

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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A conversation with Woodstock's Police Chief – Part 2

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Echo focused on the related issues of homelessness, mental health and drug abuse in part 1 of this story. Today, we will look at some of the other challenges facing the Woodstock Police Service.

The city has recently had two instances of gun violence, one resulting in the suicide of a man and the shooting of his wife in what police are calling intimate partner violence with an illegal gun. The couple's baby, found in a stroller, was unharmed. The second shooting was a brazen daylight drive-by where several bullets were shot into a city home. Police are still investigating.

"It's a major concern. Gun violence is increasing. I knew we would get to this point because the city is growing exponentially and with that comes higher crime. Brantford, down the road, has experienced a lot of gun violence and it was just a matter of time before it came here," explained Chief Rod Wilkinson.

He said he's seen many more guns seized in Woodstock over the last three years during arrests for drug trafficking and even at routine traffic stops and added it is difficult at the local level to be proactive when it comes to illegal weapons.

"When we get one, we try to trace it back to where it came from and that could give us some leads. But you're right, we just happen upon it or we get some information someone might have one."

Another concern for Wilkinson and his police service is the drug trade. He told the Echo there is a constant demand for drug enforcement whether it's the drug intelligence section executing warrants or officers on the road.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3



BIG NIGHT OUT CHARITY BALL

Costumed staff of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oxford County welcomed guests at the 8th Annual Big Night Out Charity Ball. Story on page 10.

(RON YUZARK PHOTO)

Zorra not ready for wind power

LEE GRIFFI *Local Journalism Initiative Reporter**with files from CONNOR LUCZKA*

Members of Zorra Township may not have followed the 160 or so other municipalities in Ontario to declare itself an unwilling host for wind power but ProWind or any other company won't be building there any time soon.

Mayor Marcus Ryan took a unique approach to not allowing any wind development in the township as council unanimously passed his motion at last week's regular meeting in Thamesford. It essentially said the township doesn't have enough information on wind power to make any decision.

The motion, in part, read, "...the Township of Zorra does not have, nor should be expected to have, the expertise or resources necessary to make an informed decision as to whether or not to provide a Municipal Sup-

port Resolution for an energy project..."

Ryan said he has always championed the protection of prime agricultural land and protection of the environment but has been struggling with the lack of information on wind power.

"We try to make our decisions based on information, not on opinion. What each of the five of us will decide with that information is another matter, but we should at least have information in front of us."

He added any decision on wind power is a difficult one since there is nothing illegal about it.

"As the head of council, I am going to have to go to a resident and say I am going to let your neighbour put up a wind turbine even though you don't want them to. Or, I am going to have to go to someone and say I know it is your private property and the province has made a turbine a legally permitted use, but I'm not going to let you do it."

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



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Mayor Ryan's motion passed unanimously

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Ryan said he doesn't have the ability to defend either of those decisions but he is concerned about predictions from the Independent Electricity System Opera-

tor there will be brownouts or blackouts within the next five to ten years if significant amounts of electricity generation are not brought online.



Helmut Schneider, vice president of renewable energy development at Prowind Inc., fields a question at the community information night held by Prowind on Oct. 8 in the Embro Community Centre. About 100 Zorra residents came to hear from Prowind's leadership regarding a potential wind turbine project in the municipality – a project that was subsequently squashed at the following council meeting on Oct. 16.

(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

“At some point, decisions are going to have to be made by the province about what that electricity generation is, where it comes from and how it is transmitted. If it's not wind turbines here, where a municipality does have some kind of say and where a private property owner has a say, if the province decides to put 500 turbines on the Bruce Peninsula there will be a hydro corridor that runs from there to here.”

He explained the township would have no say as property owners or municipalities about where those hydro corridors end up.

Coun. Paul Mitchell was the most vocal opponent of wind power among elected officials. He explained he thought Ryan was in favour of wind power in Zorra and had no idea the motion was being introduced.

“I can't speak for the rest of council, but I was totally taken by surprise. I did not see that coming at all.”

He added he is cautiously pleased the motion was passed.

“It appears to have derailed ProWind's proposal, at least for now, but it will be interesting to see if they fold their tent or if they keep trying to recruit landowners for another try later on. I am pleased we have won the short-term battle.”

He added he is cautious since the motion is based on the idea it is impossible for the township to get enough information to make an informed decision.

“What I would have preferred is that council looked at the available information and overwhelmingly the risk outweighed the benefits of wind turbines and we listened to the input from our residents, which is overwhelmingly against building them. I would have liked to make an unconditional statement that we are not going to support having (wind power) in Zorra.”

He added if the province changes the rules surrounding wind power, the township could be open to providing support.

“The way I look at it, we won an im-

portant battle but the war isn't over yet.”

Angie Zilke is part of a group of Zorra residents who formed to provide an organized opposition to wind power. She explained the decision by council wasn't strong enough for the group's liking and things could change quickly.

“It's not permanent enough. We need to be on guard, carry on forward and remain very vigilant. We will have to go over delegations coming to council meetings just to be aware of what's going on. The feeling is (Warden Ryan) has kind of pumped the brakes but the possibility of (wind power) hasn't stopped, it just slowed down.

She added the group will continue to lobby against wind power in Zorra.

“I feel the signs were helpful if farmers were on the fence. Just knowing how everyone around them felt. There is a veil of silence over this whole thing and no one would admit if they were talking to (ProWind).”

The emergence of Wind Concerns of Zorra Township didn't take long to drum up the support of hundreds of Zorra residents against wind turbines.

“We had instant support. Everyone felt strongly about it to begin with. The health concerns are very real and no matter where you go you can find people affected by it.”

ProWind recently held an information meeting in Embro where close to 100 residents grilled spokesperson Helmut Schneider. Zorra resident Anita Fraser asked the question on everyone's mind at that meeting.

“If you have a landowner who has agreed to (hosting a turbine), but all the surrounding farmers around them say no, does that make a difference?”

Although it was meant to be an information session, many of the questions residents asked were answered with a “We don't know yet,” highlighting exactly the issue Ryan and council took in its recent decision not supporting the project in this instance.



William Matheson stood up midway through the two-hour meeting, saying that he feels like rural residents are second class citizens.

(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

Echo

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Guns, drugs and human resources and body cams at the forefront

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

“Road officers doing traffic stops have run into a lot of drugs. Not just your simple possession, but trafficking. Our officers are out there stopping vehicles and finding this stuff. They are keen, just out of police college and they want to get these drugs off the streets.”

Wilkinson added drugs are always going to be a problem because when one person gets arrested and shut down the next one will come in.

“We are constantly on the ground looking for drugs. I have increased the drug unit staff by one and my plan is to add another officer sometime soon. I’m not sure I will be able to post that before the end of the year, but if not in 2025. I need to get some hiring done before I can pull the trigger on that.”

When it comes to hiring, the force is constantly recruiting both uniform and non-uniform staff.

“We are hiring like crazy. When I took over as chief one of my goals was to increase the size of the police service. There weren’t enough officers and we were running short of our minimum strength all the time. We had officers working overtime and we have a part-time program to fill in holes.”

Wilkinson added there are currently some officers on mental health leave as a result of the severity of calls they are attending.

“The more trauma they see, the more it can affect them. We needed to increase the numbers based on our call volume but we also need to spread those calls out amongst our officers. Some officers are doing nine to ten calls a day and if five are trauma events and not spread out amongst the platoon, that is why we need to increase our numbers to help mental health. We need to answer the calls and be adequate and effective in our duties.”

The chief explained he is pleased with the hiring of 17 new officers joining the force in the last two years.

“I still have some openings I need to

fill and part of that is because of a few retirements and a couple left for different jobs, getting out of policing altogether. We are still looking but don’t get the number of applications a fire department would receive.”

Wilkinson added the force is trying to get themselves out there to generate more interest by utilizing social media and attending job fairs throughout southern Ontario. Officers also set up a booth at the recent Woodstock Home Show. He admitted recruiting isn’t easy for more than one reason.

“We are finding some of our applicants fail their physical testing to ensure they can meet the demands of the job. That drops us down already before we even get to the interview process. I see that as our struggle. We’ve had great recruiting when it comes to experienced officers with a few coming from Brantford and Stratford and they’ve all come here with a great work ethic.”

He explained the majority of officers on the road are young and he’d like more veterans to balance that.

“Experience is a big thing. If you have ten years on the road compared to one year, there’s a big difference in how to do the job, investigate and even from a safety standpoint.”

Something new people will see as part of Woodstock officers’ equipment is body cams. Wilkinson said part of rolling out the new hardware is a civilian role behind the scenes to save the video footage.

“We are just finishing the interview process for our digital evidence management analyst. I would think by the time we roll it out it will be 2025 so we wanted to get a civilian analyst to learn the body cams from the start and be able to train the officers at the same time. We don’t want a failure with the program and want to roll it out when everyone knows what they are doing.”

The force is also hiring an information processing data clerk who will assist the



Woodstock Police Headquarters.

(WOODSTOCK POLICE SERVICE WEBSITE PHOTO)

analyst and court office.

“Because we lay so many charges it’s tough for one person to get all that work done. I see a need for those two new positions plus a new part-time clerk for our front office. They take care of a lot of accidents, the front counter and police checks.”

In recent months the Woodstock Police Service has ramped up its social media presence, informing residents of news and arrests in the city. Wilkinson admits it opens up for force for criticism from some people but at the same time, he felt

the public needs to know what they are doing.

“Our media presence hasn’t been the greatest and I’m not happy with that so when you reached out, I was like, let’s go. And Jamie (Taylor, an inspector) has been instrumental in bringing forward some of our media releases and getting us out there a little more. I think you will see us on Rogers TV soon also.”

Wilkinson wanted to remind members of the public and the media the Police Services Board meetings are open and available virtually.



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Ingersoll Chamber celebrates award winners

STAFF
Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

The Ingersoll District Chamber of Commerce hosted the 32nd Annual Awards of Excellence on Oct. 17 at The Elm Hurst Inn and Spa.

Business/Industry of the Year Sponsored by: POW Engineering

Fairbanks-Westend Automotive

Agricultural Award Sponsored by: CIBC

Jakeman's Maple Products

President's Award Sponsored by: Ingersoll Chamber of Commerce

Good For the Soll

Youth Entrepreneur/Citizen Sponsored by: Community Futures Oxford

Daniel Destine

Mark Warnick Citizen of the Year Sponsored by: The Rotary Club of Ingersoll

Sam Horton

Ted Hunt – Large Industry of the Year Sponsored by: Town of Ingersoll
GM CAMI Assembly



Alan Simm of Community Futures Oxford awarded Daniel Destine with the Youth Entrepreneur/Citizen award. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)



Adam Funnell presented Sam Horton with the prestigious Citizen of the Year award. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

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Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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5. Newspapers document history
6. Newspapers strengthen communities
7. Advertisers, big or small, should profit from their ads (meaning sensible ad rates)
8. Newspapers should be locally-owned and operated

Cemetery encampment cleaned up

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Another encampment in the City of Woodstock has been cleaned up but this one was on private property meaning once the inhabitants were escorted off by police, the cleanup was the cemetery's responsibility.

Several people set up the camp at the

Baptist Cemetery for about three weeks. Police weren't sure if it was actually on CN land which is adjacent to the property, but after confirming it was on cemetery property they stepped in. The mess left behind was the responsibility of the cemetery to take care of.

John Dobbs is one of the caretakers of the Knox Presbyterian Cemetery which is adjoined to the Baptist property. He

helped with the cleanup and couldn't believe what he saw.

"The fellow who works with me came over and gave me a hand. It took us about 10 hours in total. We just bagged it. We threw all the needles, condoms, methadone and naloxone kits. There was all sorts of garbage and drug paraphernalia."

Dobbs added he wasn't alarmed with

what he found but was taken aback by how bad the mess was.

"I wasn't really surprised. I knew they were using but I was surprised they would just throw it everywhere. There were four or five tents in total. There were shopping carts filled with garbage."

He said they also found bicycles, a popcorn machine, barbeque, children's toys and two inflatable swimming pools.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 6

Weekend Quiz

- 1) What was the cause of Marilyn Monroe's death?
- 2) The thyroid gland is in which body part?
- 3) Muchacho is Spanish for what?
- 4) Who is the creator of the show Hot Ones?
- 5) What is the capital of Bulgaria?
- 6) What temperature does water boil at?
- 7) Dionaia muscipula is usually referred to as what?
- 8) Which birds can learn to mimic human speech?
- 9) What was the name of John F. Kennedy's wife?
- 10) What does Mario jump on after completing a level?

