

West Northumberland Independent

SERVING COBOURG, PORT HOPE AND SURROUNDING AREAS

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Friday, September 25, 2026

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'I just think that there's larger implications to just cancelling this train': Port Hope resident

SARAH HYATT

Editor/reporter

Northumberland residents and leaders are again raising their voices with hopes that VIA Rail Canada will listen to need before eliminating an early-morning rail connection and keep Train 641 on the tracks.

Earlier this month, VIA Rail said "as part of a twice-yearly schedule review" it was adjusting select services along the Quebec City-Windsor corridor, effective Oct. 25, 2026.

"The revised schedule will better align service with passenger demand, strengthen network resilience and support more reliable and predictable service," said VIA Rail, on the changes to about 10 routes.

The federal Crown corporation said overall that the revised schedule will result in an average of one fewer daily trains between Ottawa and Toronto.

In Northumberland, the big issue pertains to Train 641, which VIA has said its service will end but that passengers will continue to have an "early-morning option" to Toronto on Train 41, departing Ottawa at 4:56 a.m. and arriving in Toronto at about 9:37 a.m.

Locally, the announcement has been met with

CONTINUED TO PAGE 8



Northumberland-Peterborough South MPP David Piccini announced Wednesday (Sept. 23) a \$6.1-million boost from the province for area health-care services. /Natalie Hamilton photo

\$6.1M provincial boost for healthcare

NATALIE HAMILTON

Reporter

In a gathering in the bistro at Northumberland's west-end hospital, MPP David Piccini shared Wednesday (Sept. 23) a dose of good medicine with the announcement of an additional \$6.1 million from the province to bolster health-care services and infrastructure in Northumberland-Peterborough South.

The funding will support Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH), Campbellford Memorial Hospital (CMH) and the Community Health Centres of Northumberland (CHCN) and targets outcomes ranging from increased surgical capacity to renewed critical infrastructure and more, attendees heard. The funding will support hospital operations, infrastructure improvements, additional CT capacity and surgical recovery, with the goal of

CONTINUED TO PAGE 6

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Town of Cobourg News

September 25, 2026



Voter Information Centres: Dates and Locations

Cobourg Election Staff will be available until Voting Day at the Cobourg Public Library, Records and Archives Office (200 Ontario Street) to answer resident questions and assist with updates to the Voters' List on the following dates:

 **Tuesdays (September 29, and October 6, 13): 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.**

 **Thursdays (October 1, 8, 15): 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

Election Staff will also be available on the following Saturdays at these locations:

 **September 26: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.** | Cobourg Public Library, Records and Archives Office

 **October 3: 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.** | Farmers Market, Experience Cobourg Tourism Hub

You may also contact the Clerk's Office at Victoria Hall (55 King Street West) in person during regular office hours, and on October 26 from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., 2026.



Youth Essay Contest: My Ideal Town

If you are 17 years old or younger, and live in the Town of Cobourg, write a 350 word creative eassay about what you would like to see in your ideal Town!



One lucky winner will read their essay at the inaugural Council meeting!
All entrants will be invited to attend and meet the newly elected Council.

Contest deadline is October 26, 2026 at 8:00 p.m.

For contest information and how to enter, please visit: www.CobourgVotes.ca/Youth



ARE YOU ON THE VOTERS LIST?



Make sure you're ready to vote!



Verify, update or add your information:

www.CobourgVotes.ca/VoterLookup

Acceptable ID must show your name **and** qualifying Cobourg address.

Find the full list of acceptable ID at www.CobourgVotes.ca/ID.



905-372-4301 x 9520



cobourgvotes@cobourg.ca

Upcoming Cobourg Fire Events:



SEP
26

Farmers' Market, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Cobourg Fire will be at the Farmers' Market to help promote and remind people to test their smoke alarms on Test Your Smoke Alarm Day (Sept. 28).

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK IS OCT 4-10

OCT
9

Cobourg Cougars Game, 7 p.m.

Cobourg Community Centre, 750 D'Arcy Street
Sparky will be dropping the puck!

OCT
10

Cobourg Home Depot, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

1050 DePalma Drive
Meet the firefighters (and Sparky!), explore the fire trucks, try the fire extinguisher training simulator, and get answers to your home fire safety questions.
Learn more at Cobourg.ca/FirePrevention

Upcoming Invest Cobourg Events:

OCT
6

Recruiting, Retaining, and Supporting International Workers: An Employers' Toolkit

Venture13, 739 D'Arcy Street,
Cobourg ON K9A 0H6

9 to 10:00 a.m. (in-person & online)



National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
FILM SCREENING

INDIAN HORSE

Wednesday, September 30, 2026 | 2:30 and 7:00 p.m.

Citizen's Forum at Victoria Hall, 55 King Street West, Cobourg

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Have a question? Contact our Customer Service team:

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Upcoming Committee and Board Meetings

Visit calendar.cobourg.ca/council



Port Hope invites residents to Sept. 30 screening of 'The Secret Path'

Free event showcases film project created by the late Gord Downie

INDEPENDENT STAFF

The Municipality of Port Hope, in partnership with Northumberland County, is inviting residents to a special free screening of "The Secret Path," an acclaimed film project created by the late Gord Downie of the Tragically Hip.

The screening occurs at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 30 at the Capitol Theatre in Port Hope in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The film viewing will be followed by a guest panel discussion featuring leading Indigenous voices and advocates, the municipality has announced.

The Secret Path tells the story of Chanie Wenjack, a 12-year-old Anishinaabe boy who died in 1966 while attempting to walk hundreds of kilometres home after escaping a residential school in Northern Ontario.

"Through music, animation and storytelling, the film sheds light on the devastating impacts of Canada's residential school system on Indigenous families and communities while encouraging reflection, education and dialogue," said the municipality.

Following the one-hour screening, attendees will have the opportunity to interact in a panel discussion, moderated by Municipality of Port Hope Mayor Olena Hankivsky. This panel will feature Marsha Smoke, Southeast Regional Chief, Anishinabek Nation, Dr. Hayden King, executive director, Yellowhead Institute, and Alderville First Nation Chief Taynar Simpson.

"The story of Chanie Wenjack continues to resonate deeply with Canadians and reminds us of the importance of learning from our shared history," said Hankivsky. "We invite residents to join us for this important community event as we reflect on the truths presented in The Secret Path and listen to the perspectives of Indigenous leaders."

While admission to the event is free, donations are welcomed and will be shared between the Aron Indigenous Circle, Campbellford, and Past Time, a legacy project honouring residential school survivor Stephen Pashagumskum.

Port Hope encourages community members to reserve their tickets in advance by visiting the Capitol Theatre website.



The Municipality of Port Hope and Northumberland County are teaming up for a free special screening of 'The Secret Path' at Port Hope's Capitol Theatre on Sept. 30. /Sarah Hyatt photo



MUNICIPALITY OF

PORT HOPE

porthope.ca

Stay Connected

Connect with the latest municipal information including upcoming meetings, events, and important notices.



2026 Municipal Election

porthopevotes.ca

The Municipal Election is four weeks away! Voting takes place online or by telephone from October 16 to 26, 2026. For residents who do not have access to the internet or require assistance casting their ballot, voter assistance centres will be available starting October 16. Watch for your Voter Information Letter, arriving in the mail around October 7.

Recruitment for Boards and Committees

porthope.ca/careers

Recruitment is now underway for our boards and quasi-judicial committees. This is a great opportunity to influence change in your community, connect with leaders, and voice your expertise.

Closure Notice - September 30

porthope.ca/news

In observance of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, some municipal buildings and services will be unavailable on September 30. For what is open/closed, review our Public Notice.

Test Your Smoke Alarm

porthopefire.ca

September 28 is the province-wide 'Test Your Smoke Alarm Day' take a moment to test your alarms and replace batteries if needed.

Construction Update

engage.porthope.ca/VTreconstruction

- Steady progress continues on the Victoria Street Reconstruction and Toronto Road Watermain Upsizing project. We want to thank our community for their patience during this major infrastructure work along one of our key transportation corridors. Check out our project page and follow for updates.

