

# 2025 Year in Review Edition

# Tillsonburg POST

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# Front page photos

**(Top left) Hospital Gala - May 15:** The evening's entertainment was a night of storytelling, hosted by Kelly Spencer, right, who is the daughter of former hospital CEO Jim Spencer, a town councillor and businesswoman. Various panels told their stories associated with the hospital, including the one of former employees pictured here. Photo: Jeff Helsdon.

**(Top right) Turtlefest - June 19:** Ribbon cutting for TurtleFest was on Friday at the Station Arts Centre. Left to right are: BIA board of management chair Allison Biggar, BIA executive director Mark Renaud, Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman and mascot George T. Turtle. Photo: Jeff Helsdon.

**(Bottom right) Bridge replacement - October 9:** Crews from Lancoa Con-

struction work on removing the top two layers of the masonry piers that supported Kinsmen Bridge. These piers will have a new top layer, new grouting and be part of the new bridge. Photo: Jeff Helsdon.

**(Bottom left) Founder's Fest - October 23:** Having a piper lead in the dignitaries speaking at Founder's Festival had a special meaning as a piper adorned the box for Tillson's Oats, which was a popular product that put the town on the map prior to Quaker Oatmeal buying out the company. Amongst those who spoke were MP Arpan Khanna, MPP Ernie Hardeman, Mayor Deb Gilvesy and Tamsen Tillson, great-great-great granddaughter of town found George Tillson. Photo: Jeff Helsdon.

## POSTED

## 2025 Stats

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May 1

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(TDMH's anniversary edition)

# Connection and community: we're here to help each other



**EVERYONE HAS A STORY TO TELL**

ROBIN KRAFFT

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

It's been such a rewarding experience to meet so many interesting residents over the past year. Everyone really does have a story to tell! People have been gracious and generous and our conversations have allowed me to share their life experiences. I hope the column has helped foster a sense of community and allowed us all to appreciate some of the unique individuals among us.

As we reflect on the past year, I wanted to talk to someone who might have some wise and thoughtful ideas to share with our readers, and I found Vincent Lizotte. Growing up steeped in French-Canadi-

an culture, Vincent has a down-to-earth approach to life. His father, an RCMP officer, took positions in Mississauga and Ottawa, moving the family from Montreal in Vincent's early years. Those later childhood friendships formed the foundation that Vincent has built his life's work upon.

"In the summer, we would sit on the porch after playing all day, a gaggle of us," Lizotte said. "We would talk, ask questions and give advice to each other, basically telling each other our stories. I became really interested in what makes people think and act the way they do, how they understand themselves and how we can connect more. We're all looking for belonging and significance and to know that we matter. The stories of how we do that shape our communities and what is possible."

His teen years, however, were fraught with difficulties and he felt stuck, unfulfilled, and depressed.

"I've had a long crooked path, but it's been valuable to have these challenges and struggles," Lizotte said.

Collectively, those formative experiences and his cultural upbringing reflect

in his practice in Tillsonburg as a registered psychotherapist.

"I try to be just a person, to understand what you've been experiencing and help you shift it," Lizotte said.

Vincent got his BA in Psychology at Western University, and has an MA in Counselling Psychology from Yorkville University. He augmented his traditional training in empathetic listening with additional training, allowing him to implement a variety of treatment approaches depending on what's best for individual clients.

"Humans can solve any problem," Lizotte said. "I teach people how the brain works and how it impacts their well-being and then provide them with tools. I help people get unstuck and then teach them how to do it on their own. I'm interested in these skills becoming mainstream."

As you reflect on the past year, Vincent encourages you to consider the difference between acceptance and approval, rather than making resolutions.

"It's useful to know what you don't want in your life," he said. "Things happened the way they happened. We can accept

that, but we don't necessarily have to approve. Set an intention for what you'd like to experience in the coming year. Notice things you like in your life and be interested in experiencing more of them."

Vincent also advocates for real human connection, and sharing our time and our stories with our families and our communities. If you are feeling the post-holiday blues, he suggests that you reach out to your supports and resources.

"Especially with our technology, there can be a false sense of connection," Lizotte said. "Unplug and go in for a hug."

He added that if those feelings continue, despite comfort and connection, consider seeking professional support. Sometimes a guide is necessary for navigating circumstances that are beyond our control, to learn how to regulate our emotions and move forward into self-discovery and growth.

After almost three years here, Vincent and his family have put down roots, appreciating the rural setting.

"You know that you're around your neighbours," he said. "It's a wonderful feeling. We're here to take care of each other."



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# EDITORIAL

## Bring on the New Year

An old saying associated with New Year's traditions says out with the old and in with the new. With that in mind, here are some wishes for the New Year, locally, provincially, nationally and internationally.

1. Solve the homelessness problem – This isn't an easy one, and most of the fixes need to come from provincial and national governments, but this is a real human problem, mostly based in mental health and addictions.
2. To have a year without natural disasters in Canada – We are fortunate in our part of Ontario, but others not so much. It would be great to get through a summer without a huge number of forest fires, or spring without large-scale flooding.
3. We need a national sports champion in Canada – We are long overdue to have a Canadian team win the Stanley Cup. Be it Edmonton, or even Montreal or the Leafs, it's time the world was reminded hockey is our game. Of course, at this time the hopes for a hockey championship look like a long shot, so Go Jays Go.
4. Canada needs to be in the top three medal winners at the Winter Olympics – Our nation needs to excel in this year's games and build some excitement to solve the doldrums of

winter.

5. We need a trade deal with the U.S. – Local impacts from the trade dispute haven't been massive. We need a deal before that changes. Enough said, as this is a huge topic.
6. Moving to the left – Anyone who has tried to turn left onto most major arteries in Tillsonburg can see we need a solution. Maybe advanced greens at key stoplights during peak traffic times only?
7. Help on the entertainment front – Outside of the excellent bands in local bars, Tillsonburg is lacking in this category. No movie theatre, no bowling alley, no micro-brewery. Many smaller town can check at least one of these boxes.
8. Peace on earth – There are always conflicts somewhere on the planet, but the last year has been a tough one as far as lives lost in larger-scale conflicts. Hopefully, these will be resolved.
9. Good will – Ever since Covid, there has been a heightened sense of nastiness, be it in drivers or how people treat each other. This definitely doesn't apply to all, but does to some. It's hard to measure, but does appear to be improving, so let's hope that trend continues.



Lake Lisgar.

(SUE DEARING PHOTO)

## PHOTOGRAPHERS WANTED

*Do you have a great photo you think would look good on the editorial page?*

The Tillsonburg Post is looking for images to display in this space from community members who would like to share their art work. All images must be taken in Tillsonburg, or the immediate area, and should not be of people. Images should be high resolution jpegs. Please send only one image per e-mail, and send no more than three images. Images should be sent to [jeff@granthaven.com](mailto:jeff@granthaven.com)

## Prognosticating and predicting the year to come

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

You will notice today's issue of the Post is a year-in-review, highlighting the many great things that occurred in Tillsonburg over the past year. This is a tradition within Grant Haven Media that the Post is joining now it has been in existence a full year.

As part of that tradition, our publisher Stewart Grant has been making predictions for the coming year in his home paper in St. Mary's. I decided to join in on the fun. In my predictions, readers will notice there is little reference to American politics throughout as I have the firm belief that we as Canadians don't pay enough attention to what our own politicians do.

So here it goes.

The Kinsmen Bridge, a vital Tillsonburg connecting link will re-open in 2026, but the question is when. After being delayed until mid-March when the restoration of the Participark trail will be complete, I believe the new Kinsmen bridge will open in mid-April as weather conditions will cause delays.

Are things pointing to council finally making a decision on the town hall? Recent in-camera discussions are pointing that way. A discussion behind closed doors at the last meeting of 2025 on the customer service centre design-build

renovation ended with a motion to "direct staff to report back in open session at a future meeting with a comprehensive report including detailed costing and the proposed design for a Customer Service Centre Design-Build renovation." Remember council previously passed a motion it needed to have half the money on hand before construction could start. With the lowest estimate on any iterations of a new build coming in at about \$7 million, if the proposed cost of the renovation was \$5 million, council has half that much in its new town hall reserve fund. Added to this is the fact much of the staff at one of two temporary locations on Brock Street is moving back to the customer service centre. I am predicting if renovations are the way council opts, it will start in 2026.

Another item on the closed session agenda of the last meeting, "Transfer of Tillsonburg Hydro Employees" along with the sale of the fleet vehicles from the town to THI, make me believe the sale to ERTS will go ahead. Really, we don't have much choice on this one with a multi-million-dollar upgrade needed to the transformer station.

Tillsonburg Development Commissioner Cephas Panschow has been doing a great job of selling lots in the VanNorman Innovation Park. I'm betting he will land another manufacturer in 2026. Likewise, there has been a lot of movement

in the retail scene in 2025, and I believe another big announcement on the retail front is coming, outside of the previously-announced Winners.

This year (2026) will be a municipal election year. I'm not going to predict who will win when it's unknown who is running, but I will throw out the idea that at least three current members of council won't be returning, and the \$72,000-and-counting spent on integrity commissioner investigations after three councillors filed complaints will be a factor.

Moving on from the local scene, the provincial government will continue to push its agenda for development, but there will start to be more pushback. The ongoing investigation into Greenbelt funds by the RCMP, and more-recent OPP investigation into the Skills Development Fund could spell more controversy for the Ford government. At least one politician will pay the price on these.

Federally, leader Pierre Poilievre will survive a review by his party later this month as long as no more MPs cross the floor between now and then. If they do, the party could be looking for a new leader.

The federal Liberals will finally make a decision to stick with the F-35 jets amidst heightened risk of conflict in the world. However, since the Snowbirds Tutor jets are nearly 60 years old and the Saab Grip-

en is a more maneuverable plane, the federal government will purchase Gripens for the Snowbirds that have the capability to be armed if needed. While on the fighter front, has anyone ever asked how much it cost Canadian taxpayers when former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau cancelled the initial order for F-35s?

Prime Minister Mark Carney won't be able to dodge the pressure anymore and will finally have to disclose his assets. With the person who replaced him at Brookfield being a multi-billionaire, is there any reason to believe Carney isn't? Is there a reason he doesn't want this information public, which is required of every federal politician? With the facts released, he will be our first billionaire prime minister.

And if these predictions have left you thinking, I will part with "Who says Canadian politics is boring" and move on to sports predictions.

The Leafs will get their act together and close the six-point gap – when this was written – and take the Atlantic Division. They won't advance in the playoffs past the second round, though.

The Raptors will make the playoffs, but will be beaten in the second round.

The Blue Jays will be the ray of hope for Toronto sports team fans. The Jays will get off to a rough start, but will again gel late in the season. They will lose in the AL finals this time though.



# New Year's resolutions and the spirit of the season



## THE STAGE IS THE WORLD

LAUREL A. BEECHEY

*Tillsonburg Post Columnist*

I received a gift from a friend many Christmases ago, which had an unexpected treasure inside. It was a book called 'A Celebration of Christmas' which had a lot of little stories about the Christmas it's meaning and reminisces.

A beautiful book with lovely paintings and a narrative by Henry Van Dyke jumped out at me! It is called 'Keeping Christmas', in which the author is discussing that you need to do more than observe Christmas, you need to keep it. What struck me most about this little missive is it was written a hundred years ago, was that even people back then wanted the 'spirit of Christmas'

to last all year round.