This week's answers are found on
pg. 31

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Woodstock councillor asks city to reimburse labour costs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

"It took us about an hour to clean a five-foot square piece. We couldn't move an inch or two without picking a piece of garbage up. We had to be careful with the needles and little pieces of glass from pipes. I think that bothered us more than anything. There was garbage thrown anywhere and everywhere."

Once the garbage was piled up the person who cuts the grass at the cemetery donated his time and efforts to load it all onto his truck, take it to the dump and pay the tipping fee.

While there are supports available for homeless people in Woodstock, Dobbs felt more resources are needed to help those with mental health issues, something the city used to have.

"They should have never closed the Ontario Regional Center down. We had all these people being looked

after then the government said it was too expensive to look after them that way. Now the municipality is paying the price."

He added a lot of homeless people don't want to be helped which doesn't make the situation in Woodstock any easier to improve.

Councillor Deb Tait tabled a motion at the last regular council meeting that \$500 be provided to the cemetery staff who cleaned up the mess left behind after police stepped in to have the inhabitants removed. It will be voted on at the Nov. 7 meeting. Tait would like to see the money come from the Mayor's Social Well-Being Task Force.

"It was an absolute mess. Because the encampment was on private property they had to look after the cleanup themselves. The gentlemen who did it, two are in their 70s and one in

his 80s. I asked them how long it took them. The \$500 won't cover all of it, but at least it's something."

She added more needs to be done.

"We haven't done anything about these encampments so part of the responsibility falls on the city."

Tait explained the cemetery workers weren't so much upset about having to clean the mess left behind, it was more the fact homeless people had set up shop there where people visit their departed loved ones.

"They were stealing items off of the headstones. That was the hard part, what these people did in there."

Woodstock City Council spent \$100,000 cleaning up an abandoned encampment at the end of Clarke Street and then added another \$100,000 the encampment budget line as a result.



An encampment at a Woodstock cemetery was recently cleaned up by staff after police attended to remove those living there. Councillor Deb Tait is asking the city to reimburse the cemetery for their efforts. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Woodstock Police briefs

LEE GRIFFI
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Fire alarm leads to charges

A 26-year-old female with no fixed address is facing two criminal charges after police were called to the Dollarama at 645 Dundas Street on Sunday, Oct. 20th, just before 11:30 a.m.

Police say the woman, who was causing a disturbance inside the store, pulled the fire alarm before fleeing the scene. The store, along with Foodland and Goodlife Fitness also had to vacate patrons. Police and firefighters attended to deal with what was reported as a possible fire.

The suspect was located and has been charged with false alarm of fire and public mischief.

Police would like to remind the public that anyone who willfully and without reasonable cause sets off a fire alarm will be criminally charged and face up to two years in jail. Emergency responders have to unnecessarily attend on scene, wasting time that can be spent on other important and legitimate calls for service.

Woodstock man arrested after assault

A 41-year-old Woodstock man has been charged after police were called to investigate two separate assaults in the area of Brant and Graham Streets on Oct. 7 and Oct. 8.

Police say their investi-

gation revealed a female was assaulted in her residence on numerous occasions, causing her to fear for her safety and flee for an extended period. The female victim is well known to the suspect and suffered minor injuries.

The suspect was held in custody pending a bail hearing and has been charged with assault and assault by choking causing bodily harm.

Damage at car wash leads to arrest

A 48-year-old Woodstock man has been charged after police were called to the Laserwash at 771 Dundas Street on Sept. 29 after a report of damage to a payment kiosk. Police say a male was paying for his car wash just before 9:30 a.m. allegedly punched the touchscreen kiosk screen causing almost \$4,000 in damage.

He was charged with mischief under \$5,000 and released with a future court date.

City male charged with impaired and assault

A 25-year-old male from Woodstock is facing impaired driving charges after an incident during the afternoon of Oct. 15.

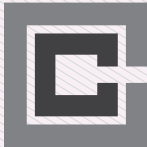
Police say they performed a motor vehicle stop on an erratic truck travelling on Rathbourne Avenue where a male driver failed a roadside breath test. While at the police station, police allege the suspect spat in an officer's face.

The male has been charged with impaired driving and assaulting a peace officer along with having open alcohol and cannabis readily available in his vehicle.

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Ingersoll Downtown BIA to hold official ceremony of original memorial honouring veterans



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

STAFF

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

The Ingersoll Downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA) is proud to announce an upcoming dedication ceremony for a unique memorial honouring veterans of all races and cultural backgrounds.

The original memorial will be presented on Nov. 11 during the town's Remembrance Day Ceremony. Located at the corner of Oxford Street and King Street, near the cenotaph, the memorial stands as a lasting tribute to the sacrifices of those who have served.

The design reflects a message of unity and respect, prominently featuring the phrase "lest we forget" in both French and English, along with Indigenous languages. The Oneida phrase "all the people remember, thank you, warriors," and the Anishnaabemowin (Ojibwe) phrase "all my relations remember, thank you warriors," acknowledge the contributions of Indigenous warriors, workers, and farmers. Indigenous Language Carriers from Atlohsa Family Services were consulted by ISAN Director, Patricia Marshal-DeSutter.

Brought to life by local artist, Deb Campbell, the artistic vision was col-

laboratively developed by co-artist, Patricia Marshal-DeSutter, the Legion and the Veteran's Crosswalk Committee. The design features two powerful symbols - a dove and an eagle, which face the text as if speaking the words aloud. The dove symbolizes peace, while the eagle represents love, courage, and strength, which in Indigenous traditions, embodies the memorial's core values.

Framing the memorial are the colors of the Four Directions of the Medicine Wheel - white, yellow, red, and black - representing the diverse races and communities that have served or lost loved ones. These colors align with the four cardinal directions, ensuring the memorial is inclusive and honors all sacrifices made for freedom.

"This memorial is a deeply thoughtful and original creation that reflects the diversity of those who have served and the values of unity and remembrance," said BIA Coordinator, Virginia Armstrong. "We are excited to dedicate this tribute to our veterans, with the community, on Remembrance Day."

The Ingersoll Downtown BIA invites all community members to participate in this collective act of reflection and gratitude.

Sakura House receives huge donation from Verspeeten family



Brothers Dennis and Brian Verspeeten recently presented VON Sakura House with a \$500,000 donation. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

STAFF

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

Dennis and Brian Verspeeten recently presented VON Sakura House with a \$500,000 donation. The gift, which will help support the day-to-day operations, was given in honour of their late father, Archie Verspeeten.

Before he passed away in 2023, Archie expressed his wish to support Sakura House, a 10-bed residential hospice in Woodstock that provides care at no cost to patients.

"Our dad had visited Sakura House on more than one occasion," explained Brian. "He had several friends that required hospice care and then, sadly, his 56-year-old son Alan also became a patient."

Sakura House is Oxford County's only residential hospice, and last year alone saw 276 patients through their end-of-life journey.

"Ultimately, this donation strengthens the heart of our mission—to provide

compassionate care that honours life and offers peace in its final stages," says Janine Jackson, Manager of Home and Community Care at VON Sakura House. "It ensures that Sakura House will continue to be a place where individuals and families can find hope, comfort, and connection at a time when they need it most."

Brian and Dennis also shared that their father felt that "no one is ever too young or too old to make a difference."

"Each year we seek to fundraise over a million dollars to ensure that no patient or their family needs to worry about paying for the care received at Sakura House," says Brittany Bratt, Manager of Fund Development at VON Sakura House. "Although we are partially funded by the government, things like heat, hydro and groceries must be covered through fundraising dollars. The Verspeeten family's gift will have a tremendous impact on those we serve, and we are so grateful for the support of this wonderful family."

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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Discover Dundas Walking tour offering a taste of downtown

EMILY STEWART
Echo Correspondent

A new hospitality networking event involved a walk around the Downtown Woodstock core and sampling a variety of local eats.

About 23 people involved in the local hospitality sector participated in the first-ever Discover Dundas walking trail during the afternoon of Oct. 22. Discover Dundas is a collaborative effort by Oxford Tourism, the Downtown Woodstock BIA, and Ontario's Southwest. The networking event gave hospitality workers a chance to meet other local businesses part of the walking group and stops on the trail.

Participants started at Theatre Woodstock to learn about their shows for the 2024-25 theatre season, the STAGES youth theatre program, and other special events held in the space. Sarah Hodgkinson, marketing and communications coordinator for Theatre Woodstock, also talked about the success of the sold-out run of Rodger and Hammerstein's Cinderella and volunteer opportunities.

The group then sampled seafood ravioli from Finkle Street Tap and Grill, as owner Jenny Peace-Hall talked about the history of the restaurant and its values such as teamwork, respect, and

sourcing ingredients from local businesses such as Gunn's Hill Artisan's Cheese. The walking tour went to Tempo, a new restaurant, where they met owner and chef Sean Mattias and sipped on lemonade and watermelon spritzer cocktails and nibbled on bruschetta, scallops, and arancini.

The group also tried cotton candy, Italian soda, popcorn, and caramels from Reel Treats Popcorn and Sweets after owner Angila Peters talked about the journey from previous ownership of the Oxford Drive-In to opening a store filled with homemade popcorn and other goodies. The walking trail concluded at Whisk and Roll Bakery with pumpkin pie squares. Whisk and Roll Bakery owner Cheryl Swan discussed the variety of baked goods, sandwiches, soups, and pasta dishes offered and her children's involvement in the business.

"I think it was a huge success. We had a great turnout, a wide variety of businesses came," Meredith Maywood, Oxford County tourism specialist, said. "We really got to see what a lot of people don't know is, the amazing opportunity are here for visitors. The visitors know it. We need our locals too."

"Everyone was so happy walking too and I think we had beautiful weather, which added a little bit of a bonus to all that," said Erica Orleni, Oxford County

tourism officer. "There's some amazing places here downtown and to come here and see, and things are always changing. Tempo just opened up 11 days, so definitely a great opportunity to come see all the fantastic stuff that we have."

Opportunities like Discover Dundas also improves word-of-mouth promotion from those who participated in the walking trail.

"Especially for this event, having peo-

ple come and experience and coming to Whisk and Roll," Orleni said. "Then, they can recommend 'Come into Whisk and Roll instead of going to some places.'"

"Everybody here is an ambassador for community," added Maywood. "As well as everybody that lives here."

Maywood and Orleni said that there will be more walking tours like Discover Dundas in the future.



Oxford County hospitality workers mingled during the Discover Dundas walking tour. The walking group went to five Downtown Woodstock businesses and got a taste of the city's core.

(EMILY STEWART PHOTOS)

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Indigenous educator answers 'hoax' conspiracy theorists

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Contributor

Indigenous educator Robyn Michaud's ongoing journey toward truth and reconciliation was co-opted by trolls and recrimination this past Sept. 30.

"There have never been so many denialists of the residential school experience," she stated of a painful National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR) spent in the darker corners of the social media universe, defending years of consistent testimony and outright common sense.

Born and raised in Tillsonburg, Michaud has spoken publicly about her parents' move to town in the 1960s to follow her father's hockey career, and ultimately growing up disconnected geographically and spiritually from her First Nations community, Sagamok Anishnawbek. Although with many painful moments along the way, her journey to reconnect culturally in her adult years not only brought her peace, it helped forge her career path. Today, the Woodstock resident is a Professor of Indigenous Studies at Conestoga College and Indigenous Education Instructor at The University of Western Ontario.

Michaud is clear that Canada's NDTR is not an occasion for celebration but a respectful observance allowing the nation to learn and move forward. Michaud represented her position and marked the day with the following tweet to 4,500 followers on X.

"Today, we observe, not 'celebrate' Orange Shirt Day. It is our Remembrance Day. This day represents many lost children and widespread intergenerational trauma to our communities. It's a time to learn and reflect. #EveryChildMatters."

The tweet was liked 3,400 times, said Michaud and retweeted 1,200 times, however amongst the massively positive response, there were at least 100 extremely negative and hurtful comments.

"There are far more supporters than haters," she credited, "but the haters were horrible."

Michaud said online anonymous comments ranged from calling Indigenous people lazy, alcoholic grifters who just want money from the government to outright denialism, demanding to see the bones of the children reported to be buried at residential school sites across the country.

"We're being told, 'You didn't dig up the bodies, so the whole thing is a hoax,'" she summarized.