Upcoming Events or Meetings:

porthope.ca/calendar

SEPT
30

Special Screening of 'The Secret Path'

In observance of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we invite you to join us for a special free screening of Gord Downie's The Secret Path, followed by a guest panel discussion. Learn more at porthope.ca/secret-path

OCT
3

Costume Sale

You'll find affordable treasures

perfect for your trick-or-treaters while giving back to the community. Proceeds from the sale will support children and youth programs. Learn more at porthope.ca/seasonal-activities

Stay Connected: Subscribe to our eNewsletters at porthope.ca/subscribe



EDITORIAL

Questions about vaccinations? Experts want you to ask

Is it worth getting your flu shot or other respiratory-related vaccinations this fall?

Well, according to the region's top public health doc, the short answer is yes – or at least consider it and approaching credible sources for information.

As previously reported, Lakelands Public Health has confirmed an early start to the respiratory virus season, with the first-lab confirmed case of Influenza A reported in the Peterborough area.

The confirmation comes a month earlier than last year, which was also an early start last October.

According to public health, for the 2025-26 respiratory season, there were more than 1,100 lab-confirmed flu cases across the health unit's coverage area, which also includes Northumberland, Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes, Alderville, Curve Lake and Hiawatha First Nations. But again, these are only the lab-confirmed cases.

So respiratory season is already here, and vaccines are expected to start rolling out next month.

Vaccine fatigue after the COVID-19 pandemic is real. And to each their own – people should decide what they want or don't want to put into their bodies.

But misinformation surrounding vaccinations can be harmful and is becoming an increasing challenge, Dr. Thomas Piggott, Lakelands Public Health's medical officer of health (MOH) and CEO, has told the Independent.

So if you have questions about vaccinations, experts are encouraging residents to reach out, whether to primary-care

providers, pharmacists, public health, et cetera.

According to Piggott, rolling up your sleeves this fall may also have more benefits than you think. He noted only about one-third of Canadians get the flu shot every year.

And while jabs serve as important protection for all, for older residents of the region – which the newly amalgamated health unit now has the largest population for health units provincially – and for kids it can be life-saving, he said.

Just last year, there were three deaths of kids in Ontario from influenza, he also noted, while describing a deadly virus that kills about 6,000 Canadians every year. (Although these figures do tend to fluctuate and some national data suggests numbers can range from an average of 3,500 deaths – and then there are more than 12,000 hospitalizations reported at times.)

When referencing the 6,000 influenza-related deaths, Piggott noted this is about the same number of people who die from breast cancer yearly. And yet, many could be preventable.

He also acknowledged the flu shot has “a bit of bad rap sometimes given that its protection is closer to 50 per cent when some vaccines we have are 90-95 per cent protective.”

However, another way to look at that is if two people get infected, one person could prevent illness.

And that is still pretty helpful, especially given the vaccine is safe, said Piggott, who also shared openly he gets his jabs

and COVID doses still annually, while encouraging residents to consider scientific information if considering doing the same.

When we think about thousands of lives lost annually that is no small number. One person lost is someone's mom, dad, son, daughter or friend, et cetera.

Another sometimes overlooked benefit of vaccinations is the impact on health-care and emergency department capacity – an issue we know is an ongoing struggle as we have even seen ERs shutter their doors in recent years at times.

As you'll read in additional coverage this week, health units are seeing a decrease in uptake of some vaccines since the pandemic and increasing challenges around tackling misinformation and getting out evidence-based information. This even translates to other diseases such as measles, where again, people have died.

When it comes to COVID, public health experts also say those vaccines are still relevant – and not just for people at risk of severe disease and death but also to prevent long COVID or post-COVID symptoms or exacerbations.

However, the RSV vaccine has had a different success story, providing important coverage to older adults and infants. Piggott said for infant vaccinations there's been about a 75 per cent reduction in hospitalizations due to RSV since the vaccines rolled out. Again, this reduces strain on the healthcare system but “also prevents infections that are really scary.”

If you're not interested in getting your

jabs, of course there are other ways to do your part, whether staying home if sick or being vigilant about where your time is spent if infected where possible in the chaos that is life and having no choice but to work at times, good hand hygiene practices, masking, all of it adds up. After the pandemic, these messages can likely feel tiresome, but the significance of these actions hasn't changed. (If you ever get the chance to look at your hands under a microscope even after a proper washing, do it and you'll see.)

The point of this article isn't to tell you what to do – that's an uncomfortable idea to tell someone what to do with their bodies – but to encourage folks who do have questions to reach out to credible sources, as opposed to digesting information solely on social media. And to let you know that there are people in public health, as just one example, who are prepared to share credible, scientific information and talk with you to help you make the best decision for you.

While peak influenza season usually doesn't start until later in the fall/early winter – and it always varies based on strains – this ultimately means you do have some time if you have questions.

And if you're comfortable with rolling up your sleeves, maybe think of it this way: You may end up helping to protect that best friend or your mom who is at higher risk or who may end up needing a hospital bed at the peak of respiratory virus season, or even a nurse in the ER who's working a lot of OT.

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West Northumberland
Independent Guiding Principles

1. Everyone has a story
2. The news should be free for all to enjoy
3. Good news beats bad news
4. A Newspaper should be a community effort (contribute to your local paper!)
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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Politics or governance?

No constituency is immune to the theatre of politics. Theatre gets our attention.

Perhaps, we, in Port Hope, can keep theatre to the confines of the Capital and look more for a solid governance solution. For our part, as voters, we must be more strategic. The “ability” to vote for up to four councillors is an option, not a duty. We all have in mind one or possibly two people we believe will be assets on council.

To add a third or fourth vote can be senseless and counterproductive, especially when such candidates do not

hold the same level of merit as our first choice. Voting for three or four candidates may well lead to ensuring that we have at least one councillor who does not deserve to be there. Votes should not be gifts.

Our next council will be responsible for expenditures in excess of \$200 million. Would it not make sense to elect seven people who have the talent and ability to manage responsibly and intelligently? The potential presence of OPG and long-standing one with the PHAI are major situations that need to be handled with

care and thoughtful consideration.

It is incumbent upon us all to give serious and thoughtful attention to the candidates and what they offer. To that end, we need to regard:

- Campaigns: Serious information or just a lot of images that want to leverage emotion? Does the candidate have a “cause” they espouse? Does it make sense within the guidelines of municipal authority?

- Election signs: Are candidates keeping to the rules or putting the signs in inappropriate places. This may seem like a

small thing but is very telling about ethics.

- Promises: Are they realistic?

We need to elect people who get back to the basics of governance. People who can prioritize and listen to constituents but not bow to special interest groups. They must have the ability to manage for today and plan for tomorrow.

You look both ways before you cross the street. Be as cautious with your vote.

*Terry Hickey
Port Hope*

Losing VIA commuter stop means more need for GO expansion

In view of the fact that VIA Rail is eliminating the morning commuter stop at Cobourg, the issue to have regular scheduled bus service to the Oshawa GO train station becomes a renewed desire.

The GO system from Oshawa to Toronto is a great advantage to all commuting people who have easy access to it. These clean and well-maintained trains and buses are used extensively. I am sure they also lessen the traffic on the already congested highways. The system is well utilized, as the full loads on many departures can attest to this.

The connecting GO buses bring passengers from as far as Beaverton (population 2,822) which is 70 kilometres (km) away. One of the bus end stops is Newcastle (population 9,167) which is about 25 km from Oshawa.

Yet, no bus comes to Port Hope, which is 25 km further from Newcastle, or to Cobourg, which is about 35 km from Newcastle. Port Hope is 50 km from the Oshawa station and Cobourg is 60 km – an easy distance further east on Hwy. 401 with a combined population in excess of 35,000.

Many residents of these towns are senior citizens, with relations or medical appointments in Toronto and with no easy access to the GO train. Students also use this transportation system.