As I read, I realized that this was not really about Christmas but about life as a whole. People always want to know the meaning or secret of life and here it was written under the guise of the 'spirit of Christmas.'

I would like to share a couple of paragraphs of Henry's Keeping Christmas, for you to ponder over and perhaps pass along.

"Are you willing to: Forget what you have done for other people, and to remember what other people have done for you? To ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world? To put your rights in the background, and your duties in the middle distance, and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground? To see that your fellow-men are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy? To own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give life? To close your book of complaints against the management of the universe, and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness, are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas!"

"Are you willing to: Stoop down and consider the needs and desires of little children? To remember the weakness and loneliness of people who are growing old? To stop asking how much your friends love you, and ask yourself whether you love them enough? To bear in mind the things that other people have to bear on their hearts? To try to understand what those who live in the same house with you really want, without

waiting for them to tell you? [Here is an old analogy you can teach your family: To trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke, and to carry it in front so that your shadow will fall behind you? To make a grave for your ugly thoughts, and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open. Are you willing to do these things for even a day?" Van Dyke wrote.

Does some of sound familiar? Now we know now where JFK got his 'it is not what America can do for you, but what you can do for America' statement.

People do apply many of these principles at Christmas time but as the season ends the spirit of giving fades away and 'me first' returns. Why is that? Everyone enjoys Christmas's love and harmony, but when we make our New Year's resolutions we don't follow Charles Dickens example with Scrooge, 'Keep Christmas all year long'.

Was it so hard to put other people before you in December? It is easier the rest of the year because you don't have to buy presents to catch get the spirit, you can give a helping hand or word of kindness.

The hardest part is taking ourselves off our pedestals and admitting we are not the most important persons in the universe. Start at home. Ask yourself today what you can do to help just one other person under your own roof. It may be as simple as taking the time to really listen to one of your children, or give a 30-second hug to your spouse. You'll get the same glow you felt at Christmas day, but it will last a lot longer.

As Henry asked: "Are you willing to do these things for even a day?" Read those paragraphs again, for they are the making of a New Year's resolutions.

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## Editor's Note: Talented writers wanted

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

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

Submissions should be 600 to 800 words in length.

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

E-mail editor Jeff Helsdon at [jeff@granthaven.com](mailto:jeff@granthaven.com) with any questions.

**Tillsonburg POST**

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8. Newspapers should be locally-owned and operated

# A good year for retail in Tillsonburg

JEFF HELSDON  
*Editor*

The year 2025 will go down as the year where the retail scene in Tillsonburg took the largest leaps forward in decades. The opening of the Northgate Plaza, which brought 50,000 square-feet of new retail space, was key. This was the first large addition of retail space in town since the opening of the Sobeys plaza across the street more than 20 years ago. Roulston's Pharmacy was the first to open in the plaza last winter. Chuck's Roadhouse and Osmow's Sharwarma followed. No Frills was the last to open in the plaza. While there are still empty spaces in the plaza, Rob Koppert, owner of Royal LePage R.E. Wood Realty and whose father-in-law owns it, said they are all rented. "Dollarama will be open in the next couple of months," he said, adding work is underway now and it would have been open earlier except for issues with the county and zoning. He couldn't reveal who the other tenants taking the remaining space were, but did share that one will be a type of clothing store that will take two units. He was not in a position to reveal anything about the tenants of the last two spaces. "It's going to be really great for Tillsonburg, but I can't release it," he said. Koppert expected all the spaces would be filled by next summer. "We had thought it would fill quicker but I think a lot of retailers got scared once the trade problems started," he said. Speaking more broadly to retail space

in town, he said the former Peavey Mart store is the only large retail space available in town. To put three or four units in that location, he said a complete retrofit would be needed. For Tillsonburg's retail to expand beyond that, it would require more land zoned for retail. Koppert pointed to the land north of Sobeys's, but said development is currently in a holding pattern. "We are missing several retailers still for a town this size," he said, adding Simcoe has a smaller population, but more retail selection. Mark Renaud, executive director of the Downtown Tillsonburg BIA, said main street vacancy is below two per cent. He also pointed to the retail level of the Tillsonburg Town Centre being completely full. A recently-completed report Renaud wrote pointed to an analysis that ranked Tillsonburg's downtown fourth nationwide in communities with populations of 15,000 to 25,000. Pedestrian counts in the core were more than two million in 2024, and Renaud expected a similar level for 2025. "Downtown Tillsonburg is continuing to defy national retail trends, posting some of the strongest performance metrics of any small urban centre in Canada and reinforcing its reputation as a highly resilient and vibrant main street economy," he wrote in the report. Outside of town limits, E & E McLaughlin Ltd, which owns the Norfolk Mall, announced a Winners would be opening there by next summer. There are also plans to build another retail pad behind the Petro Canada.



Northgate Plaza is the first new retail space in Tillsonburg in more than 20 years.

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)



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# MUSIC CORNER

## A year-end review of my top 12 Oxford County shows



**BEN ADDRESS**

*Tillsonburg Post Columnist*

If there is one thing Oxford County proved this year, it is that you do not need a highway sign pointing to Toronto to find good live music. You just need a room, a stage and people willing to show up. From packed basements to festival weekends that spilled across town, 2025 was a reminder that live music in this country is not just surviving but that it is thriving.

Here are my top 12 Oxford County events of the year. Not ranked. Just remembered. There were so many that I ended up not including and in all honesty if I had the time and room, I would have included every single show.

**January 18 - One Way Streets w/ Dumb Crush at Paddy's Underground**

The year started loud and honest. One Way Streets brought that familiar, knuckles-up Southern Ontario premiere songwriting while Dumb Crush reminded everyone that punk does not need to be polished to hit hard. A winter show that felt like a line in the sand letting us know that we are not slowing down. Both these bands will be the next big thing

**February 22 - Filthy Kitty at The Copper Mug**

Pure chaos in the best way. Filthy Kitty turned The Copper Mug into a litterbox of riffs, laughter and raised glasses.

**March 22 - Forgotten Rebels w/ Greg Rekus & Jesse Webb**

A history lesson from veterans of the punk scene in Canada. The Forgotten Rebels proved once again that punk rock ages better when it refuses to behave. We had the acoustic contrast of Greg Rekus and Jesse Webb rounding out a bill that felt equal parts legacy and the current living pulse of what's next for Canada's punk scene.

**April 4 - SDN Comedy at The Copper Mug**

Not everything that rocks has a guitar. SDN Comedy packed the room with laughs, and reminded us that live entertainment works best when it is shared shoulder to shoulder. Be on the lookout for SDN member Dalton Puhr's Comedy Christmas this holiday season. You will not be let down.

**May 3 - Two, Sean McCurley & Ethan Wall**

A quieter night but no less powerful. Songs that leaned in instead of shouting. The kind of show where you leave humming something new and thinking about it the next day. Ethan Wall is Tillsonburg's best kept secret and everyone is looking forward to his musical growth in 2026. The husband-and-wife duo Two features Tara & Brian Byrne previewing some new songs. May I suggest searching up the songs 'Love You More' and 'Indigo' by the Duo Two wherever you stream music if you are looking for some new music to add to your playlists.

**June 14 - Texas King at Turtlefest**

A festival highlight. Texas King brought big energy to a community celebration proving that original rock still

belongs on outdoor stages with kids dancing up front and beers raised in the back.

**July 11 to 13 - Buddies Fest at The Mill, Paddy's Underground & The Copper Mug**

The weekend that defined the year. Three venues, countless bands and a town fully leaning into what it does best. Buddies Fest was not just a music festival but it was a statement about cooperation, friendship and the strength of our local scene. We had music fans flying in from across the globe, and booked every hotel room in Tillsonburg and had out-of-towners wandering the streets of Tillsonburg all weekend. Every band that played was a festival highlight, but some personal favourites of mine that weekend included Dillinger Four, The McBains, Kicksie, Oneline-drawing and Seas.

**August 16 - Ian BW, 16 Scandals & The Mendozaz at The Copper Mug**

A stacked bill that delivered start to finish. Punk, attitude and community collided in a way that felt effortless. One of those shows where every band belonged exactly where they were. Ian BW

has grown so much since they first started playing in town and it is always impressive to see how well shaped their new songs are when they debut them here in Tillsonburg.

**September 4 - Jeremy Porter & Trevor Kostyria**

Songs built to last. Porter's storytelling paired perfectly with Kostyria's sincerity was the perfect making for a night that felt intimate even as the room filled up. I have known Trevor for his work in the punk band The McBains but that man knows how to keep the whole room attentive on his own. Brilliant performer and songwriter.

**October 18 - The Mahones & The McBains at Paddy's Underground**

Celtic punk chaos in a packed basement. Sweat on the walls, fists in the air and choruses shouted by people who clearly needed that release. The McBains brought their well-rounded sound to the room while the headliners played a rare, more intimate, stripped-down set with three decades of their greatest hits.

**November 21 - JJ Wilde & Smash Mouth**

**at the CPKC Holiday Train (Woodstock)**

A reminder that free music can still feel special. JJ Wilde owned the stage and Smash Mouth delivered the nostalgia. It was a great family event and I'm glad I got to bring all my kids to enjoy the sights and sound. The Holiday Train once again proved its magic brings entire communities together while raising money and food for the Salvation Army.

**December 12 - Bobnoxious at Paddy's Underground**

A perfect closer. Bobnoxious brought humor, heart and songs that felt tailor-made for a year-end sing-along. A reminder that longevity in this scene comes from showing up year after year and still meaning it.

Looking back, what stands out is not just the bands. It was the bartenders, the door staff, the sound techs, the promoters and the fans who kept choosing live music on cold nights and busy weekends. Oxford County does not wait for culture to arrive but it builds it one show at a time. If this year proved anything, it is that being in the room still matters and I cannot wait to see where 2026 takes us next.

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## MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

A course in meditation will be offered in Tillsonburg commencing December 16th

The first class will be in the morning of

**December 16th @ 09:30 AM**

**Subsequent meetings will be  
Tuesday evenings at 7:30 PM**

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# Multiple big anniversaries in town in 2025

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

200, 125, 100, 70, 40, 35.

Mathematicians and Sudoku fans may be puzzling over the above string of numbers and their connection. Those not able to solve it can take some solace in the connection is these numbers were some of the big anniversaries celebrated in town over the past year.

**200** – This is the big one, as Tillsonburg pay heed to the 200th anniversary of the founding of the town by founder George Tillson.

After traversing rough roads to Courtland, Tillson cut a path through the forest to allow an oxen and wagon to pass, bringing what he needed to build a cabin and start a forge on the banks of the Big Otter Creek. The town grew and the name was changed to Tillsonburg.

A variety of events were held through the year, culminating in the Founder's Fest held on Oct. 18.

"The bicentennial offered a moment to acknowledge how Tillsonburg has grown and changed, while also highlighting how we have still stayed the same," said Kate Bakos, cultural heritage manager/curator. "Today, Tillsonburg is a big small-town, and it is exciting to imagine what Tillsonburg would be like after another 200 years."

"The past year in Tillsonburg was one of tremendous celebration, highlighted most notably by the 200th Anniversary of the Town's founding," said Mayor Deb Gilvesy, giving credit to the volunteers and staff who made the event possible. "Their efforts ensured the celebration was truly worthy of such a historic moment. As we pause to reflect, we do so with the hope that our work today will help build a legacy worthy of the next 200 years."