It is understandably difficult to find emotional separation when dealing with deeply personal subject matter, particularly in polarized spaces where the primary goal may be gaining attention rather than moving toward truth. Stepping back from that painful immediacy, the educator within Michaud attempts to use these experiences, whenever possible, as an opportunity for constructive



Indigenous educator Robyn Michaud grew up disconnected geographically and spiritually from her First Nations community, Sagamok Anishnawbek. While painful at times, reconnection as an adult brought her peace and helped forge her career path. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

discussion. She is always open to questions, even challenges, although either of those veering into hate speech or denial of the facts is unacceptable. She theorizes that a lot of this pushback online stems from the current state of society where many people are struggling. In this case, when one group is being supported, it may lead to resentment from those who feel they are not personally being supported.

"I get it that people then ask, if Indigenous people are being helped, where is my support," said Michaud, observing even those occupying what are considered positions or demographics of privilege are not exempt from painful issues.

"You have no idea what any individual has gone through in their life."

That said, when it comes specifically to the legacy of residential schooling in Canada, it requires all parties to examine the concrete, historical facts.

To answer the claim that residential school children's deaths were a hoax, Michaud cites six years of Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) testimony from over 6,500 witnesses, including all of the records kept in these schools. Although sloppy documentation was the norm in that time period

These deaths occurred at a rate far higher than the average for children of the time period.

Apart from consistently corroborated testimony from thousands of witnesses, simple common sense dictates that children housed in cramped, crowded conditions with poor nutrition and a lack of care and compassion were more vulnerable to disease, injury and ultimately, death. Moreover, those who succumbed could not physically be repatriated, thus necessitating swift nearby internment.

"TRC Calls to Action 71-76 came about to specifically address the common testimony across all institutions that children were buried in unmarked graves at, or near these schools," said Michaud.

Non-invasive ground-penetrating radar revealed inconsistencies consistent with graves. There has been community consultation around exhuming remains for DNA testing and repatriation, a complex and expensive undertaking.

"Or let these poor children rest," said Michaud.

Encouraged that the great majority of Canadians are open to a constructive path of truth and reconciliation, Michaud remains vigilant to respond and educate when that journey is questioned or challenged. Mutual respect and empathy are key to building an understanding of the truth about this dark chapter in Canadian history.

"You've got to let those walls down and talk to each other," she said, pointing to the symbolic nature of the two-row wampum. "Viewed as a living treaty, it represents two vessels going down the river of life side-by-side, mindful of each other's simultaneous yet separate course. True reconciliation requires the kind of respect and reciprocity it exemplifies. It's not just checking boxes, it's respectful relationship-building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that will move this work forward."

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Big Night Out Charity Ball



Joan Jett was in the house as impersonators Diane Fleming, Tracy Divine, Patricia Wetlaufer and Lori Cook (Board Chair and Joan Jett).

The 8th Annual Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oxford County (BBBSOC) Big Night Out Charity Ball took place on Saturday, October 19th at the Oxford Auditorium, and it was a spectacular evening filled with fun and fundraising. As the largest fundraiser of the year for BBBSOC, the event raised much-needed funds for mentoring programs that serve youth in Oxford County at no cost to families and caregivers. Attendees donned an array of creative costumes, celebrating the spirit of Halloween while contributing to a worthy cause.

The evening started with cocktails at 6 p.m. and a delicious buffet dinner by Beres Butchery and Catering of Tillsonburg. Guests enjoyed a lively dance with a DJ, participated in a silent auction, and had the chance to win exciting prizes, including Gift of Flight vouchers from WestJet. A costume contest added an extra layer of fun, with participants showcasing their imaginative outfits. The atmosphere was filled with laughter, camaraderie, and a shared commitment to supporting the county's youth.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



The three blind mice were Megan Flynn, Sarah Jones and Lauren Ritchie.



Sharing the throne were Sara Shivafard and Clayton Pye.

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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Crafty Corner Tea Room lights up for disability employment awareness

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

A new business owner in Woodstock is hoping more companies light up their windows to show support for employees with disabilities.

The Crafty Corner Tea Room illuminated its windowsill with blue and purple lights on Oct. 17 for National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). The Light It Up for NDEAM event encourages businesses, government offices, and residents across Canada to use purple and blue lights to honour employees with disabilities.

A press release from the Ontario Disability Network (ODEN) noted that Light It Up participation in 2024 was higher than ever, with over 800 locations in over 200 communities.

Marnie Cuthbert-Todd, owner of the Crafty Corner Tea Room, became a passionate advocate for people with disabilities before opening her shop in the spring. She met Michael Szala of JobLinks after initially connecting at a Woodstock Chamber of Commerce event to learn more about the organization providing employment opportunities. She hired

someone with a disability through JobLinks, and then hired more.

"Every one of my people has some kind of disability, varying from needing accommodations to not needing any accommodations," Cuthbert-Todd said.

After meeting with Liz Gosse of the Ontario Corporate Training Centre (OCTC) at a Women in Business Expo in Brantford, Cuthbert-Todd enrolled in courses from the OCTC to learn about hiring and retaining employees with disabilities.

Eventually, she met Dean Askin, communications officer for ODEN and was interviewed for a podcast. Cuthbert-Todd said being the experience brought her to other opportunities such as being interviewed for a McMaster University study on hiring and retaining employees with disabilities. She also was asked by Ontario Minister for Seniors and Accessibility Raymond Cho to talk about her experience.

The Crafty Corner Tea Room, so far, is the only Woodstock business that registered for Light It Up for NDEAM. Although the event is over for 2024, she would like to see more participation from Woodstock.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 14

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BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH CELEBRATES 90 YEARS

As part of the 90th anniversary celebrations at Bethany Lutheran Church, a gift of \$25,000 was presented to Amanda Cook for The Mobile Health Outreach Bus. The presentation was made following the service on Oct. 6. From left to right: Shirley Hickey, Elizabeth Park, David Bald (chair of council), Amanda Blake, and Grace Osinski. (LINDA HOLM PHOTOS)

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TOTCM Night Market well attended



Funnel Cakes were a big hit that evening.

The second annual Truth Christian Ministries Night Market was a great success. Oct. 18 was the evening when 2500 people went into the forest at Freedom Acres Farm to shop near Ingersoll to eat and enjoy the atmosphere of autumn under a full moon and hundreds of lights strung through the forest. Kim Watson, Creative Director for the organization started the event last year with the vendors consisting of the church family and a drama troupe providing an interactive adventure in the forest at the back of the twenty-three-acre farm.

This year, Watson extended the invitation to local artisans, crafters and food vendors. With over 65 merchants offering their wares, the attendance greatly increased.

Along with the vendors, bouncy castle, bonfires, prayer tent and theatrical show, the event was referred to as, "Right out of a Hallmark movie," by one attendee.

Pastors Rene and Brad McIntyre, founders of Trumpet of Truth, which is located at 415 Dundas Street, Woodstock, led the church in the purchase of the farm in the autumn of 2021. The sign

erected on Freedom Acres Farm says, "An organic approach to community."

TOTCM has been blessed to have this beautiful property and wants to use it to bring people together and that's exactly what the Night Market did. The TOTCM Night Market will continue to be an annual event on the third Friday of October. Other events that take place on the farm, are the Family Fun Day, the second Sunday in June and the upcoming Christmas Nativity on the second Friday of December.

This year's Christmas Nativity is entitled, Pa Rum Pa Pum Pum, Come, They Told Me, A Christmas Nativity Event. It will be held on Friday, Dec. 13 from 7 to 10 p.m. Admission is free.

The forest will be lit, the bonfires will glow, food to purchase will be plenty, interactive activities and of course, the celebration of the season, the Christmas Nativity presented beautifully.

This year, begin a new Christmas tradition and come to Freedom Acres Farm and into the woods for an amazing evening of celebration and community.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



A cool fall evening added to the splendor of the event.

Theatre Woodstock to host Leatherbound Halloween screening



(Left to Right) Leatherbound star Teige Atfield and director Michael J. Doyle in front of the film's poster at Hyland Cinema ahead of the premiere on Oct. 17. (EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

After its London premiere had an incredibly positive reception, Leatherbound will have a screening in Woodstock on Halloween night.

Leatherbound, a silent horror film directed by Michael J. Doyle, premiered at a London independent theatre called Hyland Cinema on Oct. 19. The film follows the story of a teenage boy named Dearan, who is deaf, and purchases a leatherbound journal possessed by the demon Lilith. Dearan and Lilith write back and forth to each other in the journal and fall in love, but Lilith has treacherous plans.

When asked before the screening about what it feels like to premiere the movie, Doyle said horrifying.

"When I talk to my other friends who are artists, they say the same thing which is to display your art is putting yourself in such a very vulnerable position, so I'm excited too, but also nervous. How is it going to go down?"

The film's premiere received a positive reception from lots of enthusiastic viewers. The audience roared with applause and cheers during the film's opening and closing credits. During the post-screening Q and A with the cast and crew, Doyle's family members and friends, along with those involved in the film, said the film was well done.

Leatherbound involves some back and forth writing and American Sign Language. Any scene with spoken word dialogue, however, does not have accompanying subtitles. When watching the characters speak to each other verbally, the viewer must lip-read.

"I feel like telling a story from a deaf character's perspective, the medium of silent film is almost optimal for that kind of story," Doyle said. "The other thing is I am a big fan of silent cinema. I adore that medium and it challenges the filmmak-

er to really figure out how to tell a story without the advantage of dialogue, just the visuals."

Leatherbound took four years to finish, with the concept work starting in 2020 and filming in the fall of 2023. Most of the film's cast and crew are from London and the surrounding area, with Teige Atfield, who grew up in Woodstock and is involved in Theatre Woodstock, as the star of the film. Theatre Woodstock's William McLeod and Emilie DeClark are also in Leatherbound.

Atfield said working with Doyle was an enjoyable experience.

"He's such a fun guy," Atfield said. "He knows how to make everyone safe and comfortable on set, even though we were doing such crazy things as a horror silent film. It's exhausting and tiring, but at the same time, he keeps everything light and levitating."

Theatre Woodstock will have a screening of Leatherbound on Oct. 31 starting at 7:30 p.m. with a Q and A with cast and crew occurring after the film.

Doyle, who attended St. Mary's Catholic High School, is looking forward to bringing it to Woodstock on Halloween night.

"A lot of people in Woodstock kind of know me and this will be their opportunity to see the film," he said.

Doyle encourages everyone in Woodstock and area to put a pause on Trick or Treating and spend their Halloween evening watching the movie instead.

"Trick or treating is kind of old-fashioned I would say. Instead of going trick or treating, you should support local art, and I think it's a much better way to spend your Halloween."

Tickets are \$15. The film is not rated but has a content warning for mature themes, some sexual content and violence, and tobacco and alcohol use, along with a photosensitivity warning as some sequences might affect those with epilepsy and other photosensitivity conditions.

Crafty Corner Tea Room lights up for disability employment awareness

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

"As somebody who has hired and will continue to hire people with disabilities for my employment, for my business," Cuthbert said. "It's just important for me to just express to other businesses. I mean, even just city hall would be great, or the museum, or the art gallery or somewhere."

She is looking to speak to the city's Accessibility Advisory Committee, now

that they are back in session following the summer break.

Cuthbert-Todd has a blind volunteer at the Crafty Corner Tea Room on Fridays and Saturdays. She also has an employee and a volunteer who both require a chair, and a volunteer needing an apron with Velcro fabric.

The business is also affiliated with the

OCTC for disability inclusiveness and hiring and has a sticker indicating the workplace is all-inclusive. The business has a ramp at the entrance, spaces between tables to fit strollers, electric scooters, and wheelchairs, large print menus, and an accessible washroom.

Cuthbert-Todd encourages employers to hire people with disabilities and to recruit

employees from places like JobLinks.

"Hiring people for your business who have disabilities is not expensive," she said. "It's not a big oh no, now I got to do this and now I got to - no, it's not that at all. Simply, when you're interviewing you ask if there are there any accommodations someone requires and people will tell you."



Marie Cuthbert-Todd, owner of the Crafty Corner Tea Room, participated in Light It Up for National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) on Oct. 17. She is hoping more Woodstock businesses participate next year. (MARIE CUTHBERT-TODD PHOTOS)

ADVERTORIAL

Exciting News for Our Valued Customers!

We've got some big news on the horizon that we're thrilled to share with you! Starting October 1, 2024, we're merging our five independent stores into one unified brand: **Country Mills Feed & Farm Store**. This means Elgin Feeds in Aylmer, Thorndale Farm Supplies, Oxford Feed Supply in Ingersoll, and Norwich Feeds in both Norwich and Burford will all come together under one roof.

While our name and branding will be changing, what matters most to us remains the same. As a family-owned and locally operated business, our commitment to delivering top-notch products and services for all your animal care needs is as strong as ever. Our community has always been our foundation, and

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staff is passionate about helping you find the right products to meet your needs.