A bus to connect our Port Hope/Cobourg community would require minor adjustments to the existing routing. Our community is growing. More than 500 hundred new homes were built in the last decade and a further 400 planned for the near future. We, on the Lakeshore towns, need a reliable regular scheduled transportation to the GO train and to not depend on VIA, which is a distance carrier and shares tracks with busy cargo trains.

A submission by 20 Cobourg and Port Hope residents was made many months ago to MPP David Piccini to facilitate such a GO bus extension to our communities. No progress so far.

However, there is hope that the new municipal election will bring in new councillors, who would perhaps lobby for such a well desired and useful service. An immediate easy and inexpensive solution could be implemented almost immediately by having the Peterborough-Oshawa

GO bus come down on route 28 to the 401 and pick up passengers from the two Lakeshore communities.

*Zoltan Zavorsky
Port Hope*

WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

1. Who was the first emperor of Rome?
2. Which African country is known as the “Rainbow Nation”?
3. How many brains does a leech have?
4. What is the longest-running American sitcom?
5. Where did mahjong originate?
6. What was the first billion-dollar movie?
7. What creature holds the record for the world's largest eyes?
8. Who was the legendary king with the golden touch?
9. What type of acid gives grapefruit its tartness?
10. What is the national animal of New Zealand?

This week's answers are found on pg. 38

Quote of the Week

“This ban could not be a more direct assault on the First Amendment nor a more blatant violation of our most fundamental constitutional principles.”

- Statement by CNN, MS NOW, and POLITICO after being banned from the White House earlier this week by U.S. President Donald Trump



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Provincial dollars support infrastructure, diagnostic imaging, surgical care access, more

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

helping health-care providers continue delivering care to patients close to home, explained officials.

“Strong local healthcare starts with making sure our hospitals and health-care facilities have the resources they need to provide high-quality care closer to home,” said Piccini. “These investments will support important infrastructure improvements, increase access to diagnostic imaging and surgical care, and provide our local hospitals with additional resources to meet the needs of patients across Northumberland.”

NHH will receive \$2,909,700 in additional base funding for 2026–27, a 3.1 per cent increase from 2025–26 to support hospital operations and the delivery of essential health-care services. It will also get \$1,284,713 through the Health Infrastructure Renewal Fund to support critical infrastructure renewal and improvements at the hospital, including the replacement of its cooling tower.

In addition, NHH will receive \$389,200 in Incremental Surgical Recovery Funding (2025–26) to support additional surgical activity and help address surgical demand and wait-times.

“As Northumberland County continues to grow and age so does the need for timely access to high-quality hospital services,” said Susan Walsh, NHH president and CEO. “The investment announced today is much appreciated and will help (NHH) complete necessary infrastructure improvements – specifically, the replacement of our chiller, which manages temperature and humidity in the hospital– as well as supporting our ability to meet growing patient needs through welcome base funding adjustment and specific dollars targeted to high-need areas, including surgical services.”



Northumberland County health-care leaders, stakeholders, and politicians gathered Wednesday (Sept. 23) at Northumberland Hills Hospital to celebrate a \$6.1-million funding announcement from the provincial government. /Natalie Hamilton photo

Meanwhile, CMH will get \$1,116,700 in additional base funding for 2026–27, a 4 per cent increase from 2025–26 to support hospital operations and the delivery of essential health-care services. It will also get \$175,576 through the Health Infrastructure Renewal Fund to support critical infrastructure renewal and improvements at the hospital. And there’s another boost of \$118,500 for additional CT hours (2025–26) aimed to increase diagnostic imaging capacity and help patients access timely diagnostic services closer to home.

CMH said it’s grateful for both the investment and the impact the funding will have on patients and the communities it serves.

“These funds will help us invest in improving clinical infrastructure, expand our CT capacity to help reduce wait-times across the region, and support the essential services our teams provide every day,” said CMH CEO Jeff Hohenkerk, in a statement. “As we continue working toward a new hospital for our community, investments like these are critical to ensuring CMH can continue providing safe, high-quality care today while we build for the future.”

Finally, CHCN will receive \$189,070 through the Community Infrastructure Renewal Fund to support HVAC upgrades.

“Our Port Hope location is more than a place where we provide interdisciplinary

primary care and community-based programs – it also serves as a cooling and warming centre during extreme weather,” said Chiara Campitelli-Thompson, CHCN’s executive director. “This investment will help us maintain clean air, and consistent, comfortable temperatures throughout the building – creating a healthier environment for our clients, staff and community members.

“For a smaller organization like CHCN, capital funding of this kind makes a meaningful and lasting difference for everyone who walks through our doors.”

The province’s “Through Your Health: A Plan For Connected and Convenient Care” targets expanding access to key services to provide people with the right care, in the right place.

The plan aims to ensure residents can connect to the care they need when they need it most and where it’s most convenient by providing the right care in the right place, offering faster access to services, and growing the health-care workforce, according to the province.

Northumberland County Warden Bob Crate welcomed the funding news.

“Strong local health care is fundamental to the community’s well-being,” said Crate. “Today’s investment will help ensure Northumberland hospitals and community health partners have the infrastructure and resources they need to continue delivering high-quality care close to home.

“As our community grows and demand for health services increases, investments like these help strengthen our local system and its capacity to meet the evolving needs of residents. On behalf of county council, I thank the Province of Ontario for this important investment.”

Probe continues after alleged break-and-enter

CCTV footage captured two people believed to be connected riding electric scooters in the area, say police

INDEPENDENT STAFF

Cobourg police are calling on the public for help with an ongoing break-and-enter probe and are looking for individuals who were on electric scooters at the time of the alleged incident.

According to the Cobourg Police Service, two Strathy Road businesses were damaged during the early morning hours of Sept. 17, 2026, and the investigation was initiated after a report that the front doors of two businesses were damaged.

Through a review of surveillance footage, investigators said they determined on Sept. 17, at about 2:45 a.m., an unknown individual gained entry to one of the businesses and allegedly stole cash.

“The front glass door of the business was damaged during the incident,” reported police. “A neighbouring business also sustained

damage to the glass front door.”

At press deadline, investigators said they were still working to determine if any property was taken from the neighbouring business.

CCTV footage also captured two individuals believed to be connected to the incident riding electric scooters in the area around the time of the incident, and police said they’re looking to identify the individuals.

Police are asking anyone with information or video footage of the surrounding area between 2 and 3:30 a.m. on Sept. 17 to reach out to CPS at 905-372-6821 or submit an anonymous tip through Crime Stoppers by calling 1-800-222-8477 or visiting stopcrimehere.ca.

Tipsters through Crime Stoppers may be eligible for a cash reward and do not have to testify in court.

At press deadline, the investigation was ongoing, and no other information was available.



The province’s police watchdog has concluded its investigation into the death of a 28-year-old man while in Northumberland OPP custody, saying there are no reasonable grounds to believe police or any of the man’s police custodians committed a criminal offence in connection with his death. Pictured here is an SIU van. /SIU X photo

'Lapsed into acute medical crisis': SIU clears police after man dies in OPP custody

SIU says man experienced seizure, fell from cell bench, officers responded with due care, regard for his wellbeing

SARAH HYATT

Editor/reporter

The province's Special Investigations Unit (SIU) has found no reasonable grounds to believe an OPP officer committed a criminal offence in connection with the death of a 28-year-old man who "lapsed into acute medical crisis" while in a cell at the Cobourg OPP Detachment, say officials.

Director Joseph Martino delivered his findings on Sept. 18, 2026, marking the conclusion of the SIU's probe into the man's death while in the custody of Northumberland OPP.

According to the SIU, on May 25, 2026, the man was in a cell at the station after his arrest for breaching a term of a release order.

"The man experienced a seizure and fell from his cell bench," wrote Martino, in his findings. "Paramedics were called and he was taken to hospital where he was pronounced deceased."

Martino also stated that officers responded with due care and regard for the man's health and wellbeing and promptly responded to his cell to render care after the incident while waiting on paramedics.

In the director's full report, which includes an incident narrative, more on evidence collection and Martino's extensive analysis and decision, the SIU identifies the events in question transpired in and around a cell at the OPP Cobourg station.