**125** – St. John's Anglican Church anniversary - Dignitaries, an authentic Ukrainian lunch and special music were highlights as St. John's Anglican Church celebrated its 125th anniversary on Sunday, Sept. 14. The current church, which was built in 1900, followed two previous Anglican churches, with the first built in 1868.

**100**- Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital and TDMH Volunteer Association – The cornerstone of the current hospital was laid in 1925. The original structure, which is in the same location, cost \$60,000 to construct. The death of John Smith, former mayor of Tillsonburg, who, after providing for his widow, left between \$10,000 - \$19,000 to the town, with direction that it is to be used to form a hospital trust in the Town of



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

**There was a sense of appropriateness that Tillsonburg Town Crier Brenda Boszo led off the official ceremony for the 200th anniversary of the founding of Dereham Forge. While it would be almost a certainty there wouldn't be a town crier in the earliest days of the village with a population of only a handful of people, a person could have assumed that role as the town grew through the 1800s.**

Tillsonburg provided the catalyst to get the dream of a hospital in town started.

The original hospital has been added to, and renovated, many times since then.

The Century of Caring Gala held on May 10, 2025 was an opportunity for everyone to come together to celebrate the past, present and future of Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital (TDMH) as well as the Volunteer Association.

**70**- Community Living Tillsonburg - In 1955, the efforts of families paid off with the formation of the Tillsonburg and District Association for Retarded Children. The first privately-funded classroom was on Washington Grand with four students and one teacher. With the Rotary Club heading it up, Rotary Westmount School was built on Concession Street in 1959.

Many changes have taken place both for residences for adults and education for challenged children, with the latest in the 1990s to bring challenged individ-

uals into the main stream.

Today, Community Living Tillsonburg supports more than 300 people in the community. The organization has about 130 staff and also operates the Tillsonburg Children's Centre, located at the Livingston Centre.

**40**- Canadian Harvard Aircraft Association - From humble beginnings on a grass airstrip outside Woodstock to more than 400 members and its own hangars in Tillsonburg, the Canadian Harvard Aircraft Association has come a long way.

The group was formed on Feb. 12, 1985. The association's mission is to acquire, preserve, restore, maintain, display, and demonstrate the Harvard and other aircraft used by the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

The group added to its fleet over the years and today has nine planes in its fleet.

**35**- Tillsonburg Seniors' Centre – Pri-

or to the opening of the Tillsonburg Seniors' Centre in 1990, planning for such a facility had been ongoing for several years. The new facility was built along with an addition to the community centre that included the squash courts.

The seniors' centre is 12,000 square-feet on the main level, and has a 5,000 square-foot lower level. There are pool tables in the basement, including one that was from the Tillson family's that was in Seven Gables. The basement also has Ontario's only permanent indoor carpet bowling green.

## The future

With so many anniversaries in the past year, 2026 won't see as many celebrations, but will see its many festivals continue.

"As we look toward the year ahead, we do so with gratitude for our past, pride in our present, and optimism for the future we are building together," Gilvesy said.



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# 2025 IN SPORTS



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## January

Summer Homick competed in ice dance with her partner Nicholas Buelow of Barrie in the 2025 Canadian National Skating Championships in Laval, Quebec in mid-January. She will be on the ice on Jan. 15 for the first day of the competition, and then back on the ice the next day for the second portion of it.

Derek Partlo's working career and lifelong

passion are continuing to intersect behind the bench of the 18-6 Provincial Junior Hockey League (PJHL) Norwich Merchants.

The Tillsonburg Thunder were starting their playoff push to repeat as OSHL champions.

Two Tillsonburg outdoor enthusiasts were featured in an episode of Angler and Hunter TV. Nikki Van Brenk and Abby Helsdon were part of the show that involved the Ruffed Grouse Society of Canada.

Ice fishing was picking up on Long Point's Inner Bay.

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## February

The U12A South Oxford Storm won gold at the International Silver Stick.

Club Oxford play was heating up as the playoffs approached.

Ward's Automotive U-11 won the Silver Stick A Title in Sarnia.

The Gemini girls hockey team was in a re-building year.

Local curler Jayden King played at the Tankard, but did not qualify. King reached the semi-finals in the Ontario Mixed Doubles Curling Championship, but lost in the semi-final to the eventual winner. Owen Henry skipped the Brock University team to a bronze medal.

Ostrander native Master Corporal Jeremy Jannssens competed in the Invictus Games in British Columbia, competing in swimming and volleyball.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Tillsonburg skater Summer Homick will be competing with her partner Nicholas Buelow next week in the ice dance division of the Canadian National Skating Championships.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Tillsonburg Twisters U12A team Hughes took home silver in the Burlington Blast tournament, losing in the finals against Ottawa West 9-3. Left to right are: (back row) Melissa H, Matt F, Burkley P, Kadence J, Kyla P, Ava P, Dustin D, Steph H. (front row) Ellia G, Brynn W, Morgan S, Harper F, Aaliyah D, Audrey H, and Mackinley H.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Tillsonburg Ringette U12B Balazs attended the Waterloo Winter Fest Tournament taking home silver after losing in the finals against St Catherine's Comets 8-6. Left to right are: (back row) Sierra B, Chloe V, Taylor M, Mackenna B, Keira D, (middle row) Kiara G, Emma V, Bryn F, Madison T and front goalie Cheyenne D.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Tillsonburg Twisters U12A team Hughes took home silver in the Burlington Blast tournament, losing in the finals against Ottawa West 9-3. Left to right are: (back row) Melissa H, Matt F, Burkley P, Kadence J, Kyla P, Ava P, Dustin D, Steph H. (front row) Ellia G, Brynn W, Morgan S, Harper F, Aaliyah D, Audrey H, and Mackinley H.



# 2025 IN SPORTS



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Ponting Financial Group U12 A South Oxford Storm won gold at the recent International Silver Stick held in Newmarket. The team is preparing for its upcoming league championships.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

## BRINGING HOME THE HARDWARE

Two Tillsonburg teams won medals in this past weekend's Kitchener Golden Ring Tournament. (Top photo) Fun3 Ratter won all four of their games, making them undefeated bringing home gold on Sunday. (Bottom photo) U12-Jacko lost their first game 9-7, won their second game 6-0 and their third game 9-3, taking them to finals were they won silver against Saint Mary's.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

The Ward's Automotive U11 Storm captured the International Silver Stick A title with a 7-1 victory over the host Sarnia Junior Sting.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The McCarroll/Wright team from Tillsonburg Curling Club was the winner of the recreational division of last month's Scotch Doubles Bonspiel. Thirty-six teams competed in three divisions in the bonspiel. The Paige/Elmes team from Royal Canadian Club won the competitive division and the Lindsay/Muirhead team from London Curling Club won the intermediate division.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Ostrander native Jeremy Janssens at the net during Invictus Games sitting volleyball competition.

## March

Tillsonburg Minor Hockey alumni Shawn Gaitens was playing his first season in the Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League with the Komoka Kings.

Tillsonburg native Chris Coyle, who had a career as a coach for Woodstock Collegiate Institute, was honoured by the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSSA) for his contribution to educational

athletic programs. He played for the Glendale Griffins and subsequently the Gemini in high school, before playing university basketball at Memorial University in St. John's. Chris is the son of Glendale phys-ed coach Wayne Coyle and his wife Bernice.

Gemini players Lucas Sandham and Gavin Wernham, made their home schools proud in the senior and junior, respective, Captain/Veterans games. Both took MVP honours in their age group.



## The Return of the Great Soapbox Derby “The Challenge”

### Tillsonburg Soapbox Derby of 2026

Discussions are underway. A Soapbox Derby Fun & Play. A Charity Event of Joy & Glee. A Return to Tillsonburg it be. Sparkles ...Let's Race!

For continued communication and updates on The Race - Email Timothy at [walkfortheshow@gmail.com](mailto:walkfortheshow@gmail.com)



# 2025 IN SPORTS



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Thursday morning ladies' league of the Tillsonburg curling club finished their second draw. The following had the top four scores, left to right: Brenda Jones(69 points), Helen Cull (83 points), Laura Oliveira(Owner of Escapes Salon & Spa), Gail Harris(66 points) and Karen Robinson(69 points).



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

It was Dave Ireland's team from Tillsonburg that emerged as overall winners of the East Elgin Concrete Bonspiel that was held at the Tillsonburg Curling Club. Team Ireland went undefeated coming out on top of the 16-team field with a 3-0 record and a total of 48.25 points. Holding the East Elgin Concrete Forming trophy are from left to right: John Lamont-lead; Wade Jones-second; Ken Patterson-vice and Dave Ireland-skip. The bonspiel which was held at the Tillsonburg Curling Club saw 64 curlers vying for the East Elgin Concrete Forming trophy descended on Tillsonburg from all over the province including a team from Detroit, Michigan.

## April

Claire McCutchen and Scott Boyd won gold medals in the 2025 Skate Ontario Provincials.

Brenner Lammens was selected fourth overall by the OHL's Sarnia Sting. The 15-year-old Langton resident viewed the draft as the beginning to an end goal to play at higher levels.

The South Oxford Ward's Automotive U11 Storm lost 2-1 to Woolwich in the OMHA A finals.

The South Oxford U10 A Storm's Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) championship final appearance in Whitby Sunday, April 6th was a fitting conclusion to a great season. The team lost in the final.

## May

The Tillsonburg Torpedoes swim team is back, and making waves in the recently-opened indoor pool. The swim team started on March 18 and already has 41 swimmers from ages six to 60. The older age group are part of the master's program that already has 16 swimmers.

The Tillsonburg Gemini baseball squad had a 5-0 TVRA record.

Thrivers Company announced a major expansion to its studio space—marking the second time in only three years that the business has grown to meet rising demand and better serve its competitive and recreational student base

Tillsonburg Red Sox defeated Walsingham Senators in their

season opener on May 9.

The Tillsonburg Gemini girls' soccer team won the TVRA title after a win over Woodstock's Huron Park on May 21.

The Gemini baseball team captured the TVRA South East championship with a 5-0 victory over the St. Thomas Parkside Stampers on May 22.

## June

Tillsonburg Thunder announced they were going to move to the Ontario Elite Hockey League (OEHL) from the Western Ontario Super Hockey League (WOSHL).

New banners were unveiled to pay tribute to past Glendale High School athletic championship teams and individuals. The



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Weekend Quiz

by Jake Grant

1. What popular numeric-based phrase annoyed parents and teachers alike in 2025?

2. Who led the Toronto Blue Jays in postseason hits and batting average?

3. What movie won "Best Picture" at the 2025 Oscars?

4. Canadian Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led what pro sports team to a championship in 2025?

5. The G7 Summit in June was held where in Canada?

6. Who is Robert Francis Prevost better known as?

7. Who was elected as Mayor of New York City in November?

8. What AI chip maker is the world's most valuable company at year end?

9. What is the most populated country in the world as of year end?

10. What was the name of the hero who tackled and disarmed one of the gunmen at Bondi Beach, Australia on Dec. 14?

This week's answers are found on pg. 27



# 2025 IN SPORTS



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Chris (left) Coyle shows off his OFSAA Leadership in School ring under the appreciative eye of his greatest supporter, wife Tami.

banners recognized past county, Oxford-Elgin, WOSAA and provincial champions.

The Gemini baseball team finished fifth at OFSSA region-als.