We're so grateful for your support over the years, and we can't wait to serve our community with even more enthusiasm and efficiency. On behalf of the Saarloos family and all of our team, thank you for your continued trust and loyalty.

As we embark on this exciting journey with **Country Mills**, we look forward to growing together with you for many years to come. Stop by or give us a call soon to discover the enhanced offerings and personalized service that await you at your local feed and farm store!

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The Country Mills Team



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Kiwanis Club of Ingersoll collecting winter gear during Coats for Families Drive

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

The Kiwanis Club of Ingersoll wants to ensure families stay warm with proper clothing as the colder months approach.

The organization's Coats for Families Drive will run until Nov. 5. They are accepting new and gently used winter coats, hats, boots, mitts and other winter gear.

"Everything someone would need to stay warm in the wintertime," Brad Hammond, member of Kiwanis Club of Ingersoll and co-chair of the Coats for Families, said.

The club supports children and youth in the town and surrounding areas. The winter clothing drive started as Coats for Kids, but eventually became Coats for Families in order for parents and grandparents to also receive the necessary gear to keep them warm during the frigid months of the year.

Last year, the Kiwanis Club of Ingersoll distributed more than 1,000 coats. In an infographic about the drive posted

on Facebook, the organization said that as of Oct. 20 about 40 coats had been collected but they are looking for more winter items to match or succeed last year's total item count.

Hammond said that more people year-to-year receive winter clothing.

"I don't think it's any secret that there are families in the community that are struggling financially, even more so with inflation in the past few years. It's a chance for those that are fortunate enough, to help out others."

Coats for Families also gives residents a chance to declutter.

"Many of us have winter coats that are not used but are still in very good condition that we don't wear. So, it gives people a chance to clear out their closets a bit with good condition clothing and help out people who could use some assistance in the community," he added.

The Kiwanis Club of Ingersoll is also accepting monetary donations to buy additional clothing items. E-transfers can be sent to kiwaniseft@gmail.com, and any donation over \$20 will be issued a tax receipt.

"Every year, we do have to end up going out and buy new coats and new boots and things," Hammond said. "If we don't have something that fits someone's size, or we've given away all of the boots or something like that. We make sure that no one goes without."

Winter clothing can be donated to the following locations:

- Trinity United Church (118 Church St.)
- Victoria Park Community Centre (355 Wellington St.)
- Ingersoll Arena (97 Mutual St.)
- Pharmasave (19 King Street East)
- Brooks and Company Decorating Centre (25 King St. West)
- Home Hardware Building Centre (15 Samnah Crescent)
- The Olde Bakery Café (120 Thames St. S.)

From Oct. 30 until Nov. 8 the club will distribute winter items to families in need at Trinity United Church.

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Woodstock Ingersoll Echo SPORTS

Junior CASS Knights rock while Under Pressure against East Elgin

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Contributor

Living in a household dominated by country music, not that there's anything wrong with that, Woodstock College Avenue junior Knights' point guard Kaitlyn Vanderspek didn't immediately catch the 'Under Pressure' reference.

"You haven't heard of Queen?" post Julia Baer demanded incredulously, their teammate Jill Strik stepping in with the classic double clap/stomp combination from We Will Rock You.

"That's like my go-to thing if people don't know Queen," Strik explained.

'Under Pressure' - a compilation including David Bowie - was the perfect anthem to accompany the consensus Knights' best game of the season, a narrow 32-30 TVRA South East homecourt loss to the undefeated Aylmer East Elgin Eagles, Thursday, October 17th. Both teams played full-court pressure for the duration, a high-intensity, aggressive battle covering most square feet of the court.

East Elgin enjoyed a 7-4 lead after quarter one, the Knights battling back for a 16-11 halftime advantage. The Eagles handled pressure a little better during the third quarter, more consistent offence resulting in a 24-21 lead after 24 minutes. A Baer put-back and Strik field goal from under the basket cut a five-point deficit to one with 1:36 remaining (31-30), but East Elgin's Allison Slegers picked off a pass under her basket in the dying seconds of an exciting finish, adding one free throw to round the two-point final.

"A fun game," said Vanderspek. "Just one basket." "Play like that against the next team... and the next team," added Baer.

She led the Knights with 10 points, Strik added six, Myla Reisser five, Emily Pye and Vanderspek four each, and Elora Baker one free throw. Alex Centero led the Eagles with 12 points.

It is disappointing to lose admitted Knights' coach Justin Sperduti, but the 3-3 squad had to be happy with how they played against a team whose record is now 6-0.

"When they put together what they have shown they can do in practice, they can play with any other team."

Woodstock St. Mary's Senior Girls 38, Tillsonburg Glendale 24

Oriana Belmonte may not be a huge reader. But she did delve far enough into Charles Dickens' Tale of Two Cities to absorb its best and worst of times opening.

"I think I got halfway through," the Woodstock St. Mary's CHS senior girls' basketball Warrior confessed. "Reading is not my strong suit."

'Best' and 'worst' may be strong language, but Belmonte understood the connection between Dickens' verbiage and her Warriors' 38-24 homecourt TVRA South East senior girls' basketball victory over the visiting Tillsonburg Glendale Gemini Tuesday, October 15th. The win was scripted in a tale of quarters, better and worse times.

The first eight minutes were 'better' for the Warriors, who opened with a 19-0 run, fuelled by ten points from smooth-shooting point guard Leyah Anthony, another half-dozen from Belmonte and three from Leyah's twin sister Aliyah.

"I usually don't make a lot of layups," said Leyah



Woodstock College Avenue Knights Point Guard Kaitlyn Vanderspek (#3) heads upcourt 'Under Pressure' from a quartet of Aylmer East Elgin Eagles. (JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Anthony, pleased to see the ball go in. "The net's kind of rigged," she continued with a smile. "I make a shot, it swirls in and out."

The Warriors 'worse' began with roughly 5:40 to play in the second frame as Tillsonburg's Jiera Dodsley kicked off a 12-0 response with a turnaround bank shot from the foul line.

"We do this a lot," Belmonte admitted. "We usually go down the second quarter and work our way back up."

The Gemini run continued into the third quarter, Tillsonburg point guard Sophia Silliker finding Lucy Panschow under the basket to square accounts at 19 with 3:23 remaining. But Leyah Anthony broke off the Gemini's 19-point streak with a long field goal, the Warriors' 'better' continuing as Belmonte added an offensive putback with 2:07 to go, and then an eight-foot turnaround with 1:03 left to push the St. Mary's advantage to six. Leyah opened the fourth quarter with a nifty assist, running the floor before feeding her twin sister Aliyah. Leyah then laid in a double-digit lead which carried the Warriors to their third consecutive TVRA South East victory. She finished with 16 points to lead all scorers, the Grade 10 Belmonte added 14 and Aliyah Anthony eight. Taylor Sache had seven for Tillsonburg.

Warriors coach Emily Ruxton teaches science, not literature, but she also understood the 'best/worst' analogy.

"The girls got a little too relaxed and they left room for Glendale to come back with a fury. They wanted it more in the second quarter than we did."

Ruxton was pleased to see her team rebound to take league win number three illustrating a resurgence of their own.

"Considering we didn't have a senior team last year... we're small but had a mighty comeback."

The Warriors have worked hard to improve Ruxton says, putting in the time required.

"And it's starting to show."

TVRA South East Senior Girls' Basketball

Thursday, October 17

Aylmer East Elgin 42, Woodstock College Avenue 38

St. Thomas St. Joe's 51, Woodstock CI 37

St. Thomas Parkside 35, Woodstock Huron Park 18

Tillsonburg Glendale 41, Ingersoll DCI 30

Tuesday, October 15

Woodstock CI 50, St. Thomas Central Elgin 44

St. Thomas Parkside 38, Woodstock College Avenue 21

St. Thomas St. Joe's 40, Woodstock Huron Park 20

Thursday, October 10

Woodstock CI 33, Woodstock College Avenue 31

St. Mary's CHS 40, Ingersoll DCI 34

Tuesday, October 8

Woodstock CI 46, Lord Dorchester 27

Woodstock College Avenue 27, Ingersoll 7

Woodstock St. Mary's 34, Woodstock Huron Park 33

Junior

Thursday, October 17

St. Thomas St. Joe's 48, Woodstock CI 29

St. Thomas Parkside 34, Woodstock Huron Park 22

Wednesday, October 16

Woodstock CI 29, Tillsonburg Glendale 9

Tuesday, October 15

St. Thomas Parkside 31, Woodstock St. Mary's CHS 11

Woodstock College Avenue 38, St. Thomas Central Elgin 18

St. Thomas St. Joe's 38, Woodstock Huron Park 14

Thursday, October 10

Woodstock CI 40, Woodstock College Avenue 22

Tuesday, October 8

Woodstock Huron Park 39, Woodstock St. Mary's 22

Woodstock CI 40, Lord Dorchester 20



Woodstock St. Mary's Warriors Leyah Anthony (left), Oriana Belmonte (rear) and Aliyah Anthony (right) close in on Tillsonburg Glendale Gemini point guard Sophia Silliker (centre).

(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

27-17 victory the icing on IDCI quarterback Robbie Allen's birthday cake

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Contributor

Robbie Allen's 17th birthday was already looking pretty good.

Apart from the good chance cake would be part of his day, Allen was optimistic about the possibility of a monitor and a PS5 showing up.

"Your mom said one or the other," girlfriend Liberty Hutson interjected in clarification. "Not both."

In the big picture, not both was a small disappointment, more than offset by Allen's quarterbacking the Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers to a 27-17 TVRA Senior Football victory over the visiting Tillsonburg Glendale Gemini, Thursday, Oct. 10 at IDCI.

"I liked that," he smiled at the significant pre-present present. "I was good with a win."

Tillsonburg did anything but gift-wrap the victory, putting up a spirited battle through highly entertaining first and second halves. The Blue Bombers opened scoring on a 64-yard Declan Thompson pick-six with 2:15 remaining in the opening quarter, leading 6-0 after Ethan Butt's point after try went wide left.

Gemini quarterback Cohen Schott answered with a 14-yard touchdown pass to Brandon Wall, converted for a 7-6 lead by Reid Cameron. Allen responded, capping the ensuing Ingersoll possession, looking the Tillsonburg defence off

to his left on second-and-nine from the 14, before finding Ryan Wolfe deep in the right corner of the endzone. Butt split the uprights with his kick, putting the Bombers back in front, 13-7. Tillsonburg's Dorian Park-Thomas eked a 13-yard field goal through the bottom, right corner of the posts on the final play of the first half, pulling the Gemini within three, trailing 13-10.

The Blue Bombers opened the second half with a scoring drive, capped on the ground with an Allen keeper. Butt's second PAT of the day upped the lead to 20-10. Tillsonburg responded again, Schott throwing a swing pass to Park-Thomas to his left, the latter doing the rest with elusive, breakaway speed down the sideline. Cameron's PAT was good, pulling the visitors back within three points.

In a game featuring effective aerial assaults, it was perhaps fitting the final, and arguably definitive score highlighted the importance of the battles fought in football's 'trenches' between offensive and defensive lines. Driving from their own 25 to the Tillsonburg one, Allen plunged across the goal line behind the left side of an offensive line featuring Team Ontario alumni James Lyttle (centre) and Zach Paton (tackle).

Run plays are Lyttle's favourite thing, part of a play-in, play-out struggle which may not often get noticed, but is crucial in deciding a game's outcome.

"It's ugly, but in a good way if you know what I mean," smiled Lyttle, who also contributed a third-down strip sack from the defensive end on Tillsonburg's final drive, locking up a ten-point victory rounded by Butt's third PAT of the afternoon.

"It was two very well-matched teams," Ingersoll CI coach Terry Parker summed up. "That's the bottom line."

The win squared the Blue Bombers' record at 2-2, heading into a regular season closing encounter with powerhouse St. Thomas St. Joe's. Parker understands the game has changed since the early 1980s. A drop in IDCI's student body along with part-time jobs makes it tougher to run a senior football program, challenges reflected across a schedule featuring London and Elgin County teams. While appreciating and understanding the new rivalries and reality, Parker still finds all-Oxford games against Tillsonburg and Woodstock College Avenue bring something special to the field.

"I think it's important to recognize there's still some good football between these three towns."

JUNIOR

Ingersoll DCI 14, Tillsonburg 7

The junior Blue Bombers went to 4-0 on their TVRA Football season, but not without a tough battle says coach Nick DiCiocco.

"They were on our 10-yard line with 15 seconds left," he smiled after locking up a tense



Birthday boy and Ingersoll DCI Blue Bomber quarterback Robbie Allen evades the would-be tackle of Tillsonburg Glendale's Dominick Klassen.