There was an examination of physical evidence involving SIU forensic services at the detachment, and the SIU noted the cellblock was monitored via a closed-circuit video system, and the cell also had a surveillance camera.

The SIU also collected OPP communications recordings, body-worn camera, in-car camera, and OPP custody footage, as well as obtained several other materials and evidence as part of their investigation, according to the report. Records such as an occurrence report, a computer-aided dispatch report, the complainant's probation order, officers' notes, and a custody report/detainee security check sheet and other information relating to OPP policies around arrests, detainee care and control, search and seizure and in-custody deaths were also collected.

In addition, the SIU cited the complainant's medical records and preliminary autopsy findings report from the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service were obtained. Although, at the time of the report, the man's official cause of death was still pending, with the SIU saying the pathologist at the time of autopsy didn't identify any injuries that would account for the man's death.

In Martino's incident narrative, he states evidence collected by the SIU — which also included interviews with police eyewitnesses and video footage



The province's police watchdog has concluded its investigation into the death of a 28-year-old man earlier this year while in Northumberland OPP custody, saying there are no reasonable grounds to believe police or any of the man's police custodians committed a criminal offence in connection with his death. /SIU X photo

"that largely captured the incident" — all gives rise to the following scenario.

On the evening of May 24, 2026, OPP officers were reportedly dispatched to an address in Cramahe to search for the man after a wellbeing request. Earlier that day, during a FaceTime conversation, the man had appeared with facial injuries, and it was noted he was in possible breach of a house arrest order mandating he reside with his mother.

In the report, it states the man was arrested without incident later that evening, and officers learned that cuts to the man's face were the result of a fall during the course of a seizure. Paramedics also responded, treated his cuts and transported him to hospital given his seizure history, wrote Martino.

"The complainant (the man) was seen at hospital where he underwent a CT scan. He was medically cleared, discharged back to police and taken to the Cobourg OPP Detachment."

He was then lodged in the cells at about midnight on May 25 and slept for most of the night as guards checked on him at regular intervals. At about 10:20 a.m., the man experienced a seizure and fell from his cell bench, reported the SIU.

"Officers in the detachment responded promptly to the cell and rendered care," reads the report, which also indicates paramedics were called and arrived at about 10:30 a.m.

The man was sent back to hospital, and despite resuscitative efforts, was pronounced deceased at about 12:09 p.m.

In Martino's analysis and director's decision, he stated the complainant "lapsed into acute medical crisis while in the custody of the OPP on May 25, 2026."

The SIU was notified, as is procedure for police and the SIU initiated its investigation, which has now concluded.

On his assessment of the evidence, Martino said there are no reasonable

grounds to believe police or any of the man's police custodians committed a criminal offence in connection with the complainant's death.

The SIU also stated the man was in breach of a term of a release order by residing at an address in Cramahe and was subject to arrest.

In addition to following hospital/care procedures and regular monitoring, the SIU also noted that arrangements had been made to pick up the man's prescription medication.

However, Martino also made a note that there is a suspicion in the evidence that the man accessed and consumed cocaine he had on his person in cells, and that this may have precipitated the seizures he experienced.

"Shortly before his medical crisis, the complainant exhibited some curious behaviour by reaching into the toilet," wrote Martino. "Whether there is any substance in this speculation is yet to be

determined.

"Be that as it may, I am satisfied it would not make a difference to the liability analysis."

Martino also stated that the man had been subject to two pat-down searches with negative results before being placed in the cells.

"In the circumstances, if he did have an illicit substance on his person, it might well be that only a strip search would have detected it," said Martino, while adding that strip searches are "highly invasive" and "only permissible as an exceptional law enforcement technique where there are reasonable grounds to believe they are necessary."

"It was not clear that the police had the grounds to justify a strip search. The complainant had not, for example, been arrested for a drug offence."

Again, Martino stated that after the man fell from his bench, officers promptly responded to his cell to render care while waiting for paramedics.

"For the foregoing reasons, there is no basis for proceeding with criminal charges in this case. The file is closed."

The full report is accessible via the SIU's website. The SIU is described as an independent government agency that investigates the conduct of officials that may have resulted in death, serious injury, sexual assault and/or the discharge of a firearm at a person.

SIU investigators are civilians, and all investigations, as dictated under the Special Investigations Unit Act, mean the director must consider whether an official has committed a criminal offence in connection with the incident under investigation; depending on the evidence, cause a criminal charge to be laid against the official where grounds exist for doing so, or close the file without any charges laid.

The SIU is also mandated to publicly report the results of its investigations.



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Leaders call out VIA, pledge to fight to keep Train 641



A passenger is seen here headed for the VIA Train in Cobourg. VIA Rail Canada has announced the cancellation of Train 641 as of Oct. 25, 2026. /Natalie Hamilton photo

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

public outcry – much like in previous years when the fight centred on the then 651-commuter train amid challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic and the fallout that followed.

This previously led to lobbying, protests, petitions, business cases, and more to drive home just how critical these services are in this region and in Eastern Ontario.

“My husband and I moved from Toronto to Port Hope because we love the community and lifestyle here, while still being able to commute into Toronto for work,” Port Hope resident and Dr. Alexandra Wright told the Independent. “The cancellation of (Train) 641 makes that significantly more difficult.

“VIA’s proposed alternative leaves from Cobourg – not Port Hope – and arrives in Toronto around 9:45 a.m., which simply isn’t a viable commuter option for most people.”

Like many others who rely on the early-morning service to get into the city for work, Wright is among those wondering will they have to move now? And what are the larger, more regional impacts with this proposed shift?

In addition to those who rely on the train to get into work, there are also many more who rely on such services for critical medical appointments such as certain cancer treatments that aren’t accessible locally, and others who need the transportation for schooling, to name just a few examples.

It was a little more than a year-and-a-half ago Wright said she and her husband moved from Toronto to Port Hope. Of course, there were several factors that went into the decision – affordability, a shift away from the bustling city life, falling in love with Port Hope and its culture, and the fact that it had a train station and accessibility to the city.

“We just absolutely love it,” she said, of the community. “It kind of fits exactly

what we need – but the big thing was we needed to be able to commute back into the city.

“It’s a big reason why we chose Port Hope is because it has a train station here. It’s one hour into the city, we get to beat the traffic, which is great, and it also gets us in on time.”

This will change with VIA’s latest announcement.

In addition to Wright serving as an adjunct lecturer at the University of Toronto, her husband has also been mandated back into the office at Toronto Metropolitan University, she shared.

With VIA’s recent announcement, those like Wright are worried since most employers require people to be in the office before or by 9 a.m.

Like her husband, Wright has to be able to get into the city for work at the University of Toronto – and she also works with hospitals.

Now, come Oct. 25, options are looking limited. Arriving late for work repeatedly isn’t likely to pan out. Moving isn’t the want. And extra driving to Cobourg to the VIA station or to Oshawa GO or on the highway all translates to longer commutes for residents like Wright.

However, several local leaders are also pledging to fight to maintain the service, including Northumberland-Clarke MP Philip Lawrence, who earlier this week, said he had a “productive meeting with VIA Rail” and made it clear that Northumberland needs a train option arriving in Toronto before 9 a.m.

“It was a good conversation, and they committed to staying in touch and keeping me updated, and I will be doing the same with them,” said Lawrence, while calling on residents to continue sending him their stories and concerns, as they’ll help make the case for the need for an early-morning train to stay.

When the news first broke about Train 641 coming to a halt, Lawrence publicly



The VIA station in Cobourg. VIA Rail has announced changes as part of ‘a twice-yearly schedule review,’ saying adjustments are being made to select services along the Quebec City-Windsor corridor, which will impact local residents’ early-morning commuter train. / Natalie Hamilton photo

expressed his disappointment online.

“We all fought so hard to bring back Train 651 years ago, and we were successful thanks to the advocacy of members of our community – so we’re going to do it again,” he said, while putting out the call to contact his office and for residents to share experiences and concerns.