A Tillsonburg teen was part of a Canadian club that played in Italy. Ethan Gazley, 14, a Grade 8 Westfield Public School student, plays soccer for London FC.

The United Church of Canada celebrated its 100th anni-versary with different celebrations at the town’s two United Churches – Avondale and St. Paul’s.

## July

Martial Arts Canada celebrated its 50th anniversary. Martial



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Agrospray goaltender Mark Gignac scrambles for the puck during a playoff game against Fody’s while his defence at-tempts to thwart a Fody’s scoring attempt. Fody’s won this series 3-0 to advance to the final.

Arts Canada has a long, illustrious history in Elgin, Oxford and Norfolk Counties. The club has graded 77 blackbelts, and has won 25 world championships. It was ranked No. 5 among the National Blackbelt League and Sport Karate International’s Top 25 in the world for Sport Karate Schools in 1999, and No. 21 in 2005.

Tillsonburg resident Tanner Jacko signed to play baseball with the New England College Pilgrims NCAA Division III.

Tillsonburg’s Ashten Buzsik did not quite make it in bull riding during the Norfolk Pro Rodeo at Timmermans Ranch, July 20, in Nixon. Buzsik, 22, “came down early” riding Dancing with the Devil.

## August

Florida Panthers assistant GM Gregory Campbell sat down with the Post’s Jeff Tribe to talk about hockey, family, and his third Stanley Cup Ring.

Two local golfers, AnnMarie D’Hondt, from Courtland, and Rick Buck, from Tillsonburg, competed at the 2025 Special Olympics North America (SONA) Golf Championship, August 25-28 in Fayetteville, Pennsylvania.

Running with the Bulls, a fundraiser to assist with costs associated with cancer, was called a success. Organizer Tamara Bull said participation was 375 runners, which was up from 222 walkers and runners the year before. This year’s numbers didn’t include the walkers, who didn’t have to register.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Mixed trophy winners at the Tillsonburg Curling Club were, left to right, Kari Silventoinen (for Terry Hildebrant), Cathy Kovacs, Les Kovacs, Brenda Jones (for Cindy Hildebrant).



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Copper Mug B Division Champ were, left to right, Nick Wilson, Chris Parker, Jeff Cadotte, Andrew Dawson.



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# 2025 IN SPORTS



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Domino's A Division winners, were left to right: Brent Rohrer, Jen Cadman, Mandy Vickers, and Tyler Danbrook.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The ladies division wound up with the team of, left to right, Susan Howe, Gail Harris, Linda (Sponsor from Garden Gate), Nora Peter, Helen Cull, being the top team with the top four highest scores in the final draw of the season.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Several members of the Tillsonburg Skating Club competed in the provincials. Left to right are: (front row) Madylinn Lumley, Grace McCutchen, Elizabeth Heleniak, Milla Leighfield, (back row) Claire McCutchen, Mackenzie Hutchinson, Scott Boyd, Leilah Ardy and Morgan Condie. Boyd and Claire McCutchen won medals at the event.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The South Oxford Ward's Automotive U11A Storm finished a remarkable 2024-25 season with silver medals in the OMHA A championship final.



# 2025 IN SPORTS



(©CURLING PHOTO)

Jayden King represents the Tillsonburg Curling Club while competing in all of his events except for men's. The Courtland resident won the provincial championships in mixed last year and recently was part of the team that won the Silver Tankard.



(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)

Five athletes from Special Olympics Ontario - Tillsonburg competed at the 2025 Special Olympics Ontario Summer Games in Brantford, July 10-13. From left are Matt MacNeil and Jamie Van Parys, bocce; and AnnMarie D'Hondt, Dylan Osipenko and Will Ypma, golf.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

The Tillsonburg Gemini girls' soccer team battled a tough Huron Park opponent and brutal weather en route to a TVRA South East Tier II championship.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

The Tillsonburg Gemini captured the TVRA South East championship with a 5-0 victory over the St. Thomas Parkside Stampers Thursday, May 22 in Dorchester.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Glendale High School's new gymnasium has new banners celebrating the school's athletic championships over the past six-plus decades. Those responsible for the effort were, left to right: Dave Sandor, Brian O'Rourke and principal Dave Chisholm.



# 2025 IN SPORTS



(SUBMITTED PHOTO)  
Scott Gooding lifts his bike to mark the completion of his cycling goal during the Great Cycle Challenge.



(HELSDON PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO)  
Elgin-Middlesex District Soccer League U14 Tier II league champion Tillsonburg FC: (front row, left to right) Ethan Rocco, Raheel Quereshi, Carter Curley, Luke McKee, Avery Draper, Ethan Brown and Colby Van Dyk. In the back row, are: Manager Carrie Kowalski, Max Suderman, Jakub Tremblay, Jaxon Crann, Oliver Weger, Connor McDermott, Logan Thompson, Marek Tremblay, Myles Marlor and Coach Ken Van Dyk. Alex Tremblay is absent from the photo.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)  
The Kyle Nesbitt Trucking team was the winner of the B Division in ladies' slo-pitch action. Left to right are: (back row) coach Nick Joosse, scorekeeper Sheila Morgan; Rebecca Caza, Gemma Ladosz, Chani Homewood, Missy Falkins, Nicole Morgan, Teri Joosse, Kim Hurd, Carrie MacDonald, and coach Doug Falkins, (front row) Claire Barker, Lacey Warren, Liz Yuile, Sabrina Sinden, and Tammy Griswold.

## September

Tillsonburg-raised para-athlete Charlotte Bolton was readying for the World Para Games in India, looking to better her personal bests in shot put and discus. The Tillsonburg Red Sox reached the quarter finals of the OBA tournament before losing to St. Catharines Cobras. The Tillsonburg FC U14 boys locked up

the 2025 Elgin-Middlesex District Soccer League Tier II title with a 2-0 shutout victory over the London Wolves. Tillsonburg strongman Tyler Desplenter is officially a record-holder after he set two Strongman records in competitions. Glendale High School kicked off its TVRA football season with a senior/ junior doubleheader in Tillsonburg on Sept.

18. A senior Gemini comeback fell just short in a 35-28 loss to College Avenue Secondary School. The junior Gemini shut out CASS 16-0. Jane Van Leeuwen is one of only 488 Canadian women who have completed the six major world marathons, which is known as the Abbott World Marathon Majors. Each marathon is 42.2 kilometers in length.

## October

High school sports were underway with several Gemini teams notching wins. The Tillsonburg Thunder started play in the Ontario Elite Hockey League (OEHL) with road games during the month. Play started in Club Oxford men's hockey league.



# 2025 IN SPORTS

## November

Gemini high school sports wound down with no teams advancing beyond the quarter finals.

Tillsonburg resident Rayse Meyer finished the Bone Stock car season with a victory at the Flamborough Speedway.

Top-ranked curling teams were in Tillsonburg from across the country, and even an international team, for the Tobacco Belt Cashspiel.

An honour guard from the Tillsonburg Legion opened the Tillsonburg Thunder game on Nov. 8.

Tillsonburg Gemini senior girls' basket-

ball point guard Sophia Silliker and junior Kate Bruder were part of the senior and junior, respectively, Girls Captains/Veterans Basketball Game.

## December

Dean Symons started refereeing his 52nd season with the Oxford Basketball Officials' Association.

Tillsonburg Curling Club's Community Service Bonspiel, a popular annual event, had a full draw.

The Tillsonburg Thunder and the Milverton Four Wheel Drives are battling to avoid the 8-versus-9 playoff series and advance directly to the playoffs in February.



(Left photo) Folden's Machine Works were the winners of the Tillsonburg Slo-Pitch Ladies' A Division. Team members are, left to right: (back row) Lisa Howey, Kim Gillis, Monica Barnes, Andrea DeBlair, Amber Woolgar, Trisha McKenzie, Jen Francis, Jen Kichler, Ashley Aker, Mack Brackenbury, Mel Redecop. (front row) Sandy DeKeyser, Danielle Swart, Jenn Dahl, Nancy Teixeira, Mandi Vickers, and Jen Cadman. (Right photo) The Sticky Bandits were winners of the Men's C Division. Teams members were, in no particular order: Caleb Enns, Ivan Enns, Makaio Thiessen , Logan Froese, Andrew Wiebe, Andrew Knelsen, Nicky Knelsen, Conner Friesen, Bowen Thiessen, Austin Reddekopp, Tyson Krahn and Michael Wiebe.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)



Left: Legend Rubber Cobra Chickens were the winners of A Division in Tillsonburg Men's Slo-Pitch. Left to right are: (top row) Wyatt Blatz, Leonard Fehr, Jesse Froese, Ethan Froese, Marcus Enns, Jared Froese (bottom row) Caleb Reimer, Marcus Enns, Brian Dyck, Ethan Fehr and Nathan Froese.

Below: Pelicans were the winner of B Division in Tillsonburg Men's Slo-Pitch. Left to right are: (back row) Rob Down, Adam Jensen, Jeff Cadotte, Chris Parker, Steve Leacock, Nick Wilson, Andrew Dawson, Joe Kingsbury, TJ Nevill, Ryan Verbyust, Ryan Marques, Matt Summers, (front row) Brandon Travers and Kevin Buchner.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)



# 2025 MONTH BY MONTH

## January

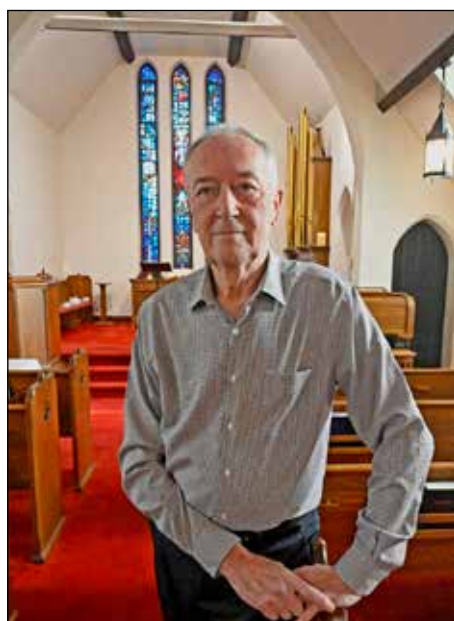
Tillsonburg Mayor Deb Gilvesy reflected on the successes of the past 12 months and provided insight into the coming year during her speech at the mayor's levee on Jan. 5, hosted by the Tillsonburg Historical Society. Gilvesy mentioned what was ongoing work at the time to open the pool, that the airport was operating without tax dollars, and the fire communications centre has turned around from losing money to making a profit. She also mentioned 2024 was a record year for industrial growth.

Tillsonburg Deputy Mayor Dave Beres was elected the new chair of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority board.

A request from the town's airport advisory committee to seal cracks in the runway was endorsed by town council. The committee advised an estimate from last year put the price of sealing the cracks at \$50,000 to \$60,000.

Town council members approved listing of the first lot to be sold in the second phase of the VanNorman Innovation Park Phase 2. After consultation with members of the Economic Development Committee, staff, and a realtor, the price for the first lot was set at \$250,000.

A report looking at ways the town can



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

**Pastor Paul Robinson preached his last sermon at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church on Dec. 29. Although he retired, he will still be providing pastoral care for the church and is the Legion padre and hospital chaplain.**

work with its service clubs to assist with the cost of big-ticket projects didn't find any way forward, but this doesn't mean the issue was done. There is a long history of service clubs assisting with town projects, with rooms in the Tillsonburg Community Centre displaying

the names of the Kinsmen and Lions, baseball diamonds being associated with the Optimist Club, and many other examples. Discussion on the matter will continue.