(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

come-from-behind victory.

Tillsonburg's Gavin Balazs opened scoring on a touchdown with 10:38 remaining in the second quarter, a lead upped to seven points on a rouge near the end of the half. Ingersoll's Logan Janzen got his team on the board on a dive play with 6:30 to play in the third quarter. A penalty on Tillsonburg following the play placed the ball at the one, from where Janzen ran the ball in for a two-point convert and 8-7 lead. Janzen's second TD of the day made it 14-7 with eight minutes remaining in the fourth, setting the stage for a dramatic finale.

"For me it was stressful - for the crowd, it was exciting," said DiCiocco.

The game marked a measure of revenge against a respected opponent who had beaten Ingersoll the previous season. The Blue Bombers were scheduled to close out their regular campaign on the road against a 'rock solid' St. Thomas St. Joe's team, before looking to a post-season run in which DiCiocco would be content to not include Tillsonburg.

"It's hard to beat the same team twice, and Sean (VanBeers) is a great coach."

TVRA Senior Football

Friday, October 18
Woodstock College Avenue 42, Tillsonburg Glendale 7
CASS - Jevaughn Roberts 3 touchdowns, Teshaine Peach 2 TD, Sutherland, Ashman 1 TD each, Kaleb Krupp 6 PAT.

Glendale - Dorian Park-Thomas 1TD, Reid Cameron PAT.

St. Thomas St. Joe's 35, Ingersoll DCI 0
Thursday, October 10
Woodstock College Avenue 17, Aylmer East Elgin 7
CASS Scoring - Jevaughn Roberts, Teshaine Peach a touchdown each, Kaleb Krupp one field goal and two PAT.

JUNIOR

Friday, October 18
Tillsonburg Glendale 35, Woodstock College Avenue 0
Wernham 2 TD, Dodsley, Balazs, McMaster, Cato, 1 TD each. Balazs 5 PAT.

St. Thomas St. Joe's 42, Ingersoll DCI 6



Tillsonburg Gemini receiver Nolan Prefontaine (right) tries to gather in a long Cohen Schott pass against the defensive attention of Ingersoll DCI's Carson Berry.

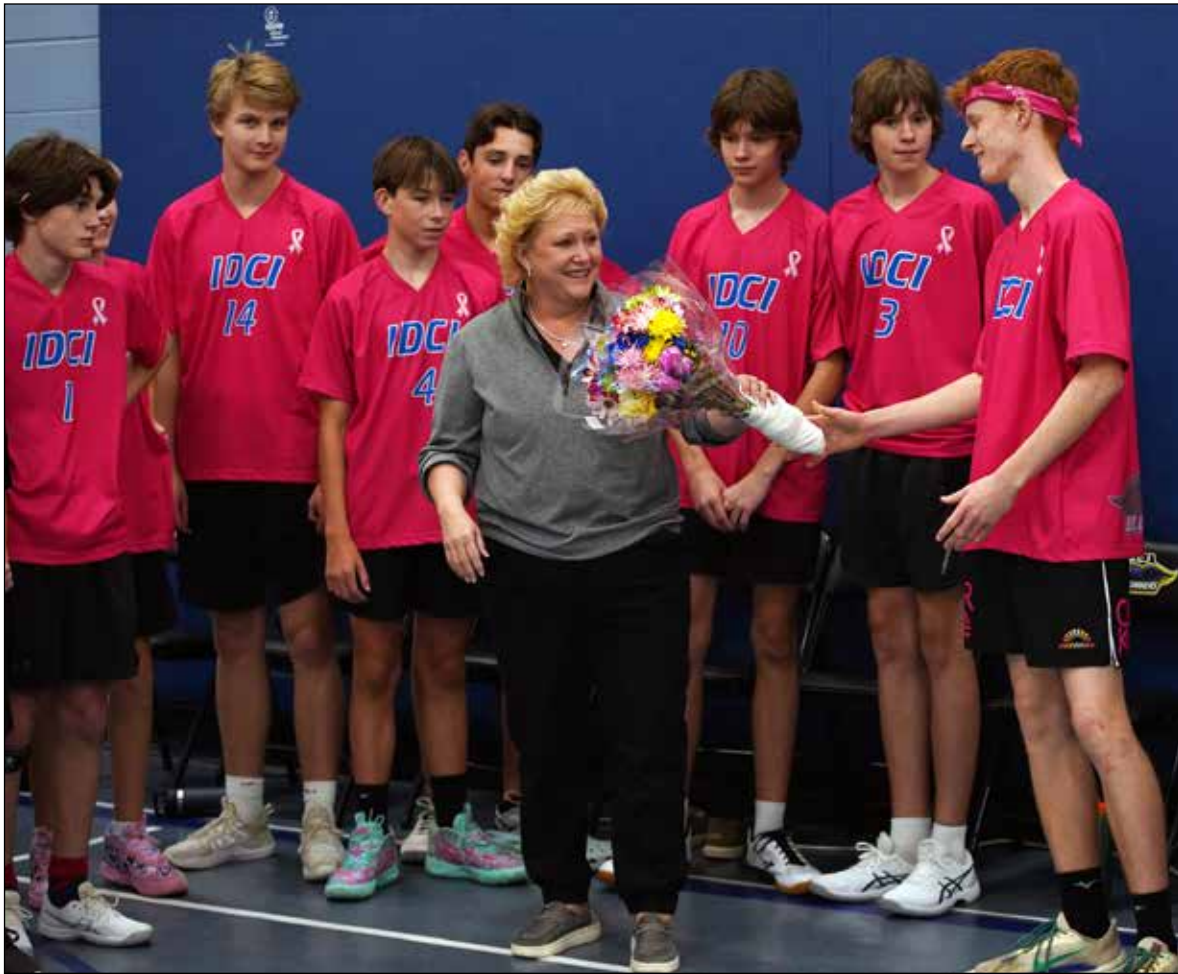
(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)



Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers receiver Trey Dawns (left) pulls in a long pass from quarterback Robbie Allen despite the best efforts of Tillsonburg Glendale's Owen Hayes.

(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Of death, taxes and the Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers volleyball program



Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers setter/left side Zach Brouwer presents junior Bombers coach Sharon Docherty with a bouquet marking the final regular season home game of her 30-year career. (JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Contributor

Death, taxes and the fact the Ingersoll DCI Blue Bombers volleyball program can be expected to put competitive teams on the court are among life's few certainties.

"The culture is established young and continues up," said Blue Bombers left side Nathan Law following a 25-16, 25-14, 25-14 TVRA South East senior boys' volleyball win over the visiting Tillsonburg Glendale Gemini Thursday, Oct. 17.

"Competitive, always solid," Law continued. "Guys who are willing to work hard, put in the time and commit to each other."

"It's continuity," summed up IDCI coach and Athletic Director Chris Adkins.

Ties to Blue Bombers volleyball run deep. On this day, junior coach Sharon Docherty was presented with a bouquet of flowers marking her final regular season home game of a 30-year career. Adkins coached one of her current players (Jack Pearson) mother Sarah, and also his assistant coach Mike Pelton during Adkins' first year as bench boss. Two years ago, an IDCI alumni volleyball tournament attracted 250 former players Adkins continued,

and all of their coaches, a list of honour including Judy Vardon, Mary Fitzmorris, Dave Alexander and Kelvin Hui.

"It's that continuity and how much people care about it."

Thursday's win pushed Ingersoll's regular season record to a perfect 7-0, a mark including a tight 27-25, 25-22, 25-23 victory over a tough Woodstock St. Mary's Warriors squad, a strong challenge Adkins welcomes.

"It's what you want," he said of a rising competitive balance in the TVRA South East. "You want all these games to be competitive and meaningful."

The Blue Bombers are scheduled to close out their regular season against Woodstock CI, another perennial power.

Finishing league undefeated is 'goal one' says Blue Bombers setter/left side Zach Brouwer, for a team whose, as ever, extended goals include a lengthy post-season run.

"Hopefully WOSSAA and hopefully OFSAA."

Woodstock St. Mary's CHS 25, 25, 25; Woodstock CI 18, 17, 18

The theme of playoff preparation was also in evidence Tuesday, October 15th at St. Mary's CHS, where the homecourt

Warriors rebounded from their first TVRA South East regular season loss to Ingersoll DCI.

"It was a good bounce back for sure," said power Michael Henry.

"It was a great game, a great team game," added Warriors setter Thomas Walker, appreciating the boost provided by a partisan 'buyout' crowd. "Fans helped."

Setting to the power position was working on the day said Walker, as well as strong play from the middle.

"Good blocking."

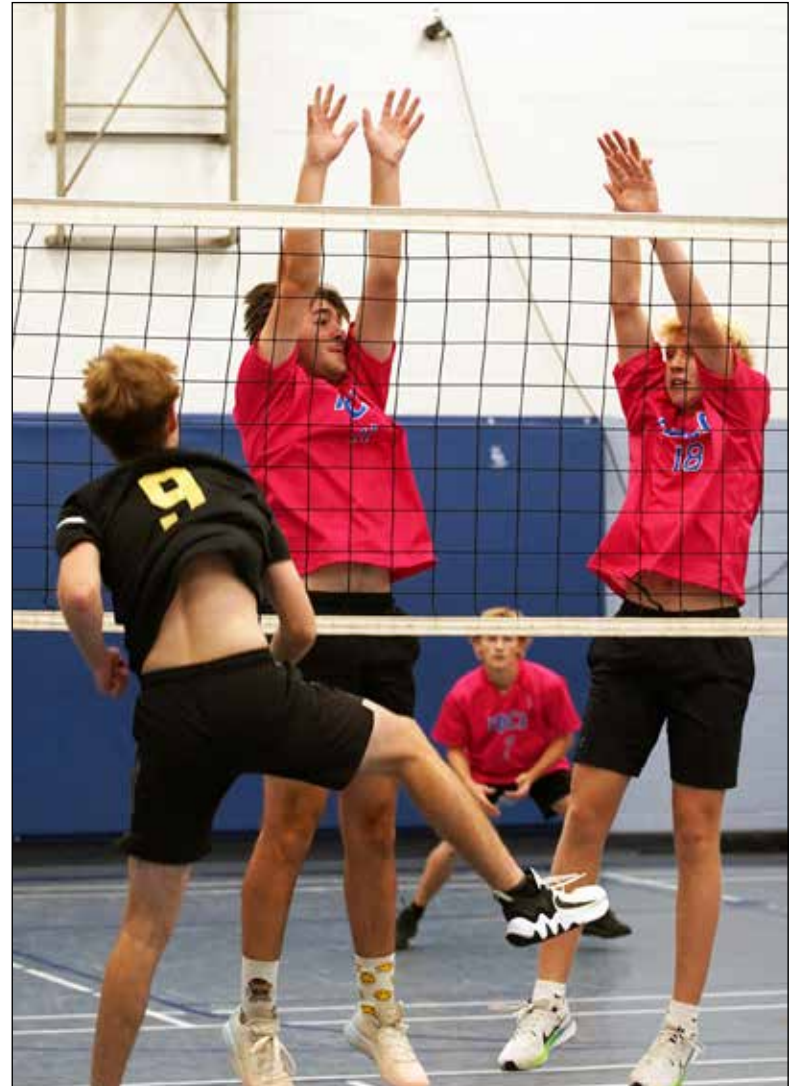
As the regular season is winding down, the Warriors are hoping to add a couple more victories said Henry.

"And just be ready and strong heading into the playoffs."

The post-game reaction on the other side of the net was similar, WCI power Will Halward's focus on performing well at regional playdowns.

"The whole season, the whole year is to prepare for WOSSAA."