He vowed to bring residents’ voices directly to executives at VIA.

“Together, we will remind VIA just how important this service is to communities like ours,” he said.

Meanwhile, Lawrence, alongside several other leaders such as Northumberland-Peterborough South MPP David Piccini, Cobourg Mayor Lucas Cleveland, Port Hope Mayor Olena Hankivsky, Deputy Mayor Nicole Beatty, Cobourg Coun. Mirriam Mutton, Cobourg Coun. Randy Barber, Brighton Mayor Brian Ostrander, and Municipality of Clarington Mayor Adrian Foster, have all penned an open letter to VIA Rail.

Leaders stated they were “incredibly disappointed” and also detailed how many commuters rely on this service.

“We understand that your reasoning for this cancellation was low ridership,” reads the letter. “That is not what we are hearing from the people we represent who use the train each day.”

The leaders go on to call out VIA, saying if low ridership is the reason, then VIA Rail should publicly release the ridership numbers that forced them to make this decision.

“A disruption of this magnitude demands complete transparency and honesty,” local leaders demanded.

“At a time when the cost of living is so high, Canadians deserve affordable, reliable, commuter services. VIA listened to our request before, and we are calling on you to listen again.

“Our neighbours rely on this train, and they deserve to know why it was cancelled.”

Wright, too, described the early-train cancellation as “shocking,” and said the train is “always packed.”

“I know there’s ridership, but I also know we (have) to be fiscally-responsible with the decisions that we’re making – but out of all the trains to cancel, I don’t see the logic in this one.”

Of note, VIA Rail made no mention of low ridership in its official announcement regarding changes.

At the Northumberland County level, council and officials are also calling on VIA Rail to reverse course, “expressing significant concern with this decision.”

Previously, the county led extensive advocacy for restoration of morning commuter rail service after suspension during the COVID-19 pandemic – where again, lower ridership, financials and other factors were cited in that decision early on.

This advocacy effort involved work alongside municipal partners across Eastern Ontario, all to ensure VIA understood the need for a reliable, affordable and sustainable morning connection to Toronto.

These advocacy efforts included the 2022 release of “The Case for Getting VIA Train 651 Back on Track: A report on the critical importance of commuter train services for a growing Eastern Ontario.” This case – which also featured feedback from more than 2,800 residents – not only helped outline demand but the correlation to the regional economy and quality of life.

Issues with Train 651 started back in late 2020.

In the report, residents identified morning rail service as the most important connection to employment, education and retraining, and medical appointments. It also documented financial pressures commuters were facing without the service, as well as broader economic and environmental benefits of providing a travel alternative.

And county staff noted the evidence

CONTINUED TO PAGE 9

'A disruption of this magnitude demands complete transparency and honesty'



Local leaders, including county councillors, are raising their voices after VIA Rail Canada's Train 641 cancellation announcement. /Northumberland County photo

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

supporting commuter services remains strong.

Through this work – and much more – all these findings formed the foundation for sustained advocacy locally – and in May 2024, VIA introduced Train 641, marking a restoration of early-morning commuter service to Toronto, recalled county staff. At that time, “VIA acknowledged that it had listened and responded to feedback calling for the return of morning service.”

Warden Bob Crate said Northumberland County worked hard alongside municipal, provincial and federal partners, as well as residents, to demonstrate clearly why this service matters.

“The evidence that made the case for restoration has not disappeared,” he said. “Northumberland continues to grow.”

“Our residents continue to travel west for employment, education and medical care. They continue to need affordable, reliable alternatives to driving Hwy. 401. Eliminating this service takes us backwards.”

In the wake of VIA Rail's announcement, the county is also renewing its call for transportation infrastructure to keep pace with the growth of Eastern Ontario. Officials said need is only becoming more pressing as communities grow and residents are increasingly looking for transportation options that support economic opportunity, affordability and environmental sustainability.

“This is about more than one train,” added Crate. “It is about ensuring growing communities like Northumberland are connected to employment and oppor-

tunity, and that residents have practical transportation choices.

“Our community made a strong, evidence-based case for morning rail service four years ago. That case still stands today. We are calling on VIA Rail and the federal government to listen once again and work with our communities to maintain this vital connection.”

Northumberland County has confirmed plans to share feedback with VIA Rail and Canada's Minister of Transport Steven MacKinnon, and is also encouraging residents, businesses and commuters to add their voices. The county's “Keeping Your Commute on Track” engagement page has more details online.

Several others have also expressed concern, including the Town of Cobourg and Cleveland. Officials here also noted that passenger rail is important to Cobourg's tourism economy as a destination located along the VIA Rail corridor.

The town has expressed concerns this service change could make passenger rail less accessible and convenient for residents and visitors and believes the potential cumulative impact of schedule changes on communities throughout the corridor warrants further discussion.

Cleveland also noted that for many Cobourg residents VIA Rail isn't just a convenience – it's an important connection to employment, education, family and opportunity. On behalf of council, he described VIA's decision as “beyond unacceptable” for commuters along this vital transportation corridor.

He also said the decision is even more disappointing given the years of advocacy by local leaders to re-establish ear-



Northumberland-Clarke MP Philip Lawrence has vowed to again fight to keep an early-morning commuter service through VIA Rail in Northumberland. /Philip Lawrence Facebook photo

ly-morning stops in May 2024 and “only to have that decision revoked two years later.”

The town also stated it recognizes that there are operational considerations involved in managing a national passenger rail network, but said decisions around service levels should also consider the broader economic, workforce, tourism and transportation needs of the communities the rail corridor serves.

For citizens like Wright, she's worried about what's next if a two-and-a-half-hour commute transpires – which just isn't realistic – and at the same time, recognizes more and more employers are requiring people to physically return to offices and for more days in offices.

She worries whether they'll have to move again if there's no longer a reasonable commute option for them. And if they don't, that's a lot of hours lost over the span of say a week, she noted. This takes away from people's lives, and it just feels impossible with all the congestion on the highway nowadays to drive into Toronto, she explained.

She, too, worries about the potential larger impacts – like how Port Hope is becoming a growing hub for young families and people searching for a more affordable life and one outside the city, and there's also lots of investment and growth being talked about right now. If you start to take away the ability for people to commute, take away the transportation opportunities, it's going to heavily affect the community, said Wright.

“I just think that there's larger implications to just cancelling this train. You're obviously affecting infrastruc-

ture, obviously, you're affecting people's commute, but I think that there's bigger implications here on accessibility. It's a significant barrier for people.

“We're talking about accessibility to things like what I'm in, which is health-care, making sure that people can access different appointments in Toronto, making sure that they can access work, which I think is absolutely huge. And I think we're seeing that this isn't just a train that gets cancelled and people have to shuffle things around.”

Wright anticipates the change will translate to “huge implications” for the region and residents in general.

“Removing one of the few viable early-morning connections to Toronto further limits how people can realistically live in communities like Port Hope while working in the city,” she said.

“Communities like Port Hope are trying to grow and attract new residents, but that becomes much harder without reliable transportation to major employment centres.”

Wright is among residents who've also been reaching out to local and federal politicians with hopes of changing VIA's decision.

Train 641 will officially cease operation as of Oct. 25. Until then, residents have their usual service stops Monday through Thursday in Cobourg and Port Hope and can arrive at Toronto Union Station before 9 a.m.

If the changes go ahead as planned by VIA, Port Hope will not have a stop and commuters or those looking to get into the city on Train 41 won't arrive in Toronto until at least 9:37 a.m.

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Three charged after alleged \$18K drug bust

INDEPENDENT STAFF

Two Port Hope residents and a Cobourg resident are facing charges after an alleged \$18,000 drug bust, say police.

According to the Cobourg Police Service, the three individuals were arrested following the conclusion of a Controlled Drugs and Substances Act investigation.

On Sept. 18, 2026, as part of ongoing investigation into alleged drug-trafficking occurring in the Cobourg and surrounding areas, police said members of CPS' street crime enforcement unit, with help from the uniformed members and the canine unit, executed a traffic stop on a vehicle in the Newtonville area.