A group of Tillsonburg residents presented the concept of building a new multi-use recreational facility that will include an indoor soccer field, walking track and multi-use courts. Jesse Goossens, president of Basketball Tillsonburg, and Kinsmen past-president Shane Curtis shared their vision with council. Their concept was for local groups to pay a large portion of the costs.

A possible site for a new town hall was narrowed down after Coun. Kelly Spencer brought debate on the subject back to council with a motion she presented at the Jan. 13 meeting. Her motion was to reconsider a motion passed on July 8 for the new hall to be located at 10 Harvey Street. The previous motion was to tear down the existing customer service centre at 10 Lisgar Ave. and to build an entirely new building on that site.

A letter of intent was signed between EYES Childcare of Brampton and 360 Developments Group in January to open a daycare in the de-

velopment at 361 Quarter Line Road. To be located on the west side of Quarter Line Road and south of South Ridge School, the new facility is expected to be opened later this year and will have 80-plus spots in a 5,500 square-foot facility.

An update from the town said renovations at the Tillsonburg Community Centre and pool are on schedule, with the town to take control of the parts under construction at the end of January, but time will be needed for cleaning and testing.

Tillsonburg's out-of-town bus service was up in the air with the provincial grant changing and other municipalities not interested in keeping the program going.

Scott Tegler was appointed interim Tillsonburg fire chief.

Pastor Paul Robinson retired from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, but will continue as Legion padre.

The first of many measles exposures was reported at Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

**Nathan Wilkinson and Kendall Young, left, hang a painting as part of the Glendale High School art exhibit at the Station Arts Centre.**

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# 2025 MONTH BY MONTH

Roulston's Pharmacy opened in the North Gate Plaza on Jan. 20.

## February

Tillsonburg council passed its budget at the Jan. 27 meeting with a 4.78 per cent increase. The budget started with a 13.69 per cent increase, and was whittled down after council sent it back to staff with instructions to lower the increase. Part of the reason for the huge increase was impacts of a court-ordered retroactive settlement with the OPP, but the province since then announced it would ab-

sorb most of this cost.

It was reported in the Feb. 6 issue that Tillsonburg native Debra DiGiovanni hit the big time when she appeared as a guest on The Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon on Jan. 22.

Tillsonburg will see 160 new long-term care beds in a modern, person-centered facility operated by peopleCare on Maple Lane. The official groundbreaking for the facility at 25 Maple Lane, the site of the former Maple Lane Public School, was Jan. 23, but construction at the site has been underway for several months. The new facility will open in fall 2026.

Forensic testing confirmed that dead geese found on Lake Lisgar were victims of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). An official with the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative at the University of Guelph said similar Canada goose deaths are being seen at multiple locations across southern Ontario, from Windsor-Essex to Prince Edward County.

Theatre Tillsonburg's "Opening Night" was presented during February. The production tells the story of the opening of a production in a rural theatre.

Tillsonburg is one step closer to another option for those who have food insecurity. At the Feb. 10 meeting, town council heard a presentation from members of the Rotary Club and Tabatha Verbuyst, executive director of the Station Arts Centre, about a proposal for a community pantry and is proposing to locate it behind the Station Arts Centre.

The 60th anniversary of the declaration of Canada's new flag passed with little fanfare locally.

The Tillsonburg Peavey Mart locations will be among the dozens that close as the company seeks creditor protection.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

### FISH FRY A SUCCESS

The Tillsonburg Shrine Club's second annual fish fry and elimination draw was another success. About 200 people attended the fish fry and all tickets were sold for the elimination draw. The last three people still in the draw chose to split the \$20,000 prize. Fish fry chair Cedric Tomico is seen here breeding the fish in preparation for supper. This year's event will be Jan. 18 and tickets will be available at the door.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

### IT DOESN'T GET MORE CANADIAN THAN THIS

Lake Lisgar was a busy place on Jan. 26 with the sun shining and the thermometer creeping a little higher from the bone-chilling temperatures from the polar vortex the week before. The frigid conditions did solidify the ice and many Tillsonburg families took advantage of it. Ardent angler Mike Dearden and his sons Benny and JJ hit the ice to see what they could catch. Here Mike and Benny are hard at it.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Aspyr, left, and Paisley pet the ball python that Cassidy Hill of Reptilia London had as part of their display. There were a variety of lizards, snakes and a turtle on display on Family Day.

## March

March 6's paper reported incumbent MPP Ernie Hardeman easily returned to power in the election on Feb. 27. Final results for Oxford were: Hardeman 27,061 votes (55.26 per cent); Liberal Bernia Martin, 11,348 votes (23.17 per cent); NDP Khadijah Haliru,

5,374 votes (10.97 per cent); Green Party of Ontario Colton Kaufman, 2,182 votes (4.46 per cent); Ontario Party Grace Harper, 1,414 votes (2.89 per cent); New Blue Party Peter Beimers, 1,317 votes (2.69 per cent); Libertarian Henryk Szymczyszyn, 276 votes (0.56 per cent). Voter turnout was 49.20 per cent, an improvement over the 46.45 per cent in 2022. Provincially, the PCs retained their majority.

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# 2025 MONTH BY MONTH



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

The official groundbreaking for the peopleCare long-term care home on Maple Lane took place in January. Taking part in the ceremony were left to right were: Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Long-Term Care Tyler Allsopp, Tillsonburg Mayor Deb Gilvesy, Jenn Killing of peopleCare, and Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman.

County budget talks brought up the potential of a bag tag increase to \$3 and a switch to a six-day collection cycle. This will mean pick-up won't be on the same day of the week.

Columnist Laurel Beechey recounted town founder George Tillson's journey from Normandale to what is now Tillsonburg to start the town. This was a prelude to increasing coverage on the 200th anniversary of the founding of Dereham Forge, which became Tillsonburg.

Tillsonburg's third Black history Heritage Event took place at the Tillsonburg Community Centre.

The pool opened on March 10 after being closed since April 18, 2023 for renovations. It opened to an Aquafit class on the Monday morning.

From humble beginnings on a grass airstrip outside Woodstock to more than 400 members and its own hangars in Tillsonburg, the Canadian Harvard Aircraft Association has come a

long way as it celebrated its 40th anniversary.

The Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser didn't quite meet its goal, but still saw a huge increase from last year. Held Feb. 22, the event involved teams and individuals finding sponsors for the walk to raise money for Tillsonburg Light House, a transitional house in Tillsonburg.

Community Living Tillsonburg started activities to highlights its 70th anniversary.

Government regulations were impacting the owners of the Tillsonburg Gun Shop. Although the restrictions were made in the name of public safety, there were no impacts to crime but were to legal gun owners, who already go through vigorous safety courses and background checks, and to businesses.

Stacked restaurant opened in the Tillsonburg Town Centre.

It became official that inter-community transit would cease at the end of March.

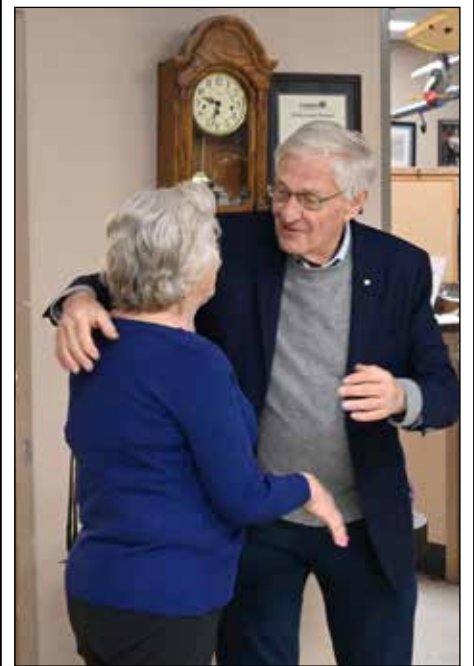
Several Tillsonburg residents were presented with Coronation Medals by Oxford MP Arpan Khanna.

Tillsonburg council green lighted a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a multi-use recreational facility on town land. Although such a facility was in the town's recreation master plan in the future, consideration to building sooner is being given due a presentation from community groups wanting to help with funding and grant availability. The study would cost \$85,000.

Organizers of a temporary health clinic planned for Tillsonburg were encouraging the public to fill out a survey to provide input before the end of the month. The survey was part of the process to open a temporary clinic in Tillsonburg for unattached patients.

Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital (TDMH) and Alexandra Hospital, Ingersoll will be proceeding with full integration, it was announced. The date for full integration is April 1, 2026.

The Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre was looking for volunteer drivers for its programs, including Meals on Wheels.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

## ANOTHER WIN FOR HARDEMAN

Ernie Hardeman, PC candidate for Oxford, is congratulated by his wife Rita after winning a ninth term as the MPP for the riding. He captured 55 per cent of the vote.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Lucas and Maria Santos, and daughter Alice stand in front of the igloo they built on the front lawn of their Joseph Street home. The project took about three weeks to complete.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

## THE BIG SPLASH

Tillsonburg's indoor pool opened on March 10, just in time for March Break, with a full slate of programming. Prior to the opening, former aquatics supervisor Julie Dawley, left, started a new tradition with the passing of the duck to Melanie Corbett, centre, who filled that role after Dawley was promoted to manager of recreation programs and services. Aquatic coordinator Vanessa Letoile couldn't resist the temptation to be amongst the first in the water and witnessed the ceremony.

# NEEDFULL THINGS

## 75 BROADWAY

VIDEO GAMES - VINTAGE TOYS - SPORTS COLLECTABLES  
GOLD & SILVER - COINS & JEWELRY - CRYSTALS



# 2025 MONTH BY MONTH

## April

Station View Development was given the go-ahead by council. Owned by BMI Group, the approval was for a building with a nine-storey and an eight-storey towers. The building will fill the entire vacant block between Vension Street West, Bridge Street West, Rolph Street and Bidwell Street.

Tickets for the hospital's gala celebrating its 100th anniversary were for sale.

Tillsonburg council passed a motion to support the Buy Canadian movement whenever possible.

Long-time Norwich business, Moore's Sees, relocated to Tillsonburg. Started by Ralph Moore in 1916, the business was purchased by VanMeer Farms and relocated to Bell Mill Side Road.

The Glendale High School robotics team won two competitions in its first year. Students on the team work with technicians from Martinrea to build robots.

Chuck's Roadhouse becomes the second business to open in the new Northgate Plaza at 671 Broadway.

GM announced it was laying off hundreds of employees at CAMI due to poor market demand for the BrightDrop electric delivery van.

Tillsonburg council asked for a pause on the province's move to implement strong mayor powers.

The Station Arts Centre was part of the Oxford Studio Tour on May 3 and 4.

Plans for a wind power development in southern Oxford and Elgin County by WPD Canada Corporation raised the ire of local residents.

Tillsonburg native Debra DiGiovanni won a Juno for best comedy album at the awards held March 30 in Vancouver.

Carlos Reyes started as the Director of Operations and Development in Tillsonburg. He served in this role previously before moving to Kitchener.

## May

Local singer Olivia Mae Graham has been nominated for a Country Music Association of Ontario award for Breakthrough Artist of the Year. CMAO members chose the award nominees through three rounds of voting, and Graham was one of six chosen as a nominee. Further voting will decide who wins the award.

