOTTLENECK
BOULEVARD
COMMUTER
- CONGESTION
CONSTRUCTION
CROSSWALK
GRIDLOCK
- HIGHWAY
INTERSECTION
MOTORCYCLE
OVERPASS
- PEDESTRIAN
POLICE
ROUNDAABOUT
RUSH HOUR
- SPEEDING
STOP SIGN
TAILGATING
TRAFFIC LIGHT
- TURN
VEHICLES

COMING EVENTS

AUGUST 28 | DOORS OPEN AT 5 PM DINNER SERVED AT 6 PM
INGERSOLL 50+ ACTIVITY CENTRE ANNUAL FISH FRY

250 Ingersoll St. S, Ingersoll
\$35.00. Enjoy fresh battered pickerel, golden fries, coleslaw, dessert, tea, coffee, and cold drinks, all while supporting a great cause! Cash Bar. Drop into the centre, 250 Ingersoll St. S, Ingersoll or call 519 485 3869 to reserve your spot. Advance Registration only (Register by August 25)

AUGUST 22 | 8 AM - 12 PM
CHRISTMAS IN AUGUST YARD SALE
INGERSOLL 50+ ACTIVITY CENTRE
250 Ingersoll Street South

Discover all your Christmas treasures!
Shop for small furniture, pictures, puzzles, books, and more.
Support the centre by purchasing breakfast sandwiches, beverages, and fresh cookies made by Chef Rick.

AUGUST

AUGUST 18 | STARTS 1 PM
SACRED HEART PARISH EUCHRE

Henderson Hall, 133 John Street, Ingersoll
We invite everyone to join us for a Euchre afternoon. Refreshments provided.

AUGUST 23 | 10 AM
UKRAINIAN NATIONAL FLAG DAY CELEBRATION:
UNFOLDING OF THE LARGEST NATIONAL FLAG OF UKRAINE IN THE UKRAINIAN DIASPORA IN CANADA

Flag will be hung on the bridge over Highway 401, Woodstock, ON (Meet at Wendy's, 570 Norwich Ave, Woodstock)

You're invited! 30+ people are needed to unfold the flag with honour and respect on Ukrainian National Flag Day. This event is dedicated to the 35th anniversary of Ukraine's independence! This event is organized by “Gromada”, the Ukrainian Association of Oxford County.

AUGUST 29 | 10 AM - 2 PM
FIRST ANNUAL FAMILY FUN DAY

St. David's United Church, 190 Springbank Ave, Woodstock

St. David's United Church and The Optimist Club of Oxford County have partnered up to host our "First Annual Family Fun Day" to raise money for the Breakfast Programs at Eastdale Public School and Central Public School. Games, Dunk Tank, BBQ, Kids Corner, Silent Auction, Vendors and more! Vendors welcome, call 519-539-3161. Come join us for a fun day!

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 2 | 2 PM
STRATFORD MISSION DEPOT

Christ Church, 595815 Oxford 59, Huntingford
Learn about the Stratford Mission Depot with founder Jean Aitcheson. This Reaching Ontario Sharing Education (ROSE) program is co-hosted by the Braemar W.I. and the ACW of Christ Church. It is a wheelchair accessible building and all are welcome. Refreshments will be served. Questions contact lauracgreen77@gmail.com

SEPTEMBER 6 | MEMORIAL SERVICE AT 2:30 PM
INNERKIP CEMETERY DECORATION DAY & MEMORIAL SERVICE

We welcome you to decorate your family gravesite. (No glass containers please)

SEPTEMBER 12 | 3 PM
INGERSOLL DISTRICT NATURE CLUB
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND NATURE WALK WITH BBQ

Join us at the LAWSON NATURE RESERVE on McBeath Rd south of Ingersoll N0J 1W0 for a guided walk on the trail followed by a meeting and BBQ. Both members and nonmembers are welcome. Call Sheila 519 485 2645.

SEPTEMBER 12 | 9 AM - 4 PM

(Rain Date: Sunday, September 13)
OPEN HOUSE AND FAMILY FUN DAY

Tillsonburg Regional Airport, 244411 Airport Road, Tillsonburg

Join the Canadian Harvard Aircraft Association for its biggest event of the year, their Wings & Wheels Family Fun Day, September 13. (Rain date: Sept 14). World War II Harvard aircraft, along with hundreds of classic cars will be on display in one location. Bring your classic car or peruse those brought by others. Harvard flights will be available all day long. A great day's outing.