Police allege they seized 58 grams of cocaine, 98 grams of crack cocaine, scales and cellphones.

"The total street value of the drugs seized was approximately \$18,000," reported police.

As a result of the probe, police said a 55-year-old Port Hope resident, a 30-year-old Port Hope resident, and a 36-year-old Cobourg resident were each charged with two counts of possession for the purpose of trafficking a schedule I



After a traffic stop in the Newtonville area as part of a drug-trafficking investigation, Cobourg police say they've seized about \$18,000 worth of drugs and three local residents are facing charges. /CPS photo

substance, and possession of proceeds of crime under \$5,000.

The 55-year-old Port Hope resident was additionally charged with failure to comply with probation, while the 30-year-old Port Hope resident further charged with two counts of possession of a schedule I

substance related to cocaine and fentanyl, a police spokesperson told the Independent.

None of these charges have been proven in court.

Police continue to ask citizens if they see suspicious activity or suspected drug

activity to reach out to CPS.

"Timely reporting can help police identify emerging trends, support ongoing investigations and ensure resources are deployed where they are needed," said police.

Alternatively, Crime Stoppers remains an anonymous option where tips can be submitted via www.stopcrimehere.ca or by calling 1-800-222-8477.

CPS' street crime enforcement unit is dedicated to addressing drug-trafficking, organized criminal activity, repeat offenders and emerging crime trends in the community, reads a recent release from the service.

"Working closely with front-line officers, regional policing partners and the crime analytics unit, the street crime unit uses intelligence-led policing strategies to identify areas of concern, support investigations, and target enforcement efforts where they are most needed," said CPS. "The unit plays a key role in disrupting criminal activity, enhancing community safety and responding proactively to issues impacting residents and businesses in Cobourg."

Man convicted of first-degree murder dies in custody

Correctional Service Canada says Runo Mark Cairenius, 87, died on Sept. 18, 2026

SARAH HYATT

Editor/reporter

Correctional Service Canada says officials are reviewing the circumstances surrounding an inmate's death – a man believed to be convicted of first-degree murder back in 1993.

The CSC has identified the deceased inmate as Runo Mark Cairenius and said he died while in custody at Warkworth Institution on Sept. 18, 2026.

"At the time of death, the inmate was 87 years old and had been serving a life sentence since Nov. 15, 1993," said the Correctional Service of Canada, in a release issued on Monday, Sept. 21, 2026.

The inmate's next of kin have been notified, added officials.

Following the release, the Independent reached out to the Correctional Service of Canada with inquiries to confirm whether this was the same individual who had pleaded guilty on Nov. 15, 1993 to first-degree murder in the May 4, 1992 killing of his common-law wife Airi Makinen, as reported by the Toronto Star in October 2008. At this time, a jury had heard Cairenius' application for an early release under Canada's Faint Hope Clause and an ask to be deported back to Finland. The jury ultimately ended up ruling against this. The Independent also asked the CSC whether this was the sen-

tence Cairenius was serving at the time of his death.

"Regarding Mr. Cairenius, it seems that your information is consistent with what we have on file," replied Mike Shrider, a regional communications manager with the CSC and Government of Canada, in an email to the Independent. "He was sentenced in Brampton in November of 1993 to an indeterminate (life) sentence for first-degree murder.

"This was the sentence he was serving at the time of his passing."

In previous national news coverage about the murder that was described as brutal and the weapon described as a claw hammer, Cairenius was also described as

a former Brampton man.

As in all cases involving the death of an inmate, the CSC said it will review the circumstances surrounding the death, in alignment with CSC policy, which also requires the police and coroner be notified.

Officials had released no other details at press deadline, including any details surrounding a cause of death.

Warkworth Institution is described as a medium-security facility with a rated capacity of 537.

This was the latest information available at press deadline.

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'Cost of repairing and building homes higher than ever'

Residents can help make a 'sweet' difference through 'Great Gingerbread Build-Off'

SARAH HYATT

Editor/reporter

With housing costs higher than ever, Habitat for Humanity Northumberland is calling on the community for help.

Since 1998, Habitat for Humanity Northumberland has been helping local families and residents in need of a hand up to break the cycle of poverty and achieve the dream of a safe place to rest their heads by either building or improving places they can call home.

Habitat does this through fundraising, partnering with local families and rallying volunteers yearly to help build new affordable housing across the county, and through its home repairs and reno program, which means help for people to stay in their existing homes longer.

But for Habitat's latest call, you won't need a hammer – instead other tools like icing bags may be ideal.

This November, the Great Gingerbread Build-Off (GGBO) will return for the holiday season, offering residents a chance to make a "sweet" difference in the community and have some festive fun at the same time.

"Proceeds from our Great Gingerbread Build-Off events help fund critical home repairs today and future Habitat home builds tomorrow," Aimee Tedford, Habitat's director of business operations, told the Independent. "With the cost of repairing and building homes higher than ever, this event is about more than raising funds, it's also about raising awareness, building relationships and introducing new people to Habitat's mission."

Registration and sponsorship opportunities are now open for "Habitat Northumberland's expanded holiday fundraiser," which is described as "bigger than ever."

The fundraiser is set to make its return with more ways to build, create and join than ever before, the organization has announced.

After raising \$25,000 last year, the festive fundraiser is expanding for 2026 and is centred around three events: "The Showdown," the new "Great Gingerbread Academy," and free kids' workshops.

Last year, fundraising efforts helped with a Brighton home renovation project in the Pinnacle Street South area, which meant a mom and daughter finally found home sweet home. That dedication earlier this year marked Habitat's 79th partnership with local families since 1988.

"This year, proceeds will help us continue the tremendous growth of home repairs program, which was expanded significantly since its relaunch in the spring," explained Tedford. "We're excited to carry that momentum into the next year, and hopefully, have a new Habitat home build project to share as well."

Building off the success of Habitat's previous long-standing Gingerbread Festival fundraiser, the signature GGBO competition is now getting a bigger stage this year.

Here's what you need to know if you're looking to participate this November.

"The Showdown" is set for Nov. 20 at 5:30 p.m. at the Cobourg Lions Community Centre.

"Teams of four will race against the clock to create an unforgettable gingerbread build while navigating roadblocks, surprise challenges and Habitat's infamous building inspectors," said the organization, adding that new this year, there's a live spectator component so people can come out and cheer on the teams and "watch the mayhem unfold"

Team registration is open now and it's \$500 per team, and spectator tickets will go on sale at the start of October.

The "Great Gingerbread Build Off Academy" is another new addition, which is set to light up Port Hope High School on Nov. 29 at 1 p.m. Simply put, inter-



The VOS Theatre team is seen here at a previous Great Gingerbread Build-Off event. For 2026, the GGBO challenge is expanding and returns starting in November. /Habitat photo

mediate and high school students are getting their very own GGBO challenge.

They, too, will be tasked with tapping into their creativity and have to focus on teamwork to race against the clock and tackle "a few surprises along the way." Registration is open now, with participating teams encouraged to fundraise in support of Habitat and a suggested \$50 goal per team member, noted the organization.

Tedford said Habitat is especially excited to engage a new generation of supporters through this event this year.

"Young people ... are often eager to learn more about

the challenges surrounding affordable housing in Northumberland, and the academy gives us a fun and meaningful way to start those conversations," she said.

Finally, the free kids' workshops are set for Nov. 14 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Mill Restaurant in Cobourg, and Nov. 22 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Port Hope. These events are geared for "builders" under the age of 12 and are all about creativity and holiday fun, noted Habitat.

Kids will get a pre-built gingerbread house, icing and candy to decorate and take home. One-hour sessions are available throughout the events, said Habitat organizers. However, space is limited, and advance registration is required. Parents and/or guardians also have to stay during the workshop, added Habitat.

"With free workshops for children under 12, the academy challenge for intermediate and high school students, and the adult showdown at the Lions Community Centre, there's an opportunity for the whole family to get involved," explained Tedford. "And grandparents can come and be spectators at both challenge events."