Theatre Tillsonburg is celebrating a wave of recognition as 'Steel Magnolias' by Robert Harling received four prestigious nominations from the Western Ontario Drama League (WODL) Festival Awards.

Dr. Sharon Howard, opened Paws and Claws Veterinary Clinic on May 5. The full-service veterinary clinic specializes in medical care for dogs and cats. This includes preventative health care, dental work and surgery.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Theatre Tillsonburg's production of "Steel Magnolias", which ran earlier this year, was nominated for several Western Ontario Drama League Festival awards.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Members of the Glendale robotic team were hard at work last week preparing their robot for a competition in Windsor. Left to right are: Zach MacRae, Ellis Cole, Matthew DeVos, Julia Drobits, Aleah Phillip and Patience Kongai.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

### OXFORD STAYS BLUE

Oxford MP Arpan Khanna thanked supporters and volunteers at his victory party after he was reelected in spring's federal election. Khanna received 53.2 per cent of the vote, far surpassing the Liberal's David Hilderley with 37.9 per cent. See Page 4 for the full story.



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Oxford County seeks an engaged citizen to join the Oxford County Library Board to help govern the library system for the remainder of the 2023-2026 council term.

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# 2025 MONTH BY MONTH



## WARM WEATHER IS CRUISING TIME

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Spring means it's time for the classic cars to come out of storage for car shows. The Tillsonburg Cruisers started their regular Tuesday cruise nights in the lot between the Simcoe Street Wendy's/Tim Horton's and Erie & Creek Tackle. Cars ranging from a 1926 Ford Model T to a 2024 Corvette were on display. Fundraising at the event has aided Sakura House in Woodstock, the Hospice of Elgin and the local hospital. The events will continue on Tuesdays until fall.

From reconstructing the Kinsmen Bridge to addressing homelessness, Mayor Deb Gilvesy covered a lot of ground during the mayor's annual address to the Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce. The annual event was held Thursday, April 17 at the Tillsonburg Soccer Club.

The Tillsonburg Helping Hand Food Bank is accepting financial donations as a way to meet increasing demand. In a typical year, the food bank would do a spring food drive, but instead this year is doing what coordinator Samantha Hamilton calls the Spring Forward Give Back Financial Drive.

The town is seeking input on a proposal to increase the boundaries of the Downtown Tillsonburg Business Improvement Area (BIA). Formed in 1978, Tillsonburg BIA was one of the first in Ontario. At the time the population was 9,400 people. The original boundaries stretched from Venison Street, south to Bloomer, and were bounded by Val-

ley View on the west and a line roughly down the middle of Lisgar Ave to the east. The proposed expansion would see the BIA boundaries stretch from the middle of Concession Street on the north, along the Stoney Creek gully on the west to Otter Creek, across to Young Street on the South, and then up Vienna Road, crossing the Otter and towards Maple Lane. There would be no impact to residential home owners, but there would to commercial and industrial.

Incumbent Arpan Khanna handily recaptured Oxford in the federal election in late April. By percentages, Khanna received 53.2 per cent of the vote and Liberal David Hilderley 37.9 per cent.

Two local school boards are at the top of the list of what the province calls "failures" at several school boards across Ontario. Both the Thames Valley District School Board and Brant-Haldimand-Norfolk Catholic District School Board were named. The boards were required to submit implementation plans to meet provincial financial accountability goals.

A new 12-bed Transitional Care Unit opened at Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital (TDMH). The Ministry of Health provided \$1.6 million in funding to allow the unit to open on April 1 and will fund it through the end of March 31, 2026

Broadway Cinemas posted an announcement recently saying the theatre "will cease operations following the last screening of the day on May 15, 2025." This is an end of almost three decades of operation of the tri-screen theatre. It leaves Tillsonburg in a unique situation, as most towns with 20,000 people have a movie theatre, unless part of a metropolitan area.

A drain critical to lowering the water level in Lake Lisgar is being replaced. Workers with Watech Services Inc. have been working on repairing the low-flow valve, which is on top of the cement weir west of the gazebo. The valve is essentially a drain to draw down the lake levels. Council approved \$120,000 for the repair.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

**Workers with Watech Services have been busy at Lake Lisgar repairing the low-flow water valve that can be used to drain the lake.**

Jason Pankratz's released his book Tillsonburg at 200: 200 Questions and Answers About Our Town.

A new option has been thrown into the mix of potential sites for Tillsonburg's new town hall. Deputy Mayor Dave Beres presented a motion at the April 28 meeting to explore the feasibility of the former Peavey Mart site at 121 Concession St. E. as a potential site for a new town hall. This is in addition to investigating sites at the existing customer service centre at 10 Lisgar Ave. and a site on the corner of Brock and Harvey Streets. The motion, which Coun. Chris Rosehart seconded, also approved up to \$30,000 in funding to look at an environmental site assessment, building condition and a preliminary floor plan.

Frank Kempf was named Citizen of the Year for his efforts to keep Lake Lisgar clean. Mayor Deb Gilvesy commented that she called him "The Keeper of the Lake."

Oxford MP Arpan Khanna was named national outreach chair, which made him part of the 11-members leadership team for the Conservative Party of Canada.

A new health care course offered at Glendale High School will expose students to a variety of careers in the health care field.

A gala was held to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital and TDMH Volunteer Association.

## June

The Tillsonburg Post transitioned to a weekly paper in mid-June. The business model at Grant Haven Media has been to launch papers on a bi-weekly frequency and then transition to weekly when revenue and support warrant. This change has never occurred as quickly within the company as it did with the Tillsonburg Post. The speedy growth can be attributed to community and business support.

Four first-year medical students from Western University's Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry had a taste of rural medicine and life in early June. Called Discovery Week, the program sees all first-year medical students at Western participate in immersive one-week placements in health-care settings across Southwestern Ontario.

Tillsonburg council was divided at the May 26 meeting on how to deal with a staff report on the Business Improvement Association finances tied to an anonymous letter sent to businesses, but was united in response to a request to pay the association's legal fees.

Town bi-centennial celebrations continued with the launch of an exhibit at Annandale National Historic Site titled Tillsonburg 1825.

Turtlefest, held on June 14, had record attendance with more than 30,000 people in attendance. There was also a record number of vendors and food booths.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

**Flight Sergeant Addison Mabey shows off the pins she earned for completing marksmanship, biathlon and effective speaking. The pins were one factor in deciding if she was to earn a pilot's license scholarship.**



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

**Riding the MEGABike was a fun fundraiser for Big Brothers/Big Sisters programs. Riders enjoyed a leisurely pedal around Tillsonburg while having fun and raising money to support Big Brothers/Big Sisters programs in town.**



# 2025 MONTH BY MONTH



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

**TurtleFest was another success with wall-to-wall people downtown for the annual street festival. There was something for people of all ages, from the bouncy castles to vendors, food trucks, and musical entertainment throughout the day.**

Town council approved reconstruction of the Kinsmen pedestrian bridge between Hickory Hills and subdivisions on the west side of town and the downtown at the June 16 meeting. The accepted bid was for \$3.25 million, less than the \$4.69 million budgeted for the project.

Jen Dean was presented with the Tow Woman of the Year award from the Women of the Towing and Recovery Association of America (WTRAA) at its gathering in April. She was not only the first Canadian to win the award but the first international winner. At 29, when she received the award, she believes she may also be the youngest. Dean works in the family business Ad-

vanced Towing with her father, Mike, mother, Rosemary, and sisters, Melissa, Amanda, and Lisa.

There is rising demand for Helping Hand Food Bank services in Tillsonburg. At the food bank's May 20th annual general meeting, it was noted that in 2023 the Helping Hand Food Bank supported 5,165 area people (3,676 households). In 2024, the need grew and the food bank supported 7,036 people, an increase of 35 per cent.

The opening of Osmow's Shawarma in the Northgate Plaza brought a Mediterranean option to town.

With people lined up to the road waiting to get in, and over 300 in attendance, South West Oxford (SWOX) Council declared the township an "unwilling host" to future wind turbine projects in a 5 to 1 vote at its June 17 meeting.

Oxford MP Arpan Khanna and Elgin-St. Thomas-London South MPP Andrew Lawton were critical of the government's fire-arms buyback program, and the general approach of the Liberals on the issue.

## July

Citizen of the Year Frank Kempf was lauded at the citizen of the year ceremony by the Kinsmen, of which he is a member, Mayor Deb Gilvesy and Joan Weston, who works on the lake with him, also paid tribute.

A revitalized Backus Conservation Education Centre opened to the public on June 21.

Local students Patience Acheta and Lucas Sandham were recognized as Rotary Medallists.

The town sold its first property in the Van-Norman Innovation Park Phase 2 to Wise Line Tools.

Town council approved a \$5,000 grant to the Tillsonburg Tri-County Agricultural



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

**The Station Arts Centre's pancake breakfast on Canada Day was a big hit with the line-up stretching around the corner at some points through the morning.**



(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)

**Theo Bowman, 7, and his two-year-old sister Myla live release a sunfish during Tillsonburg's 11th annual Free Fishing Derby in July.**

Society to assist with funding after the fair had a tough year in 2024, with revenue down \$19,000.

The new Tillsonburg Unattached Care Clinic opened on July 7 in Roulston's Pharmacy.

Tom Brown became the new president of the Tillsonburg Legion, succeeding Dianne Hodges after she was at the helm for 12 years.

Remnants of the railroad spur that ran to the historic site of Tillson's mills, and the present site of The Mill restaurant, were uncovered during construction on John Pound Road.

Attendance was up at Tillsonburg's Canada Day festivities. These included the traditional pancake breakfast, activities on the lawn at Annandale House and a ceremony at the cenotaph.

The Canadian Harvard Aircraft Association celebrated its 40th anniversary on July 5. The day featured static displays as well as rides in Harvards.

The 11th Annual Free Fishing Derby at Lake Lisgar was another success.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

**The Tillsonburg and District Historical Society presented its annual Indigenous Cultural Celebration on June 19 in Memorial Park. (Top right photo) Robyn Michaud, an Anishinaabe Kwe, Bear Clan from the Sagamok Anishinabek First Nation who is a professor of Indigenous Studies, grew up in Tillsonburg and was the emcee for the evening. The evening included Indigenous food, craft vendors, drummers and dancers.**



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

**Staff at the Tillsonburg Unattached Care Clinic have been busy answering phones since the clinic opened on July 7, with most of the week's appointments filled within two hours. Left to right are: Mackenzie Tibbits, RPN; Jessica Carrasco-Hardin, NP; and Cait-Lynne Anderson, medical office assistant.**



# 2025 MONTH BY MONTH



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Before the store opening at 7 a.m., officials from No Frills corporate gathered with the owners of the new Tillsonburg store for a ribbon cutting. Left to right are: Liz Roth of No Frills; Ian McKay, group director Ontario No Frills; Darryll Mantel; Tracy Mantel; Correy Mantel, owner; Rita Machado and Luca, owner; Marian Mantel; Jennifer Teixeira, No Frills vice-president operations Ontario and Atlantic; and Ryan Barrett, owner Aylmer No Frills.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

The Legion colour party paraded into July's Tillsonburg council meeting prior to a presentation on a veteran's crosswalk by member Don Burton.