Although as a single A versus double A school, the 4-2 WCI Red Devils have a numerically less challenging route than the TVRA South East's AA entries, coach Colin Maltby was looking forward to tough matches in St. Thomas St. Joe's



The Ingersoll DCI Senior Blue Bombers upped their TVRA South East regular season record to 7-0 with a three-game sweep of visiting Tillsonburg Glendale on Thursday, October 17th. (JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)



The Ingersoll DCI Junior Blue Bombers upped their TVRA South East regular season record to 6-1 with a victory over the visiting Tillsonburg Glendale on Thursday, October 17th. (JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

CONTINUED TO PAGE 19

PJHL Standings

| SOUTH DOHERTY DIVISION | GP | W | L | OTL | T | SOW | SOL | PTS |
|---------------------------|----|----|---|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 - NEW HAMBURG FIREBIRDS | 12 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 2 - WELLESLEY APPLEJACKS | 11 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 17 |
| 3 - NORWICH MERCHANTS | 10 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 14 |
| 4 - WOODSTOCK NAVY VETS | 10 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 13 |
| 5 - DORCHESTER DOLPHINS | 11 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 10 |
| 6 - TAVISTOCK BRAVES | 11 | 4 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| 7 - HESPELER SHAMROCKS | 10 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| 8 - PARIS TITANS | 11 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |

| WEST YECK DIVISION | GP | W | L | OTL | T | SOW | SOL | PTS |
|---------------------------|----|---|---|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 - EXETER HAWKS | 13 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 20 |
| 2 - PETROLIA FLYERS | 12 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 20 |
| 3 - THAMESFORD TROJANS | 11 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| 4 - NORTH MIDDLESEX STARS | 9 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 11 |
| 5 - AYLMER SPITFIRES | 13 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| 6 - PORT STANLEY SAILORS | 10 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| 7 - MT. BRYDGES BULLDOGS | 10 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 9 |
| 8 - LUCAN IRISH | 10 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 |

Woodstock Hockey Day to celebrate community

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WOODSTOCK

PENALTY
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Photobooth

COUNTRY
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LIVE on location
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SPARKY
THE FIRE DOG
10 a.m.-12 NOON

11 a.m.-3 p.m.
MEET THE VETS

Saturday
October 26

Reeves
COMMUNITY COMPLEX

LEE GRIFFI
Editor

Woodstock Minor Hockey is welcoming the community, both hockey and non-hockey, to join them for Woodstock Hockey Day this Saturday.

The annual event runs at the Reeves Complex and has a slew of events on

and off the ice sure to please hockey and non-hockey folks alike.

Tarnya Petch is the Director of Fund-raising and Volunteers and said the as-sociation wants to welcome everyone to enjoy the day and highlight all levels of hockey.

“We want to bring the community in to show what minor hockey is really about.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 20

DCI Blue Bombers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

and at home to Ingersoll Tuesday, Oc-tober 22nd as both tests and building blocks toward the post-season.

“The teams that beat us were great teams, but I feel we handed them the wins more than we should have,” he said. “You can’t just show up at WOS-SAA and win it, you have to be mentally prepared.”

TVRA South East Senior Boys’ Vol-leyball

Thursday, October 17

Woodstock CI 16, 28, 26, 18, 15; St. Thomas St. Joe’s 25, 26, 24, 25, 11

Aylmer East Elgin 25, 19, 25, 24, 15; Woodstock College Avenue 19, 25, 10, 26, 7

Woodstock Huron Park 25, 25, 25; St. Thomas Parkside 20, 22, 22

Woodstock St. Mary’s 25, 25, 25; E.S. Notre Dame 13, 8, 17

Tuesday, October 15

Woodstock Huron Park 25, 21, 25, 25; Lord Dorchester 20, 25, 22, 17

Thursday, October 10

Ingersoll DCI 27, 25, 25; St. Mary’s CHS 25, 22, 23

Tillsonburg Glendale 25, 23, 25, 25, 15; E.S. Notre Dame 9, 25, 8, 14, 11

Tuesday, October 8

Lord Dorchester SS 16, 25, 25, 25; Woodstock CI 25, 19, 19, 14

St. Mary’s CHS 25, 25, 26; Woodstock Huron Park 12, 21, 24

Ingersoll DCI 25, 25, 25; Woodstock College Avenue 13, 9, 12

St. Thomas Parkside 25, 25, 25; E.S. No-tre Dame 20, 17, 21

TVRA South East Junior Boys’ Vol-leyball

Thursday, October 17

Ingersoll DCI 25, 24, 25, 25; Tillson-burg Glendale 18, 26, 15, 9

Woodstock St. Mary’s CHS 25, 25, 25; St. Thomas Arthur Voaden 10, 13, 16

Aylmer East Elgin 21, 25, 25, 25, 12; Woodstock College Avenue 25, 20, 15, 20, 15

St. Thomas St. Joe’s 25, 25, 25; Wood-stock CI 19, 20, 21

Tuesday, October 15

Lord Dorchester 25, 25, 25, 25, 15; Woodstock Huron Park 22, 17, 21, 19, 10

Thursday, October 10

Ingersoll DCI 25, 18, 25, 27; Woodstock St. Mary’s CHS 23, 25, 22, 25

Tuesday, October 8

Lord Dorchester 25, 25, 18, 25, 13; Woodstock CI 23, 19, 25, 17, 15

St. Mary’s CHS 25, 25, 25; Woodstock Huron Park 16, 20, 12

Ingersoll DCI 20, 25, 25, 25; Wood-stock College Avenue 25, 21, 17, 16



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Route to the Past – Ghost Towns of Oxford County

SCOTT GILLIES

Contributor

As we enter the season of ghosts and goblins, tricks and treats, it only seems fitting that we take an ethereal tour across Oxford County to look at and discuss some of the hamlets and villages that could now be considered ghost towns.

Ron Brown's book *Ghost Towns of Ontario* outlines communities across Ontario that were once important cross-roads or boomtowns but for various reasons have all but vanished. Brown details settlements along the St. Lawrence lowlands, the shores of Lakes Ontario and Erie, as well as the Queen's Bush and the mining towns of northern and southern Ontario. I was disappointed though to find no references to Oxford County. Did that mean that there are no such ghost towns in this county? Surely not!

Communities that no longer exist the way they once did include such places as Peebles on Union Road, and Hagle's Corners located at the corner of Union and Highway 19 north of Salford. The community of Ebenezer has nothing left to commemorate its existence other than Ebenezer Road. The juncture of that road with Culloden Road was once marked by a Methodist Church that is today only a grassy gore next to the farmer's field, and yet the cornerstone of that structure was laid with Masonic honours and documented by famed Ingersoll poet James McIntyre.

Looking through the *Historical Atlas of the County of Oxford* published in 1876, one can find the former settlements of Vandecar and Oriel in East Oxford Township. Lynes Corners and Newark were once prosperous communities in the North Norwich area. Lynes Corners, also known as Hicks Corners, was located on the Norwich Road at Middletown Line. There was once a tavern on the northwest corner. Stories are told that the farmhouse to the south has no windows on the north wall so that the wife could not see her husband stopping at the tavern! Further to the west, at Newark, many of you will recall the Grim Reaper signs warning approaching drivers of impending doom and the need to stop at the intersection.

Richwood, Ratho and Chesterfield located in Blenheim township are no



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

longer the significant centres they once were. Still other communities like the post office villages of Braemar, South Zorra and Walmer, were to be found throughout the northern portion of Oxford.

Many of these places were quite prosperous in the 1870s. Businessmen, craftsmen and entrepreneurs were found living next to their farming neighbours. For instance, John Garthwait was a wagon maker and blacksmith in Oriel, while George Cabe was a mason in Vandecar. Thomas Clements and W. J. Davis were the respective postmasters of these two villages.

In Youngsville, north of Embro, there was an innkeeper, a carriage maker and a veterinary surgeon. Farther east, in Strathallan (formerly known as Alma) John Mitchell and William Caldwell were blacksmiths. A. H. Tindall was a shoemaker, John Tree was a carpenter and James Lappin ran the hotel.

Likewise, Ratho was a booming community with a harness maker, a blacksmith, two carpenters and two shoemakers as well as a hotel and a cheese

factory.

South of Sodom is an excellent book which further details the founding, development, and in some cases, the subsequent decline of many communities throughout South Norwich Township. Some examples are Cornell, Erbtown, Little Ireland and Millers Corners.

Another example is that of Rosanna. All that remains of Rosanna are the markers in the cemetery. Little else remains in the areas of Lots 14 to 20, Concessions 11 and 12 of South Norwich. A schoolhouse was built in 1865, and a Methodist church in 1884. This church was eventually bought by the Baptists and used until the late 1930s. It was demolished in the 1940s and moved to Tillsonburg. Strangely enough the community remained nameless until 1896 when the name Rosanna was adopted and a post office opened. The first telephone was installed in 1912 and as communications between Rosanna and the outside world improved, the interests of the inhabitants widened. The church and school were no longer necessary as community hubs and eventually most of

the community life disappeared, leaving only the cemetery as a mute testimony to Rosanna's existence.

Issues of "The Ingersoll Chronicle and Canadian Dairyman" newspaper often contain news reports from small hamlets in the neighbouring districts. Wilson's Corners appears to have been located at the corner of the Salford Road and Culloden Road. Situated between this hamlet and Ingersoll was another West Oxford township community known as Prouse's Corner, which was the location of a community hall where meetings of the Maple Leaf Literary and Library Club took place. To the north of town, Dunn's Corner once boasted a cheese factory and school. Today only the converted schoolhouse remains.

This unfortunately was the fate of many of yesterday's villages and towns. Success seemed imminent when they were first settled, but for various reasons these communities have almost vanished. I say almost vanished because they linger on in the memories of some local residents.

Route2thepast@gmail.com

Woodstock Hockey Day to celebrate community

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

People don't go to the arena unless they know somebody who is playing. A lot of times the house league kids don't get the same attention the rep kids do."

She added this is the day everyone is at the arena watching the games.

"It's also good for the younger rep teams because the people attending their games are the parents and the grandparents so it's nice for them to

have an audience to cheer them on and celebrate everything they are doing."

She added a lot of people out there might like hockey but have never been to a minor hockey game.

"We are hoping to bring more families in that way. You can still be a fan of the hockey community without playing. We want to bring everyone together and celebrate everything that is hockey," she added.

There are many events planned throughout the day, and anyone is welcome.

"There will be a mix of house league and rep games 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. before the Navy Vets play."

Among the off-ice events are the Woodstock Fire Department and Sparky between 10 a.m. and noon, trick or treating from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and fans will be able to meet the

Woodstock Navy Vets Junior C team from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Petch added former minor jerseys are also for sale and the rep teams will be holding fundraisers but everything other than those and the Navy Vets game are free of charge.

An online auction is also available at <https://www.32auctions.com/organizations/123131/auctions/170345?r=1&t=all>



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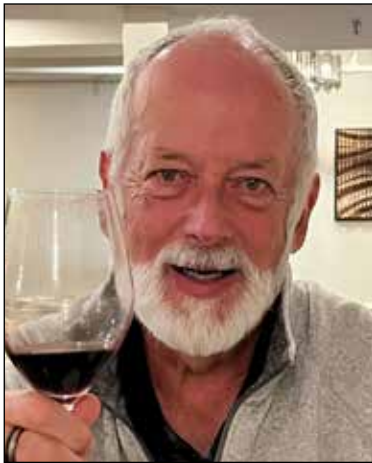


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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Meeting Anne at Green Gables



PAUL KNOWLES

Echo Contributor

On Prince Edward Island, Anne is inescapable, which I find interesting because Anne, as we know, never existed. She is a figment of the imagination of Lucy Maud Montgomery, author of all of the Anne of Green Gables books.

Or is she fictional? As we wandered through the Anne of Green Gables Museum – not to be confused with Green Gables Heritage Place, part of L.M. Montgomery's Cavendish National Historic Site – we spotted a small wooden frame containing a quote from Montgomery.

"When I am asked if Anne herself is a 'real person,' I always answer 'no' with an odd reluctance and an uncomfortable feeling of not telling the truth. For she is and always has been, from the moment I first thought of her, so real to me that I feel I am doing violence to something when I deny her an existence anywhere save in Dreamland. Does she not stand at my elbow even now – if I turned

my head quickly, should I not see her – with her eager, starry eyes and her long braids of red hair?"

And as you visit the Anne sites, it is quickly apparent that the author's sense of Anne's actual existence is shared by millions of Anne fans all around the world. Hundreds of thousands of them have visited these iconic Prince Edward Island attractions.

We visited two – the museum and the heritage place, both homes often visited by Montgomery, both inspirations for her settings in the books. The home that now houses the museum was known as Silver Bush, although it will shock no one to know that it has green gables. This farm was owned by the Campbell family, cousins of Montgomery, and the parlour was the setting for Montgomery's marriage to Rev. Ewan Macdonald. The farm is the location for several Montgomery novels and today it houses a large number of Anne related artifacts in its relatively tiny rooms.

More extensive exhibition spaces are found 20 minutes away at the Parks Canada operated Green Gables Heritage Place.

At Green Gables Heritage Place, there is also a relatively small farmhouse – yes, with green gables – but Parks Canada has also converted the barn into a visitor facility and has added a large visitor centre with an extensive information exhibit.

We enjoyed the relatively quick tour through the house and we spent a fair amount of time in the information exhibit, but the highlight was an unexpected concert as a four-piece band presented

an hour-long musical history of Prince Edward Island. The music celebrated the diverse heritage of the province.