Ultimately, Habitat's hope is participants will see this is about more than just building gingerbread houses. Instead, it's about building hope in the community, and learning more about Habitat's efforts to create safe and stable housing solutions for residents and families across Northumberland.

Realtor Jacqueline Pennington has also returned this year as the title sponsor to support the event for a sixth year.

"The Great Gingerbread Build-Off brings our community together in such a fun and creative way," added Cathy Borowec, CEO of Habitat for Humanity Northumberland. "This year, whether you want to build, sponsor, bring your kids or cheer from the sidelines, there's a way for everyone to be part of it."

People looking to get involved in this year's event can visit habitatnorthumberland.ca, which has all registration, sponsorship and event details. Team and kids' workshop registration has opened, while the spectator tickets will be up for grabs in early October.

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'Heart and soul of our people': New NCAM space open

Facility designed to help preserve municipal records, more



The opening of the new Northumberland Archives and Museum space brought together First Nations' Chiefs and Elders, elected officials, community partners and residents. /Northumberland County photo

NATALIE HAMILTON

Reporter

Northumberland County officially opened the new Northumberland Archives and Museum (NCAM) location on Sept. 17, marking the occasion with a special ceremony at the 6,000-square-foot facility in Cobourg.

The county opened the doors to the "purpose-built space" that's meant to preserve, care for and share the region's history, records, artifacts and stories for generations to come.

Designed to meet Canadian Heritage Category A curatorial standards, NCAM will help preserve municipal records and collections, while offering enhanced opportunities for public access, research, programming and exhibitions.

"The newly built NCAM facility is a new home for the stories, records and objects that help us understand who we are and where we have come from," said Warden Bob Crate. "Our collections will be given the care they deserve while creating new opportunities for people to explore Northumberland's history."

"It is also a place where we can continue to build relationships and create space for the histories and experiences of

the many communities that make up Northumberland."

NCAM was built as "a unique pairing" alongside the recently opened Golden Plough Lodge long-term care home on Courthouse Road, to provide unique history programming, specialized spaces, proper environmental conditions, and modern technology for the long-term preservation and care of collections, reiterated officials.

The ceremony brought together First Nations' Chiefs and Elders, elected officials, community partners and residents. The event marked the debut of "Gidinawendimin," an exhibition exploring the beauty and resilience of the first language and culture of these local lands – those of the Michi Saagiig.

This exhibition was developed under the guidance of e wiindmaagzijig, a circle of Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers and language teachers, who worked closely with county staff to help shape how Michi Saagiig language and culture are shared with visitors.

The opening ceremony started with smudging and an opening song and prayer, followed by remarks from the warden, First Nations' Chiefs and Elders, and community partners.

"Our language is more than words put together – it is the heart and soul of our people," stated Melody Crowe, an Elder of Alderville First Nation. "It carries our values, our way of seeing the world and a connection to our ancestors."

"As visitors experience Gidinawendimin, we hope they see the beauty of our language and understand how deeply it is connected to who we are. We are very thankful for the opportunity to share this part of who we are and to help carry our language forward for future generations."

Northumberland County recognized the support from the Government of Canada that contributed \$412,406 through the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund toward the establishment of the archives and museum space. An additional \$393,069 from Canadian Heritage supported the development of Gidinawendimin, which will be hosted at NCAM over the next year.

The facility includes the Stewart Richardson Gallery, NCAM's main exhibition space and home to Gidinawendimin, the inaugural exhibition. It also encompasses the Parker Westgate Studio, equipped with state-of-the-art digitization technology to help make collections more

accessible; a reading room sponsored by Cameco, providing space for research as well as community and family-focused programming, and a climate-controlled collection storage to protect archival records and artifacts.

There is also a dedicated processing and conservation lab for the care and preparation of collections and quarantine area for newly received and unprocessed materials, helping protect the permanent collection, explained county officials.

"The opening of NCAM represents a significant investment in the future of our local history," said Crate. "The facility gives our collections the specialized care they require, while the new public spaces allow us to showcase our collections and connect people with the stories they tell for generations to come."

Research services and access to collections are available by appointment. To book a research appointment and student field trips, people can email ncam@northumberland.ca.

Ncam.northumberland.ca has more information about hours of operation and the like.



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Northumberland County has officially opened the new Northumberland Archives and Museum (NCAM) location on Courthouse Road in Cobourg. /Northumberland County photo

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County News

Corporation of the County of Northumberland

NOTICE OF PASSING OF MUNICIPAL-WIDE DEVELOPMENT CHARGES BY-LAW AMENDMENT

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the municipality of Northumberland County passed an amended municipal-wide development charges By-law No. 30-2026 on the 16th day of September, 2026 under section 2 (1) of the Development Charges Act, 1997, S. O., 1997 c. 27, as amended.

Northumberland County has been doing ongoing work on a new development charge study. By-law 30-2026 extends the current existing development charge by-law to allow more time for the new development charge study to be completed.

The development charge amounts remain unchanged by the amendment and can be viewed on the Northumberland County website at: **Northumberland.ca/DevelopmentCharges**

No key map has been provided as the by-law amendment applies to all lands located within the municipality of Northumberland County.

A copy of the complete by-law amendment is available for examination at the municipality of Northumberland County offices, 555 Courthouse Road, Cobourg, Ontario K9A 5J6 during regular business hours (weekdays from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM) excluding statutory holidays. A copy of the by-law amendment can also be viewed in the regular council meeting minutes from September 16th, 2026.

DATED at the municipality of Northumberland County offices, Cobourg, Ontario, this 25th day of September, 2026.

Tonia Bennett
Municipal Clerk

Northumberland.ca

905-372-3329

Next County
Council Meeting

OCT
14

Alternative formats of this information are available:
accessibility@northumberland.ca | 905-372-3329

Cultivate Festival marks 10 years in Port Hope this weekend

Thirty Canadian acts will perform on multiple stages over three days at Haute Goat Farm

SARAH HYATT

Editor/reporter

The 10th edition of the Cultivate Festival is all set to transform the picturesque Haute Goat Farm for three straight days in Port Hope.

Featuring live performances and a spotlight on the arts and community, the festival will light up the farm starting today through to Sunday, Sept. 27.

With the introduction of a first-ever pay-what-you-can model, this year's festival also marks another important milestone when it comes to knocking down barriers to accessibility and inclusion.

"We want people to come spend the weekend with us," said Jeff Bray, Cultivate's executive and artistic director. "Bring the kids, bring your parents, discover a band you've never heard before, make something, eat something great and slow down for a while."

"Pay-what-you-can is really simple – if you can contribute, amazing. If you can't, we want you to come anyway."

This weekend about 30 Canadian acts

will perform on multiple stages. There will also be hands-on workshops, art-making, an art hive, kids' activities, cultural programming, local food and drink, camping and campfire fun, the "Cultivate Carnival," lots of chances to just wander the farm, and more, noted organizers.

Cultivate organizers said musical highlights will include Terra Lightfoot, Lemon Bucket Orkestra, A Sharon, Lois and Bram Sing Along, Ahmed Moneka, Cuff the Duke, the Jimmy Bowskill Band, Durham County Poets, Melissa Payne, Polky, WAAHLI, Nimkii Osawamick, Päter, Less Tòches and many more.

Hosted in the rolling hills at the farm, Cultivate is also designed as a festival for all generations to slow down, explore and experience something together, added organizers.

And while the all-ages event is now a pay-what-you-can model, it is still a ticketed event for capacity purposes. Residents can learn more via cultivatefestival.ca.

The festival is 100 per cent powered by volunteers.



Cobourg Deputy Mayor Nicole Beatty is seen here at a previous edition of the Cultivate Festival. The festival returns this weekend for its 10th year. /Jeanette Breward photo



You're invited to have some fun on the farm as the Cultivate Festival marks its 10th year this weekend with three days of celebrations at Haute Goat Farm in Port Hope. /Jeanette Breward photo

'Rural communities are the backbone of our region'

Provincial \$153,169 boost aimed at supporting economic growth

INDEPENDENT STAFF

The provincial government is chipping in \$153,169 aimed at attracting investment, boosting workforce capacity and building long-term growth in rural Northumberland County.