Tillsonburg council was supportive of a request by the local Legion branch to install a veteran's crosswalk on Broadway, but has to consult with the Ministry of Transportation before making a commitment on it.

ALUS Canada is going through a trans-

formation as Tillsonburg-area resident Bryan Gilvesy steps back as CEO. Gilvesy will become the chief strategy officer.

Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman, the longest-serving current member of the Ontario Legislature, recently reached three decades of public service.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

## RUNNING FOR A CAUSE

Runners came from far and wide for July's Running with the Bulls. The event consisted of four different components: the 10-kilometer event pictured here, a 5-kilometer race, a youth 1-kilometer race, and the Marwood 2k Memorial Family Walk.

A new Oxford County Tourism program is assisting daytrippers in choosing Tillsonburg as their destination of choice.

The Bridge Street Streetscape Plan was approved by council. The plan, which would have a price tag of \$14 million if implemented today, is merely a plan – one to be executed over a long period in stages, with council of the day having the say at each stage. Some of the changes could include a one-way street in certain areas to placing a higher emphasis on pedestrian safety.

Attendance at Saturday's Running with the Bulls doubled from last year. The second annual running event stepped it up a notch with an association with the Kindred Association. This charity helps families who have a member diagnosed with cancer.

A zone change was approved by Tillsonburg council to allow a dollar store to locate in the Northgate Plaza on Broadway. Dollarama plans to locate a 9,300-square-foot store there.

Jennifer Dean was named one of the Top 30 under 30 by Kin Canada.

Tillsonburg Rotary Club's student exchange program is operating again for the first time since Covid-19 with Tillsonburg resident Evan Yallop leaving for Germany as part of his exchange.

Oxford MP Arpan Khanna is launching a nationwide consultation on reforms to Canada's bail system as part of his Private Member's Bill.

Tillsonburg council will survey the town's youth, asking for input on youth spaces, shopping, wellness, arts and culture and barriers.

## August

Construction was to start on the replacement of the Kinsmen Bridge over Participipark.

Oxford County was celebrating its 175th anniversary with the release of a book on the county's history.

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# 2025 MONTH BY MONTH



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Members of the DeCloet family took time out from a planting event to stand next to the recently-unveiled sign designating the DeCloet Family Forest Legacy, near Clear Creek in Norfolk County. Left to right are: Paul DeCloet; Wendy Cridland, executive director of the Long Point Basin Land Trust; Ben DeCloet; and Peter Carson, president of the land trust.

Tillsonburg council sought more information before making a decision on a request to expand the BIA zone. BIA executive director Mark Renaud and Shane Curtis of Delmer Property Investments presented opposing views of the proposal during the meeting.

Tillsonburg native Carey Ouellette ran into Post correspondent Jeff Tribe when the latter was visiting Rwanda. Ouellette now lives there, and shared tales of his adventures.

Frank Moore of the Tillsonburg Military History Club was getting close to the end of a journey in relation to a suitcase full of military memorabilia he purchased 12 years ago. The journey to learn more about it took him to Holland, resulted in recognition of five Allied airmen who lost their lives in a crash in Holland and saw author Jason Pankratz write a book about the unique circumstances with the crash.

Organizers of the 171st edition of the Tillsonburg Fair deemed it a success. Estimates

were more than 6,000 people attended.

Council made accommodations for the closed Kinsmen Bridge during its replacement by installing a four-way stop at the intersection of Baldwin Street and Wilson Ave, and offering free bus service from the Hickory Hills stops.

Tillsonburg council approved the expropriation of land at 170 Vienna Road to provide access to town-owned property behind it.

Aalanna Rusnak's pageant career soared to a new level competing at Miss World Canada, August 12-17, in Oakville and Vaughan, and finishing as first runner-up in both Miss World Canada and Miss Supranational Canada.

An Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) grant paid the way to improve accessibility of the public washrooms at the Livingston Centre.

The annual Southern Area Women's In-



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

A new pedestrian crossover was installed on Tillson Ave in front of Annandale School prior to the start of the school year.



(STUART BLOWER PHOTO)

The Tillsonburg Fair was called a success by organizers after the three-day event in August. The 13-ride midway helped to draw people, and there was an increase in sales of midway ride bracelets. See more fair coverage inside today's paper.

stitute Tweedsmuir History Day was held at Avondale United Church.

Following approval from the CRTC, MY Broadcasting Corporation purchased local radio stations CKOT and CJDL from Rogers Sports and Media.

Melissa McKibbin, who grew up in Tillsonburg and is a Glendale graduate, started as Glendale High School principal on July 1. Both of her parents, Jim and Sheila, were also educators in town.

A \$99,30 Ontario Trillium Foundation grant was recognized during a Community Living Tillsonburg job program graduation ceremony. JobPath is a six-week comprehensive employment preparation program designed to equip participants with the skills and confidence needed to succeed in the job market.

## September

An Ontario government grant helped with

the launch of a new seniors' digital literacy class at the Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre.

St. Charles Anglican Church on Ostrander Road, the oldest church in the area, closed its doors. The brick structure was built in 1844.

A motion to build the town's new hall on vacant town-owned property at the corner of Brock and Harvey Streets was defeated by a narrow 4-3 margin at the Sept. 8 council meeting. Coun. Pete Luciani presented a motion calling on council to select what is known as the greyfield site, at the northeast corner of Brock and Harvey Streets, as the location for a new town hall.

The Beer Store property on Concession Street East was listed for sale although the realtor listing it said there is a lease until 2030.

A revamping of the clinic area at Shopper's Drug Mart aims to enhance health care delivery in Tillsonburg.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

## CRANBERRY CONSTRUCTION

Reconstruction of Cranberry Road, north of North Street East, started. The project will see the installation of sewers, storms sewers, curbs, gutters and sidewalks to the northern town limits. The first stage of the project is scheduled for completion in December, with the second phase to start next spring.



# 2025 MONTH BY MONTH

Tillsonburg Hydro and EARTH Power are exploring a collaboration that will strengthen the local utility and meet the community's future needs.

On Sept. 4, Arpan Khanna, Member of Parliament for Oxford, was joined by members of Tillsonburg Legion Branch 153 as he presented specially designed Oxford County/House of Commons "Challenge Coins" and certificates of recognition to WW2 veterans Tom Boneham and Leighton Ronson.

Council referred the proposal to expand the boundaries of the BIA back to its board of management and the Chamber of Commerce for comment.



**POPPY BENCH** (JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)  
A bench with a poppy design was unveiled in front of the Station Arts Centre. Taking part in the unveiling were, left to right: Tabitha Verbuyst, Station Arts Centre CEO and the artist who painted the bench; Rev. Paul Robinson, Legion padre; Louise Richel, vet and Legion member; Mayor Deb Gilvesy; Mike Pritchard, Legion service officer; Darrell Ball, Air Cadet liaison officer; and Sarah Senior, chair of the Station Arts Centre board of directors.



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(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)  
Tillsonburg volunteer firefighter Barry Lasook flips a steak at the annual Tillsonburg Firefighters Association Steak BBQ, Sept. 13 at the Tillsonburg Community Centre. A new grill was donated this year, expanding their grilling opportunities.



(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)  
Jesse Goossens of Thompson Goossens Accountants LLP, playing on the Holmes, Kocheff & Good LLP team, chips to the green during the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital Foundation Golf Tournament at The Bridges at Tillsonburg.



# 2025 MONTH BY MONTH



## NEW FIRE SAFETY MASCOT

Ontario Deputy Fire Marshal John McBeth presents Tillsonburg Fire Department Fire Public Educator Sarah Barclay with a challenge coin for her efforts in developing Beepa, the province's new fire safety mascot.

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

At its Sept. 8 meeting, council approved an application to the Rural Ontario Development Program to fund the Tillsonburg Health Care Recruitment Strategy, a recruitment and marketing initiative to attract doctors to town. The goal is to increase awareness of healthcare opportunities amongst medical professionals, students and recent graduates.

General Motors has informed the union

at its CAMI Assembly Plant in Ingersoll that production will resume this fall — but at a much slower pace than originally planned.

All members of council were cleared of any wrongdoing by the town's integrity commissioner in two separate investigations that were presented at the Sept. 25 council meeting.

Tillsonburg firefighter Sarah Barclay was honoured by the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office for her contribution to fire safety with the idea for new provincial mascot Beepa. Modelled after a smoke and carbon monoxide detector outfitted in firefighter bunker gear, Beepa is more than just a feel-good fuzzy mascot — pushing its nose sets off warnings similar to a detector going off.

Take back the Night march returned to Tillsonburg on Sept. 17, calling attention to femicide, domestic violence, and the need for better-funded women's shelters and prevention programs.

The Senior's Sampler event, held at the Tillsonburg Senior Centre on Sept. 15, was a great success. Eighty-five tickets were sold and eight vendors served a variety of sample menu items to attendees.

The Kinsmen Club of Tillsonburg restored both banks under the Kinsmen/Hawkins Bridge on Lake Lisgar.

The Terry Fox Run, held on Sept. 14, was deemed a success by organizers. The event raised more than \$30,000 for cancer research, and was the 45th year the event was held in Tillsonburg.

## October

A fire caused between \$8 and \$12 million in damage to the Marwood International plant at 101 Townline Road.

The town's Economic Development Advisory Committee is advising council to increase its allotment for institutional/commercial land from 15 to 30 per cent, which would require a boundary expansion to facilitate it.

Dignitaries speaking, an authentic Ukrainian lunch and special music were highlights as St. John's Anglican Church celebrated its 125th anniversary on Sunday, Sept. 14.

Tillsonburg's Business Improvement Association is on the hook to address an historical shortfall in funding for the Facade Improvement Program. The shortfall equates to the BIA portion of the contribution and mostly dates back to the founding of the program in 2012 and 2013, before current BIA executive director Mark Renaud started in that capacity. Adding to the complexity of the issue is the facade improvement program started without a formal agreement between the BIA and town, and a bylaw wasn't passed to formalize it.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

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

DECEMBER 11, 2025 – JANUARY 7, 2026

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# 2025 MONTH BY MONTH



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Crews from Lancoa Construction work on removing the top two layers of the masonry piers that supported Kinsmen Bridge. These piers will have a new top layer, new grouting and be part of the new bridge.

Glendale High School passed a huge milestone in regard to the funds it has raised for the Terry Fox Run. The funds from this year's students brought the school's total raised over the \$100,000 threshold.

With the deck from the former Kinsmen bridge over Participark gone, crews have been concentrating on repairs to the masonry piers that will support the new bridge.

An attempt to fasttrack Oxford MP Arpan Khanna's Private Member's Bill, the Jail Not Bail Act, was voted down in the House of Commons.

Rocio Salinas started as the CEO of the Tillsonburg and District Chamber of Commerce on Oct. 1.

A request from the property owners of 400 Simcoe Street for a boundary adjustment to include it in the Town of Tillsonburg revealed that a Winner's store is coming to the location in 2026. A letter from E & E McLaughlin Ltd. to council, discussed at the Oct. 14 meeting, stated that 22,500 square feet of the former Walmart space will become a Winners store, set to launch in July 2026. TK

Liquidation will continue to occupy the remainder of the former Walmart location.

Tillsonburg residents came out to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the town at the Founder's Festival on Oct. 18 in Memorial Park.

With more than 150 members and growing, the Tillsonburg Pickleball Club is calling on the town to help plan for more courts to meet surging demand.