The musicians were versatile and talented. After the concert, I asked if they were a band that played together professionally. No, I was told, they were all guides at Green Gables who happened to also be musicians.

Perhaps the oddest thing about the performance was the person seated beside the wall, next to us, appeared to be Anne in person! I asked why she was there and she explained that she was a friend of the folks in the band, and when she had a break, she liked to drop in on their concerts.

Coincidentally, Green Gables Heritage Place has exactly the same connections to Montgomery as the other museum; this farm was also owned by cousins of Montgomery, in this case, David and Margaret Macneil. Montgomery visited here often because she was raised by her grandparents in a home only two minutes away. Only the foundations exist there, a site now dubbed L.M. Montgomery's Cavendish Home.

Montgomery's personal story, well told at heritage place, is far darker than the sunny outcomes of the Anne novels. Montgomery's mother died when she was 21 months old and her father moved to Western Canada, leaving her with her PEI grandparents.

She sent her first novel, Anne of Green Gables, to a string of publishers only to have it rejected several times before it was finally published to instant acclaim and immediate fame.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

The Anne of Green Gables Museum, one of several Anne destinations in Prince Edward Island.

But while Montgomery's literary career blossomed, her personal life continued to include tragedy – the birth of a stillborn child and her minister husband's struggles with mental illness. The couple had moved to Norval, Ont. near Toronto where she worked tirelessly to hide his maladies only to cause enormous stress for herself. The information panels at the heritage place say her one solace was to return to Prince Edward Island, coming home to Green Gables and the peace of the Cavendish district.

Montgomery and her husband moved to Toronto later in life; she died at home at age 67 in 1942. A writer to the end, her final manuscript was delivered to her publisher on the day she died.

Not surprisingly, her body was

returned to PEI and is buried in Cavendish Cemetery, but her internationally famed creation, Anne Shirley, lives on in her 20 novels and many short stories – over 50 million copies of the original Green Gables story alone have been printed – and in musicals, TV shows, movies and animated features. And most importantly, it seems, Anne lives on in the hearts and the imaginations of the millions of Anne fans, many of whom make the pilgrimage to these PEI homes with green gables..

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



A tiny bedroom in the Green Gables Heritage Place farmhouse.



In concert telling the musical story of PEI at Green Gables Heritage Place.

Zorra Township News

Don MacLeod says goodbye to Zorra Township after 28 years of “consummate” service

CONNOR LUCZKA

Echo Correspondent

Coun. Kevin Stewart thanked outgoing Chief Administrative Officer Don MacLeod twice on Oct. 16, MacLeod's last time serving as the top staff member for Zorra Township.

First, he thanked him as a councillor for the support MacLeod offered during his first term on council. Second, he thanked him as a resident.

“Before getting into council, I was a resident here for most of my life, not really paying too much attention to local politics at all,” Stewart said. “And it was a great place to live...You're a big part of that, I believe.”

Aside from Stewart, each councillor took the floor to personally thank MacLeod for his dedication to the township, all of whom said the township would not be where it is today without his guidance.

“I'm very, very lucky and thankful to work at Zorra Township for the past 28 years, to have spent almost half my working life at one place has been special,” MacLeod said after councillors expressed their gratitude. “My co-workers, council, and the public have made this more than just a job and a paycheck.”

MacLeod joined Zorra Township in 1996, coming from Harwich Township where he got his start as a public employee in 1991. His first council meeting was on June 4, 1996, and little did he know that it would lead to another 698 meetings for him.

Becoming CAO in 2011, MacLeod served nine terms of council, four mayors, and 26 different councillors in his 28 years.



Outgoing CAO Don MacLeod looks on as Zorra Mayor Marcus Ryan tells council of MacLeod's ingenuity and “consummate” professionalism on Oct. 16. For the last half-hour of the council meeting that evening, council took the time to thank MacLeod for his service, as Zorra's top staff member retires after 28 years. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Over that time, MacLeod said that there have been many people who have helped him, from members of his family to co-workers and peers. He thanked his wife, Heather, for her love and support.

Mayor Marcus Ryan, who remarked that when he was first elected to council MacLeod was only a few years into his posting and already seemed like he was a master, praised him for his leadership. He added he is constantly reminded of how rare it is to have had such a strong and effective relationship he could rely on.

“And we've disagreed,” Ryan pointed out. “But every time we have, he

says, ‘Well, I think you're wrong, but anyway, that's what council decided, and that's it.’ And then went off and did it. That is the consummate bureaucratic professional. Give advice to the elected officials they should be given, and then just do whatever they say, no matter how stupid we are and what we decide to do.”

Although there are examples of MacLeod's ingenuity over the years, Ryan said, one of the most successful is also one of the most recent, the project on the former Maple Leaf property.

“Don came in with what I think I can fairly characterize what every member of council, thought was a crazy idea. He said what if we bought it, and sold it to a developer because they're going to have to develop it the way we tell them to. And I think collectively, council was like, that's crazy. That's never going to happen. But sure, go try.”

MacLeod did more than try. Through consistent work, what began as a crazy idea turned into a massive windfall for the municipality. Not only did they net funds to finance other key projects for their constituents, but they secured a much-needed commodity for the township: housing.

“As a result of it,” Ryan continued. “We ended up with no abandoned industrial site in our largest settlement area...We're probably going to see over 1000 units of housing to accommodate the required growth of the province, of all kinds of varied types...and all of this before it was cool.”

He added it happened before the

province acknowledged that there was a housing crisis, and something needed to be done to provide density and quantity and affordability and variety of types of housing.

“If this project hadn't been done with the requirements that we put on Kingwood when we sold it to them...we would have required at least 50 acres more of land to accommodate the units that are going to be accommodated in here.”

MacLeod, in his outgoing address, reminded council the praise heaped upon him is to be shared, specifically by Steve Oliver, director of public services, and Karen Martin, director of corporate and protective services.

“All of the successes I've been able to achieve have been a result of each staff member going above and beyond and being there to support me,” he said. “One last person I want to acknowledge is Maggie (McLaughlin). I've known Maggie her entire life. So as my career comes to a close, it's an absolute joy to watch Maggie begin her career, not only in municipal government but here at Zorra. You have a bright future.”

MacLeod wished incoming CAO Diane Larder, the current director of finance, the best of luck, saying that he has no doubt she will do her part in taking Zorra to the next level.

In addition to the goodbyes given to MacLeod, more were given at the retirement celebration hosted by the municipality on Oct. 23 at Cobble Hills Golf Club.

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New Zorra Municipal Centre was over budget – but taxpayers paid pennies on the dollar

CONNOR LUCZKA

Echo Correspondent

Although originally expected to cost \$6.5 million, the newly constructed Zorra Municipal Centre’s actuals indicate it costs slightly more, not including the solar panels to be installed after year-end.

The building itself cost just over \$6.8 million, though the total cost, including solar and furnishing, is \$7,430,870 according to a recent report presented to Zorra Township Council on Oct.16.

Although over budget, Coun. Paul Mitchell pointed out a silver lining. The property tax funds used for the new build was only \$719,000.

“So all in all, not only did we end up with a building where we were about \$100 a square foot, \$90 a square foot, less than comparable buildings and other municipalities, but the burden on the taxpayer was minimal to come up with what we have here,” Mitchell said. “When we started talking about this, I was very skeptical, but now ... I'm glad we did it.”

The report indicates that the cost per square foot is much lower than similar

projects in the region, being approximately \$100 a square foot cheaper than East Zorra-Tavistock and Middlesex Centre’s new projects, as Mitchell indicated.

CAO Don MacLeod clarified the furnishing costs of \$423,479 encompassed furniture, media equipment for live-streaming, signage, door locks, key fobs, security cameras, shelving, computers, and appliances.

The cost to build was offset by two major revenues - the sale of the old municipal office’s generator netted \$27,000 and Kingwood Homes, which is building housing on the old Maple Leaf plant site, donated \$300,000. The total amount funded for the project was just over \$7.1 million, including grants from other levels of government.

Council voted to use the surplus deficit reserve to fund the \$319,400 shortfall. The reserve has \$630,888.

To recoup the reserve’s money, a repayment schedule of \$58,000 a year for five to six years is recommended by the director of finance. That will impact the 2025 tax levy by half a per cent, though a formal schedule will be included and approved during the budget process.

Ingersoll holds Mystic Market

The Ingersoll Cheese Museum welcomed guests to step into the shadows at its Mystic Market on Oct. 17. As night fell, attendees explored a world of eerie delights, with vendors offering an array of spooky and macabre items. Visitors connected with tarot readers and mediums, receiving glimpses beyond the veil, while the Ontario Paranor-

mal Investigators unveiled the secrets of ghost hunting. The event also featured Dustin Wade from Wade Manor in Woodstock, who showcased some of his most intriguing artifacts. Guests enjoyed a hauntingly good time filled with mystique and excitement, making for a memorable evening at the museum.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Getting a high five at the Museum’s spooky display were Fareedha Abdul Razack, Siraj Hassan and Layaan.



Rebecca Craven of Ten Swords Tarot spoke with one of the many visitors.



Dressed for the occasion were Cindy and Dan Wilkens.

Riddles

- What do you call a snail with no shell?

Homeless.
- Why did the rope go to the doctor?

It had a knot in its stomach.
- What kind of witch lives at the beach?

A sandwich.
- How did Burger King propose to his girlfriend?

With an onion ring.
- What do you call a rabbit with the sniffles?

A runny bunny.
- Why did Peter Pan always fly and never stop?

Because he could never never land.
- What word of only three syllables contains 26 letters?

Alphabet.
- What did the bee say when he returned to the hive?

"Honey, I'm home"
- How do you keep someone in suspense?

I'll tell you tomorrow.

Sudoku

by PeterS 2024

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Solutions on page 35 Basic (4)

Featured Pet



MACY

This is Macy, she's our 16-year-old sassy Girly. Even though she has lost 60% of her sight and 80% of her hearing she never misses the chance to sit and watch her family cook dinner, go for a walk or play with her siblings. There isn't anything she wouldn't do for her family, and nothing they wouldn't do for her. She's the Kujo of the house and will make sure every visitor passes her sniff checks before they are okay to enter her home she guards intensely (when she actually hears the door that is.) Even though the fur is faded and the pep may not always be in her step she is still our good girl and will always be.

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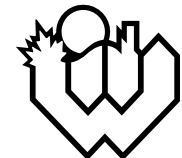
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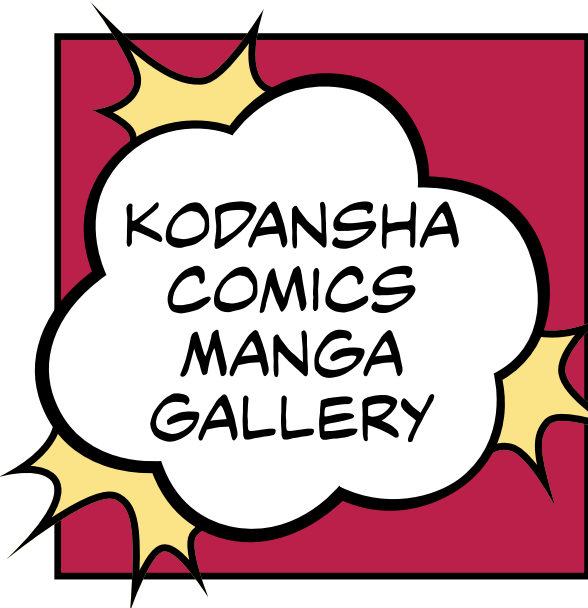
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Over the years, SMART has significantly expanded, with 1,572 classes running each week in 667 locations throughout Ontario and Nova Scotia. Last year, it welcomed over 26,000 participants. SMART classes were offered in community centers, retirement homes, and virtually at no cost to individuals aged 55 and older, as well as any adult living with a disability. The classes focused on improving strength, balance, and mobility through low-impact exercises tailored to meet the needs of participants.

The program was designed to enhance mobility and coordination, helping to prevent falls among older adults and enabling them to continue living independently at home. Additionally, SMART classes provided a great opportunity for participants to meet and connect with



SMART members for this event were prepared to participate.



Ingersoll organizers were Louise - SMART Instructor, Janet - Volunteer coordinator & SMART Instructor, and Robin - Manager of home Community care Oxford.

new people in their communities, actions that contribute to overall fostering meaningful social inter- wellness. (RON YUZARK PHOTOS)

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THE OLD ST PAUL'S CHURCH CHRISTMAS ONLINE SILENT AUCTION IS BACK!

Old St Paul's Church, 723 Dundas St. Woodstock.