Activities:

- Opportunities for Harvard flight experiences (While pre-booking flights is not necessary, it is recommended. Contact crewflights@harvards.com to ensure your seat)
- Hangar tours and aircraft displays
- Fundraising garage sale & book sale
- Food trucks

All types of vehicles are welcome. If you are bringing a vehicle for display, registering your vehicle upon arrival on-site is highly recommended.

In case of inclement weather, check their Facebook page for RAIN DATE updates. Cost: Cash donation, Contact: info@harvards.com / 519-842-9922, For more info: www.harvards.com

SEPTEMBER 13 | 1:30 - 5 PM

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR COMMUNITIES PORCH MUSIC FEST

Starts at The Waterlot, downtown New Hamburg

Live music, local food and drinks, and fun for the family hosted at Puddicombe House; Imperial Market Patio; The Waterlot and the LYNC Station downtown New Hamburg. Ten local and award winning musicians will keep you singing and dancing. Come for the music stay for the food and take a picture with some classic police cars. Porch Music is in support of the Mill Block Community Development. Free limited tickets are available at Eventbrite: eventbrite.ca/e/lync-porch-music-fest-tickets-1996113255481?aff=oddtcreator

SEPTEMBER 19 | 2 - 4 PM

OPEN HOUSE AND FAMILY FUN DAY

St. John's Church, Eastwood, 685860 Oxford Rd 2 (Hwy2)

Visit our historic church and learn about our Celtic traditions.

Games and refreshments.

SEPTEMBER 19 & 20 | 10 AM - 4 PM

ALPACA FARM DAYS

Carol & Jim Harrison, 335358 Line 33, R.R.4, Embro

Meet alpacas! Learn! Play! Shop! Relax! New this year: alpaca pellets & beans for your gardens. Fee: Donation to Big Brothers, Big Sisters Oxford in lieu of admission charge.

This is an outdoor event, rain or shine. Find us on Facebook: Harrison's Alpacas. Our farm is in the heart of Oxford County's rural community.

SEPTEMBER 30 | 7 PM

OXFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ALTADORE

Chartwell Oxford Gardens, 423 Devonshire Ave, Woodstock (Main Entrance)

The only home fine enough to entertain the Prince of Wales in 1860. Come join Thomas Ryerson as he takes us through the rich history of the house on the “Round Hill” and its former occupants. Free Event, No Registration, Parking, Donations Welcome! www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.ca or email us at info@oxhs.ca

ONGOING CLASSES, CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

EVERY 3RD THURSDAY | 5 - 7 PM

ARTISTS OPEN MIC | POETRY, PROSE, MUSIC & MORE

Blueink Bookstore & Cafe, 491 Dundas Street, Woodstock, ON

www.blueinkbookstore.com. Go to “Events” Tab for information and to register

FOOD TRUCKS AT GRACE UNITED CHURCH TAVISTOCK

116 Woodstock St. S. Tavistock

AUGUST 17 | 4:30 - 7:30 PM

Siggi's, Pablas Street of India, SWAT
Donations to Tavistock Agricultural Society

AUGUST 24 | 4:30 - 7:30 PM

Berlin 95, Ish n Chips, El Milagro
Donations to Camp Bimini

AUGUST 31 | 4:30 - 7:30 PM

Born2Eat, Los Rolling Tacos, Fo'Cheezy
Donations to Tavistock Agricultural Society

EVERY OTHER FRIDAY | 1 - 4 PM

BE FALL-ISH AND COME TO THE INGERSOLL COUNTRY MUSIC JAMBOREE
Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St. S. Ingersoll

Join us, walk ins welcome. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Perform, listen, dance & enjoy! September 4 & 18, October 2, 16 & 30, November 6 & 20, and December 4.

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

CAREGIVER CONNECTION

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

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

EVERY FRIDAY | 1 PM

TILLSONBURG DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB

Tillsonbur Senior Centre, 45 Hardy Ave, Tillsonburg

Don't have a partner? Come anyway and we will match you up with someone. For more information, visit their Facebook page: TburgBridge.

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

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

OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY

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

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

LAST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH | 10 AM - 12 PM

MONTHLY VON BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC

Ingersoll Pharmasave, 19 King St. E., Ingersoll
Last Tuesday of every Month.