A study on growth analysis shows Tillsonburg leading the county in predicted population growth percentage over the next 40 years. By 2061, the study predicted Tillsonburg's population would grow by 20,500 people to 39,300, more than doubling the 2021 population.

General Motors announced it was ending production of the BrightDrop delivery van at CAMI in Ingersoll.

Town council deferred a decision on a proposed affordable and attainable four-story, 47-unit apartment building on town-owned land on Earle Street. The application was for a zone change to Medium Density Special

Residential and an official plan amendment to accommodate the building at 31 Earle Street. Several residents showed up to speak against the proposal.

A battery energy storage facility is in the early planning stages for the Town of Tillsonburg by Skyline Energy.

Tillsonburg resident Tamara Bull is looking to collect 519 pairs of socks as part of an initiative to assist area homeless people.

## November

Members and past members of the Tillsonburg Rotary Club came from near and far to celebrate the club's 75th anniversary since its establishment in Tillsonburg.

Three Canadian organizations are coordinating efforts to offer mental health support for Jamaican foreign migrant workers struggling to deal with Hurricane Melissa's devastation.

Nurse Practitioner's Week had an extra special meaning at Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital with the success of a year of the Rapid Assessment Fast Track (RAFT) program under Nurse Practitioner Krista Wright.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

## FOUNDER'S FESTIVAL

Although Tillsonburg was founded as a forge, hence its original name of Dereham Forge, lumber was a large part of early industry with a saw mill following after the forge. The Great Canadian Lumberjack show displayed some of the skills early settlers in Ontario would have used on a daily basis, such as log rolling pictured here, as entertainment at the free-of-charge event on Oct. 18 in Memorial Park. The event featured much more as the bicentennial of the founding of the town was celebrated.

**Wishing you  
a happy and  
healthy 2026!**

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(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Tillsonburg's new mural was unveiled on the wall of the library. The Canada Connects Nature's Bounty Mural Mosaic is a nationwide program to bring the country together through art. From left, Mark Renaud, executive director of Downtown Tillsonburg BIA; Tabitha Verbuyst, executive director of the Station Arts Centre; and Vanessa Fortner, events and marketing coordinator with the BIA, unveiled the mural.



# 2025 MONTH BY MONTH



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

The Tillsonburg Rotary Club's 75th anniversary celebrations drew 16 past presidents to the celebration. Left to right are: (front row) Jay Weiler, Tom Heeney, Ann Kamenar, Gloria Aykroyd, Harold Moore, Don Watkins, Jack Parker, (back row) Cam McKnight, Bob Aykroyd, Frank Moore, Scott Campbell, Brian Clark, Dave Rushton, John Gilvesy, John Lohuis, and Keith Hodgkinson. Past-presidents Jim Donaldson and Rick Cox were absent from the photo.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

## NIGHTTIME SANTA CLAUS LIGHTS UP TOWN

Tillsonburg's Santa Claus parade was another success with people lining the streets along the entire route. More than 100 floats, walkers and vehicles took part in the parade, with the last float carrying the one everyone was waiting for – Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Tillsonburg's new manager of innovation and strategic initiatives is hoping to help chart the course for the future of the town while keeping economic constraint in mind. Peter Raji started in the newly-created position on Sept. 29.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada lamprey control crews started treatment of the Big Otter Creek on Oct. 17, and continued into November. The initial application of 3-trifluoromethyl-4-nitrophenol (TFM) was on the Otter Creek where it crosses Cornell Road near Otterville.

A controversial development on Earle Street was given the go-ahead by town

council at the Nov. 10 meeting.

Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital and Alexandra Hospital Ingersoll are two of five health care facilities in the province being added to an innovative program to assist patients to transition from hospital to home. Called the Hospital to Home (H2H) Program, it is designed to promote safe and timely transitions from hospital to home for eligible patients, providing up to 16 weeks of wrap-around services to be delivered in their home or community setting following discharge.

Town council approved a \$7,000 engineering report on the integrity of the Rotary Clock Tower's brickwork, putting

off repairs as the possibility of an entire rebuild was raised.

First Baptist Church in Tillsonburg was like returning home for Pastor Dave Heinrichs, who grew up in Port Rowan area.

## December

Tillsonburg council turned down \$85,000 in funding for a feasibility study for what it terms a Multi-Use Recreational Facility (MURF) at the Nov. 24 meeting, but did set money aside to complete the study in the future.

Tillsonburg Helping Hand Food Bank coordinator Samantha Hamilton is asking area residents to consider donating food when making seasonal giving decisions.

A proposal to expand the boundaries of the Downtown Tillsonburg Business Improvement Association will not be proceeding, council decided.

The Tillsonburg Salvation Army will not be sending out their Christmas appeal letter this year, but there are many other ways to contribute, including the kettle campaign, making online donations or dropping off cheques to the Salvation Army locations.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

## WITCHES' NIGHT OUT

All sorts of witches, ghouls and goblins descended on downtown Tillsonburg on Oct. 23 and Oct. 25 for events sponsored by the Downtown Tillsonburg BIA. Thursday night saw 14 downtown businesses participating in a variety of activities from a medium and special sales to local bars offering special drinks. This group of witches, from the left, Nancy O'Hara, Angela Ward, Katie Rooyakkers, Keeley O'Hara and Amanda Hosanna, enjoyed a potion at The Copper Mug.=



# 2025 MONTH BY MONTH

Members of Oxford County Council recently had their first look at next year's document, which comes in with an operating budget of \$227.8 million and a capital portion of \$127.9 million.

Tillsonburg has made another list of the top 10 places to live in Canada.

The Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA) board is opposing major changes to Ontario's 36 conservation authorities. The proposal would see existing conservation authorities amalgamated into seven.

The Salvation Army's new officer, Major Denise Walker, is enjoying her first

Christmas season in Tillsonburg.

Tillsonburg council turned down a proposal to build a battery storage facility on an industrial property at 500 Highway 3, but said the decision may be revisited in the future.

A financial review of the Downtown Tillsonburg Business Improvement Association, in connection with an anonymous letter circulated last summer, found "no wrong-doing or financial irregularities".

Local country artist Olivia Mae Graham's debut album, Nobody, is now available digitally, along with vinyl and CDs.

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(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

### CHRISTMAS DECOR HIGHLIGHTED IN TOUR

Amongst the stunning images in each of the locations included in the annual Tour of Homes organized by the Station Arts Centre, the concept of Christmas and welcoming people into the homes was captured well at the Lisgar Avenue home of Dennis and Christy Jeffery with Doreta Topan at the door, greeting guests while two giant nutcrackers provided an honour guard. The tour included six homes and businesses, and had more than 200 participants.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Dignitaries saluted as members of the choir from the Oxford Christian Reformed School choir performed O Canada.



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I'm the first day of the year, a fresh start for everyone here. What am I?  
*New Year's Day*

I'm shouted at midnight, loud and bright, to welcome the new year's night. What am I?  
*"Happy New Year!"*

I sparkle and boom in the sky so high when midnight arrives. What am I?  
*Fireworks*

I fall from above, tiny and light, and cover the floor at midnight. What am I?  
*Confetti*

I'm a list of promises made with care, but often forgotten by February. What am I?  
*New Year's resolutions*

I'm a party sound you blow, loud and silly, to steal the show. What am I?  
*Noisemaker*

I'm a shiny ball that drops down slow to signal it's time to go. What am I?  
*New year's ball drop*

SUDOKU

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Solutions on Page 27

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If for some reason you will be dining alone on December 25th please come and share a free Christmas Dinner with us! Individuals and families are welcome.

## MUSIC JAM AT THE TILLSONBURG LEGION

**Saturday, December 27: 1 p.m.-4 p.m.**  
 featuring Ken Lighthouse and the Northshore Ramblers. Only \$7 admission. Cash bar available. All Welcome.

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## INTERESTED IN BRIDGE?

Join us every Friday at the Tillsonburg Duplicate Bridge Club at 1 p.m. at The Senior Centre. Don't have a partner? Come anyway and we will match you up with someone. For more information, visit their

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## TILLSONBURG LIONS

The Tillsonburg Lions meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays. You are invited to their dinner meetings in the Lion's Den at the Community Centre. If you are interested in giving back to your Community contact Jim at 519 409 0876 for more information.....all are welcome.

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**WHERE:** Ingersoll Public Library 130 Oxford St., Ingersoll  
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## WOODSTOCK

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## TREES

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

## OBITUARY

### L. ELAINE HALLETT



At the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital with her loving husband holding her hand as she passed, Lillian Elaine Hallett of Tillsonburg on Monday, December 15, 2025 at the age of 79 years.

Loving and devoted wife of 60 ½ years to her husband Denis. Elaine will be sadly missed by her children Donald and

Derek Hallett. She was predeceased by her eldest son Daniel (October 2025). Grandmother to Ashley. Sister to Raymond (Joan) Bloomfield.

As per Elaine's wishes, cremation has taken place. Memorial donations to the SPCA/Humane Society may be made directly online with the charity or via a cheque by contacting Ostrander's Funeral Home (519-842-5221) who have been entrusted by the family.

Condolences and memories may be shared at [www.ostrandersonline.com](http://www.ostrandersonline.com)

## OBITUARY

### GEORGE F. ROBINSON



George F. Robinson of Brownsville, Ontario, passed away peacefully on December 7, 2026, following complications due to Alzheimer's disease. George is survived by his wife Gloria Jean Robinson (Connor) of Springfield, Ontario, with whom he shared 58 years of marriage. He is also survived by his son Greg Robinson and daughter-in-law Bernadette, and

by his cherished granddaughter Amelia and her husband Sean.

George was born in Courtland, Ontario, to Russell Robinson and Gladys Robinson (Viet), both predeceased. He is survived by his sisters Evelyn Ferguson (the late Max Ferguson) of Springfield, Ontario; Muriel McGibbon (the late David McGibbon) of Guelph, Ontario; Joan Gregson and Robert Gregson of Strathfordville, Ontario; and Ella Mae Graydon and David Graydon of Cambridge, Ontario. George was deeply loved by sisters and is greatly missed.

As the owner of George Robinson Electric, he was known for his integrity and strong work ethic. He was always willing to help in an emergency, even in the middle of the night, which earned him the respect of his neighbours and the farming community.

As a man of steadfast faith, George dedicated much of his life to serving in his local churches, including North Broadway Baptist Church (Tillsonburg), Springfield Baptist Church (Springfield), and Truth Community Church (Thamesford). He believed in supporting missions and never missed an opportunity to share his faith with others.

George found great joy in farming, boating, and woodworking. He is and will forever be greatly missed by all who knew him. A memorial come-and-go open house will be hosted at Springfield Baptist Church on January 3, 2026 from 11am to 2pm, for those who wish to pay their respects to Gloria Jean and the rest of the family. Cremation has already taken place and George will be laid to rest at the family farm, a place he loved more than any other in this world.

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## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Six seven
2. Ernie Clement
3. Anora
4. Oklahoma City Thunder (basketball)
5. Kananaskis, AB
6. Pope Leo XIV
7. Zohran Mamdani
8. NVIDIA
9. India
10. Ahmed al-Ahmed

## SUDOKU

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



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### HOLIDAY HOURS

December 24 - 27 - Closed

December 28 - 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

December 29 - 30 - 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

December 31 - January 1 - Closed

January 2 - 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

January 3 - Closed

January 4 - 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