With 300 quality items to select from, you are sure to find a great deal for Christmas giving and decorating. It's easy! Visit our website www.oldstpauls.com from November 5 to 11 and click the Auction link. Two convenient pick-up times at Old St Paul's Church, 723 Dundas St. Woodstock.

SIR FREDERICK BANTING: THE MAN YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW

Virtual Meeting -

Monday, November 18; 7:00 p.m.

Oxford County Branch of Ontario Ancestors

Historians and scientists have deemed the discovery of insulin to be "the most significant event in the history of Canadian medical science". Historians and authors have well documented the difference Sir Frederick Banting made with his involvement in the discovery of insulin. What has not been as effectively communicated are his many other contributions throughout the course of his lifetime. There was far more to this

distinguished Canadian's career than the often-simplified events of the insulin period. Banting's interest in art, his military service in both world wars, and support for medical research in Canada will be discussed.

Visit our website at <https://oxford.ogs.on.ca> to register for this free presentation on Zoom.

THE OPTIMIST CLUB OF OXFORD COUNTY

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

If anyone is interested in coming out to meet us and learn more about us please email brenda7621@outlook.com

LIVING WITH LOSS:

A SIX-WEEK GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Caring Hearts Support Network: St. David's United Church, 190 Springbank Ave., Woodstock ON

A safe and supportive space to explore your grief, with the guidance of trained facilitators. Please contact for upcoming dates. No cost to attend. To register or for more information call or text 519-536-3370.

www.caringheartssupportnetwork.com.

One-on-one grief support is also available.

GRIEF SUPPORT FOR MAID RELATED LOSS

4th Wednesday of the month; 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Thamesford Library, 165 Dundas St., Thamesford

This monthly in-person grief support group for loss related to Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) offers a compassionate, safe space to explore this unique loss. The group will meet the 4th Wednesday of the month from 1 – 2:30 p.m. at the Thamesford Library, 165 Dundas St., Thamesford. The group is free of charge and pre-registration is requested. The next meeting is Wednesday, October 23rd. To register or inquire about an evening group, contact Faye Brekelmans at 519-866-3016 or email faye@compassionategriefsupport.ca.

REPAIR CAFÉ

4th Saturday of each month; 10:00 a.m. - Noon
Hosted by East Oxford 403 Anglican Churches
St. John's Church, 685860 Oxford Rd. 2, Woodstock

Repairs to clothing, textiles and minor non-electrical household items by donation. Also offered: learn how to make your own repairs.

ARE YOU IN A JAM?

Ingersoll's Country Music Jamboree Club is celebrating 40 years. New members wanted. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Listen, dance, enjoy! **Every other Friday afternoon from 1-4p.m. Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St S, Ingersoll.** The club welcomes walk-ins at the door.

J. S. BACH'S LONG WALK IN THE SNOW

Saturday, November 23rd; 7:00 p.m.

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church,

56 Thames St. S., Ingersoll

St. Paul's Church would like to invite you to a very special evening. St. Paul's has been sponsoring a

Syrian Refugee family, and this evening will be a fundraiser in support of the family. This special performance is called "J.S. Bach's Long Walk in the Snow". Johann Sebastian Bach is usually seen as the wise, old man of Western Music, but he didn't begin his working life that way. At 18, and in his first job as an organist, still barely beginning life as a composer, the young genius got into such trouble that the only thing he could do was to walk away. "JS Bach's Long Walk in the Snow" takes you along on that trip: a 400 km odyssey to a glittering northern port city with street fights, big business, insight, fulfillment, the father figure he didn't know he needed and, quite possibly, love. The story is narrated by the inimitable CBC personality, Tom Allen. Tom is a storyteller, concert host, author, musician and broadcaster. With glorious music, both familiar and gripping, Tom, along with his wife, Lori, and a cast of brilliant musical friends, bring the story of J.S. Bach's Long Walk in the Snow to life, and that troubled young man in from the cold. This promises to be an amazing evening, in support of a wonderful family. We'd love you to join us on a journey where we discover that such an extraordinary artist was an ordinary man who faced those same struggles that so many of us face today. Tickets are \$35. They can be purchased through the church office at (519) 485-3390 or via email at stpauls@execulink.com or on <https://www.eventbrite.ca/>. (\$38.61)

WOODSTOCK MOOSE LODGE EVENTS:

690 Sutherland Drive, Woodstock

SATURDAY NIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

HALLOWEEN BASH - GORD BELL

Saturday, October 26th; 7 p.m. - 11 p.m.

Last Saturday Night Entertainment! Starting in November, it will be Sunday Night Entertainment from 1-4 p.m.

SUNDAY NIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

Sunday, November 3; 1-4 p.m.

Linda Lee Country Show \$7 per person.

Sunday, November 10; 1-4 p.m.

Les Homes \$7 per person.

Sunday, November 17; 1-4 p.m.

Ronnie West \$7 per person.

Sunday, November 24; 1-4 p.m.

Jim Otterbein \$7 per person.

Sunday, December 8; 1-4 p.m.

Mike Thrope \$7 per person

NEW YEARS EVE

8 p.m. - 1 a.m.

Ronnie West, \$25 per couple, lunch included.

HURON PARK BAPTIST CHURCH EVENTS:

199 Berwick Street, Woodstock

YOUNG AT HEART LUNCHEON

PRESENTS

November 28; Noon

A Christmas theme with music from Bryan Mallot. Please call the church office 519-421-4722 for more details.

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION EVENTS: 642 Dundas Street, Woodstock

ARMISTICE DINNER

November 3; Cocktails at 4:30pm, Dinner at 5:30pm.

642 Dundas Street, Woodstock

Tickets can be purchased at the office for \$25.00 each. Deadline for purchasing these tickets is October 25th.

SHUFFLEBOARD

Every Thursday; 1:30 p.m.

EVENING ENTERTAINMENT

Every Saturday; 7:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

CADETS

Every Monday

DART LEAGUE

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays.

BEACHVILLE LEGION EVENTS:

434852 Zorra Line, Beachville

DOOR TO DOOR POPPY CANVASSING

October 26

For Dorland Subdivision, Foldens, Sweaburg, Beachville

REMEMBRANCE BANQUET ROAST BEEF DINNER

November 2; \$20

Call 519-423-6363 to order.

REMEMBRANCE DAY CENOTAPH SERVICE

November 11; 12:00 p.m.

Light Lunch to follow.

HAM AND SCALLOPED POTATO DINNER

November 15; \$15

Serving begins at 5:30

Call 519-423-6363 to order.

KARAOKE - November 23; 7-11 p.m.

EUCHRE - Thursdays; 7 p.m.

DARTS - Fridays; 8 p.m.

FREE POOL

Peer Support Group for Parents & Caregivers

Third Wednesday of each month; 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

21 Wellington St., Woodstock

(Virtual options available)

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

PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS WITH US! HERE'S HOW

Deadline: Tuesday prior at 3 p.m. • Contact: info@theecho.ca

Coming Events are for non-profit organizations to promote their free admission events at no charge. Event listings can include your event name, date, time and location as well as a phone number, email address or website. If your event is not free admission or you would like to include more details than stated above, you have the following options:

Coming Events Word Ad (50 word max.) - \$10 + hst

Coming Events Boxed Word Ad (50 word max.) - \$15 + hst

Display Ad - Sizes begin at a business card size for \$35 + hst



Heart of Oxford Experience returns with more vendors than ever

EMILY STEWART
Echo Correspondent

Residents across Oxford County will have a chance to explore many area businesses with a one-stop shop event for everything local.

The Heart of Oxford returns on Nov. 9 at the Oxford Auditorium starting at 10 a.m. and running until 8 p.m. There

will be more than 60 vendors participating, as well as all-day live music from local musicians, and food and beverage vendors.

“This experience truly has something for everyone, and we are so excited to provide the community with a fun day out filled with Oxford County everything,” said Kirsten Young, founder of the Heart of Oxford Experience.

The event started as an Instagram contest in 2020. Young, who owns Kynd Beauty Spa, wanted to bring local businesses together during a time of uncertainty for small businesses everywhere during COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

The first contest had more than 70 local businesses participating and a prize value of \$5,000, and over time it grew to 140 businesses and \$25,000 in prize value.

“Last year it was time for a fresh new direction by bringing these incredible businesses under one roof and giving you The Heart of Oxford Experience,” Young said. “Unlike any other vendor show in our area, this is exclusively Oxford County businesses. The people from our home who are dedicated to sharing their magic and using it to build our community.”

She added that for every dollar spent at local businesses, 66 cents stays within the community.

“Shop local shouldn’t be just a trendy saying, it should truly be a lifestyle,” she said. “All of our local businesses

rely on the support of the people who also call Oxford County home.”

After the 2023 Heart of Oxford Experience, vendors told Young that the event saved their business, and many attendees started and completed their holiday shopping on the same day.

“We have so much to offer locally and events like this help spread the word about these wonderful businesses while also helping build our local economy.”

The Heart of Oxford is sponsored by Community Futures Oxford. It also has Laura Woolner of LN Studios, Maddie Young of Honey and Oak Photography and Rachel Southby of Oxford Occasions and Pints and Prosecos involved.

“We all have so much pride in what we do for not just this beautiful small business community that has been created but also for our home community of Oxford County,” added Young.

Tickets for the Heart of Oxford Experience are \$10 and can be purchased online by visiting www.theheartofoxford.ca.



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www.theecho.ca

TheHeartofOxford.ca

SHOP, EAT AND EXPERIENCE OXFORD COUNTY BUSINESSES!

@TheHeartOfOxford

**The Heart
of Oxford**
EXPERIENCE



Scan for your ticket

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 9th
10.00am-8.00pm | Oxford Auditorium

Enjoy live music, delicious food, and shop a wide selection of local brands all under one roof. It's the perfect place to start your holiday shopping. Let's support our local businesses this season!

The Heart of Oxford Experience is sponsored by **Community Futures Oxford**



BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Email to inquire info@theecho.ca

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- 4) Sean Evans
- 5) Sofia
- 6) 100 °C
- 7) Venus flytrap
- 8) Songbirds & parrots
- 9) Jacqueline Kennedy
- 10) A flagpole

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Martin's Nursery, 42661 Orangehill Road, Wroxeter (1 concession north of Wroxeter on Belmore Line)

SERVICES

Have you been affected by someone else's drinking? Al-Anon Family Groups could help YOU! Call for time and place. 1-800-706-9833 or App Available

FOR SALE

Santa Claus suit, Mrs Claus velveteen dress and cap and all the accessories. Reasonable. Call 519 424 9757

FOR SALE

Office desk, Bullet top table desk, 60 inches long 30 inches wide, Natural Cherry on Cherry veneer solid cherry headers, three metal legs one black two silver colour. Newly finished, some flaws in the veneer. \$75.00. CASH ONLY. St. Marys area. Call 519-272-5951 and leave a message.

FOR SALE

1986 Ford Motorhome \$5,000, White patio door \$350, 40 1" brick sections \$150. Call 519-485-4556

FOR SALE

Santa Claus suit, Mrs Claus velveteen dress and cap and all the accessories. Reasonable. Call 519 424 9757

YOUR CLASSIFIED

Contact info@theecho.ca for more info on how to get your classified ad in this spot!

FOR SALE

Office Desk top, 60 inches long and 30 inches wide, Medium cherry colour on Maple veneer, solid Maple headers, newly finished. No legs or base supplied, you can obtain legs from Richleau, Amazon, Wayfair. Can be made into a table desk with legs. \$50.00. CASH ONLY. St. Marys area. Call 519-272-5951 and leave a message.

FOR SALE

Office desk, Bullet top table desk, 72 inches long 36 inches wide, Black Ebony on Oak veneer, solid oak headers, three legs, one leg is solid Oak, two legs are metal, black. Newly finished. \$150.00. CASH ONLY. St. Marys area. Call 519-272-5951 and leave a message.

SUDOKU

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Echo

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

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Princeton

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Sunday School 9:30 am
Sunday Worship Service 10:30 am

Pastor 519.521.3491



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723 Dundas St., Woodstock

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With our new Interim Priest Rev Mark Kinghan*
Sundays at 11am followed by coffee hour.

Sun Oct 27: Vicki Cannon,
Diane Smith, Duet

Sun Nov 10: Laurel Winger - Trumpet,
Remembrance Sunday

Historic Old St. Paul's: Celebrating 190 years

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Save up to \$60.

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November 15th-30th - Pay for 30 mins, get the full 60 mins.

All purchases must be made by November 30th and deals must be used by March 1, 2025. No promos on RMT Services.

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