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

PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

21 Wellington St., Woodstock

(Virtual options available)

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

VON OXFORD SUPPORTIVE CARE PROGRAMS

Navigating any form of grief can feel overwhelming; however, with the right support, guidance, and education, individuals can discover a pathway to healing. VON Oxford Supportive Care Programs offer assistance for grief stemming from various circumstances, such as the death of someone, caregiving, serious illness diagnoses, and life transitions. Through education, connection, and compassion, our programs create a safe space for individuals to explore their emotions and learn effective coping mechanisms during the grieving process
Contact us today to learn more about VON Oxford Supportive Care Programs. Email: oxford.griefsupport@von.ca, Phone: 1-888-866-7518. All Programs are Free-of-charge.

COMING EVENTS

4TH WED. OF MONTH | 1 - 2:30 PM
GRIEF SUPPORT FOR MAID RELATED LOSS
Thamesford Library, 165 Dundas St., Thamesford

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

OXFORD COUNTY DIABETES EDUCATION PROGRAM
Are you looking for support with your Diabetes? Our Team of Registered Nurses, Registered Dietitians and a Social Worker is here to support YOUR goals. We can help with medication adjustments, lifestyle and diet changes, stress management, weight reduction strategies and more. Appointments are available at Alexandra Hospital Ingersoll and Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital and by phone. **SELF REFERRALS ARE WELCOME.** Please call 519-485-9611 to book an appointment. Let’s work together!

THE OPTIMIST CLUB OF OXFORD COUNTY
The Optimists bring out the best in Youth, Community, and Themselves. If anyone is interested in coming out to meet us and learn more about us please email brenda7621@outlook.com

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

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

BEACHVILLE LEGION EVENTS:
434852 Zorra Line, Beachville

WEDNESDAYS | 7-8 PM
GENTLE CHAIR YOGA

WEDNESDAYS | 7:30 PM
HUMP DAY DARTS, FREE POOL

THURSDAYS | 7 PM
EUCHRE

FRIDAYS | 8 PM
DARTS, FREE POOL

AUGUST 15, 22, 29 | 1 - 4 PM
THAMES VALLEY BLUEGRASS AND OLD TIME COUNTRY PICKERS
Open Mic (acoustic only). Come enjoy the music!

AUGUST 19 | 4:30 - 6 PM
OX ON THE RUN BOOKMOBILE

AUGUST 28 | 5:30 PM
PORK LOIN SUPPER
To order call 519-423-6363 or rcl495. suppers@gmail.com

AUGUST 29 | 7 - 11 PM
KARAOKE WITH KEN PYLE

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 55 EVENTS:
642 Dundas St, Woodstock, ON

COME PAINT WITH US!
Our Legion is Celebrating 100 years of Service to our Veterans community and the City of Woodstock. Help us honour them with a community mural project. Anyone interested in participating is welcome. Youth taking part in our community mural project, will be credited with community hours. We are also looking for donations to off-set the of cost to the necessary supplies and equipment required for this community project! A reminder for everyone were still looking for donations towards our Art mural and looking for Knitters or Crochets for our Knitted Poppy waterfall. For details contact: The Royal Canadian Legion Br. 55 Woodstock, Ontario: rclbranch55@rogers.com.

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS
DART LEAGUE

FRIDAYS
CANTEEN IS CLOSED
Unless we have a function which we are open August 14th, Office is open Friday mornings.

SATURDAYS | 7 - 11 PM
EVENING ENTERTAINMENT:

AUGUST 15 - MIKE THROPE
AUGUST 22ND - JEFF DAWDY
AUGUST 29TH - CHUCK MOYER

AUGUST 16 | 5 - 6 PM
FAMILY DINNER
Beef on a Bun, Coleslaw and Dessert pre-order & pay no later August 12th. Contact the Legion either by email rclbranch55@rogers.com or call 519-537-3112 to order.

SEPTEMBER 19 | 11 AM - 4 PM
OPEN HOUSE
Celebrating our 100th anniversary. We will be selling our tickets for our Gala event in December this day.

DECEMBER 18
100TH ANNIVERSARY GALA
Did you know it is the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Legion and Branch 55 Woodstock, Ontario? We provide support to cadets, Veterans and local youth among many other things. Support our 100th anniversary gala either with a prize donation or monetary donation. More details by emailing rclbranch55@rogers.com

CROSSWORD

1	2	3							4	5	6		
7								8					9
10				11					12				
13								14	15			16	
17					18			19				20	
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39	40					41					42		
43						44					45		
46						47					48		
49													
											50		
	51										52		

CLUES ACROSS

1. Microgram

4. Fixed charge

7. Each

8. Feeling of humiliation

10. Coat with sticky substance

12. Powerful “Severance” family

13. Japanese city

14. “Pulp Fiction” actress Thurman

16. Hat

17. Place where rockers work

19. Psyche

20. Snakelike fishes

21. Where people live

25. Body part

26. Old towel

27. One’s essential being

29. Japanese alcoholic beverage
30. Boxing’s GOAT

31. Wet muddy ground

32. Christian Laettner is one

39. A place to store lawn tools

41. Large tub for liquid

42. Old World lizard

43. One-time European member group

44. Healing student

45. Nuclear weapon

46. “Kiss of the Spider Woman” actres Sonia

48. Silk garment

49. About some Norse poems

50. Woman religious community member

51. Congressman (abbr.)

52. Two-year-old sheep

CLUES DOWN

1. An insane person

2. “Homeland” actress Danes

3. Buttock muscles

4. US federal agency

5. Birds of prey

6. Electronic communication

8. Ocean

9. Terminates

11. Low-pitched sound from a bell

14. Exclamation: yuck!

15. A place to attach a boat

18. Exclamation of surprise

19. Make a mistake

20. Border line

22. Have religious faith

23. Klutz
24. Large tree

27. House of __ rulers

28. Red deer

29. Small coin (French)

31. Popular sandwich

32. 10-year period

33. Not good

34. Government lawyer

35. Egypt’s intelligence agency

36. Without an occupant or incumbent

37. Stain with one’s hands

38. Crippling

39. One point east of southeast

40. Large, united groups

44. __ and cheese

47. Alcoholic beverage

Solution found on page 31

Embro comes alive with annual truck and tractor pull

The Embro Community Centre roared to life as the 19th annual Embro Truck and Tractor Pull took over 375634 37th Line from Friday, July 31 to Saturday, Aug. 1. The motorsport tradition once again drew families, competitors, and horsepower enthusiasts from across Oxford County and beyond for a full weekend of action, community pride, and charitable impact. The event delivered two distinct nights of competition. Farm Stock Friday opened the festivities with heavy farm-stock tractors rolling onto the twin tracks. Local and regional pullers competed in classes ranging from 9,000 lbs to 60,000 lbs, showcasing raw torque, traction, and technique. On Modified Saturday, the intensity climbed as gates opened for the Modified Truck and Tractor Pull. Custom builds, multi engine

machines, and heavily modified trucks delivered a full afternoon of dirt flying drama. The event was co sanctioned by OTTPA, SWOTPA, and GTTPA, bringing together top competitors from across Southwestern Ontario.

Beyond the track, families enjoyed a variety of activities including a children's pedal tractor pull, face painting, and a selection of local food trucks. A fully stocked beverage garden provided a relaxed viewing area for spectators throughout both days. True to tradition, the Embro Truck and Tractor Pull remained entirely volunteer run, with all proceeds donated directly back into the community. Funds supported area hospitals, school nutrition programs, and local improvement projects, continuing the event's long standing legacy of giving back.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Spectators found a quiet hilltop perch, giving them a great angle on the day's competitions.



The roar and rising smoke from the tractors added to the high energy atmosphere of the event.



Crowds watched as heavy stock tractors entered the field to start the Friday program.

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OBITUARY

RIA VAN DE LAAR



Maria (Ria) van de Laar, age 85, formerly of Embro, Ontario, passed away peacefully on July 11, 2026, surrounded by her loving family. Beloved mother, grandmother (Oma), great-grandmother (Omama), and friend, Ria was known for her kind heart, gentle spirit, and unwavering love for her family

and community. She cherished family gatherings, gardening, and caring for others. Her green thumb was legendary. Ria is survived by her children, Desiree Learned (James), Brigitte van de Laar, and Gary van de Laar; her grandchildren Alyssa (Adam), Iain (Andrea), Ria, and Filippo; and her great-grandchildren Logan, Lochlan, Lincoln, Evelyn, and Brighton, who will always remember her warmth and generosity. She was preceded in death by her husband, Gerardus (Gerry) van de Laar. A memorial service to celebrate Ria's life will be held at a later date. Family and friends are invited to share memories, stories, and expressions of love as the details of the memorial are finalized. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Alzheimer's Society, Heart and Stroke, or a charity of the donor's choice, honouring Ria's lifelong compassion for others. Ria's legacy of love, kindness, and dedication to family will continue to inspire all who had the privilege of knowing her.

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