The funding is being provided through the Rural Ontario Development (ROD) program, a \$20-million investment by the province geared to strengthen local economies, support rural workers and help communities plan for future expansion.

Northumberland-Peterborough South MPP David Piccini, recently joined Candice Tierney, founder and CEO of Oat and Mill, and James Don-Carolis, director of operations, to tour their manufacturing site in Colborne.

"Rural communities are the backbone of our region, and our government is committed to ensuring they have the tools they need for growth and success," said Piccini, in a release. "Through the (ROD) program, we are investing in initiatives that support small businesses, strengthen municipalities, and help our communities plan for long-term growth.

"Our government is proud to invest in projects that will drive economic growth and create new opportunities across our region."

Through the first intake of the ROD program, the province is supporting three

projects in Northumberland-Peterborough South. This includes \$143,169.50 for the Municipality of Port Hope's "Building Resilience" initiative aimed at manufacturing and energy sector readiness, \$13,974 for the Municipality of Clarington's Orono economic development strategy and marketing plan, and \$10,000 for Oat and Mill's marketing materials update.

"We're grateful to the (ROD) program, and to (Piccini) for championing rural business in our community," said Tierney. "The support and guidance helped us launch our new product line, Wild Child, in some of Canada's largest grocery store chains, such as Metro, Sobeys, and Whole Foods Market.

"This growth translates directly into more local jobs."

According to the province, through the first intake of the ROD program, the province is investing more than \$5.5 million in 116 projects across rural Ontario. The ROD program supports local projects from municipalities, small businesses, not-for-profits and Indigenous groups, reads a release from Piccini's office.

"We are grateful to the province of Ontario for its investment in Port Hope and for recognizing the importance of preparing communities for future economic growth," said Municipality of Port Hope Mayor Olena Hankivsky. "This funding



Northumberland-Peterborough South MPP David Piccini recently joined by Candice Tierney, founder and CEO of Oat and Mill, and James Don-Carolis, director of operations, to tour their manufacturing site in Colborne, and make a funding announcement on behalf of the province. /MPP Piccini photo

will help ensure our local businesses are ready to seize emerging opportunities in the energy and advanced manufacturing sectors.

"By strengthening our community's readiness and competitiveness today, we are positioning Port Hope to attract investment, support business expansion,

create jobs, and build long-term economic prosperity for residents and businesses alike."

Since 2019, Ontario has invested \$34.3 million in 653 projects through the ROD program and the former Rural Economic Development Fund, the province reported.

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Post-merger check-up: Health unit talks priorities

SARAH HYATT

Editor/reporter

Eighteen months after the official voluntary merger that created Lakelands Public Health, the region's top public health doc says the priorities and challenges ahead are still many as several crises continue to intersect and public health has a major role to play.

Back in August 2023, the Ministry of Health announced its proposal "to strengthen the public health sector" and plans to offer one-time funding, resources and supports to public health agencies that decided to voluntarily merge by January 2025. Discussions started between the former local Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit and Peterborough Public Health shortly thereafter, with formal board of health votes shifting the needle towards provincial approvals in early 2024.

By Jan. 1, 2025, Lakelands Public Health officially became a reality and merged, but integration work is still ongoing, Dr. Thomas Piggott, the health unit's medical officer of health (MOH) and CEO, told the Independent.

On a provincewide scale, these voluntary mergers ended reducing the grant total of public health units from 34 to 29.

"I made the joke to staff that we, you know, like an 18-month-old baby, we're still learning some, you know, new words and how to walk consistently, but we've fortunately got some great parents, (with) the health unit background (being) HKPR and Peterborough Public Health."

In addition to maintaining services, Piggott said staff also continue to work towards adding and bolstering service delivery in the region.

"That is all underway right now. And in the background of that as well is obviously the need for more work in public health."

The climate today is difficult – the issues are more complex – and priorities and crises are often colliding and/or intertwined. And this isn't unique to just public health.

Take the healthcare system that is in crisis and its challenges around access to care, noted Piggott.

"Public health really has a critical role to play into helping to support communities and prevention at a population level."

In terms of learnings amid merger work and top priorities to tackle for the merged health unit, this is just one area.

Lakelands Public Health has a much larger geographical area to serve now, and of course, one of the most important actions is to get on the ground and chat and spend time with folks and get to know more partners



Walk participants at Tattoos4Trauma Walk to End Suicide are seen here at the memorial walkway set up along the Cobourg boardwalk. Photos of loved ones lost lined the way. Dr. Thomas Piggott was in attendance. /Tim Burgess photo

and communities, explained Piggott.

"It's important for me as a leader, but I think important for all of our staff."

To this end, back in May and June, the health unit hosted a series of town-hall style events throughout its coverage area, including locally, to hear directly from residents about their priorities.

"We're pulling all of that information together and it's coming together in what will be our strategic plan that we plan on launching early next year from the board of health," said Piggott, noting this plan will serve as a blueprint for key priorities for the next five years.

Piggott acknowledged the need for a lot of work under public health and the team will continue to try and figure out the best path forward in all its communities as Northumberland's individual needs are likely to vary to say in comparison to Haliburton or Curve Lake First Nation.

The team will of course then be challenged with responding to those individual needs while also balancing efficiencies within the health unit and better ways of delivering more for residents throughout the region.

As for what public health heard at these town halls, the issues identified were many and some are broader.

"I think one of the prominent things we've heard throughout the whole region is mental health and addictions-related challenges," said Piggott, acknowledging the plethora of stressors and factors contributing to these crises today.

Meanwhile, there's also inequality and poverty, which has increased, and those have an impact on health, too, he noted.

"We're seeing more people experience the visible impacts of homelessness ... and that's a concern in many of our communities, big and small, as well as the substance-use crisis and challenge, which involves not only the need to get access to treatment, but to support people with where they're at and to help to prevent those harms from happening in the first place."

Then, there's tackling misinformation, especially around vaccines from a public health standpoint, which is increasingly becoming a challenge to get out good evidence and science so people can make informed decisions for themselves, their families and kids, which is critical, continued Piggott.

"We've seen a decrease in uptake of some vaccines following the COVID-19 pandemic. And that leads to challenges like what we've seen with measles transmis-

CONTINUED TO PAGE 17

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'We've probably seen the most significant Lyme disease season on record this past year'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

sions and even measles death in the province, which a generation ago, we would have thought would never happen again. So those challenges are very much real here."

Another area of concern the health unit has heard loud-and-clear is around environmental health challenges and how the changing climate is impacting health.

And that's not all.

"We've probably seen the most significant Lyme disease season on record this past year – and the tick that carries Lyme disease is spreading, (and) is much more prominent ... and more people are getting sick from Lyme disease and a whole litany of other illnesses associated with the environment," explained Piggott.

Then there has been the wildfire smoke, along with increasing extreme heat events, which are also impacting health, especially for older adults, vulnerable populations and those without access to cooling, he added.

Simply put, "there's a lot going on" and to work on.

What's more, Lakelands Public Health, as a whole, now has the oldest population of any public health unit in the province.

And with this comes an opportunity to age healthier and prevent diseases but also a whole host of challenges from an access to care standpoint, a hospital strain standpoint, and more, he explained.

Piggott believes public health has a key role to play to help keep people healthier, at home longer and aging in healthier ways in local communities – and these are just a few of the priorities that have come up and that public health will be working on as part of its developing five-year blueprint.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, readiness for emergencies is another prominent ask.

"We learned from the COVID pandemic, but there's also been extreme weather events and storms that have really strained our ability to be ready and respond. We need to do that better," said the MOH. "So really, there's a lot of challenges and priorities."

"What we're trying to do now is to continue to strengthen the health unit following the merger to make sure that our staff and our communities are ready for what's to come in the future."

He also noted he believes one critical element to this puzzle is size. Both previous health units were "a little bit small before the merger." Now, Piggott feels they've found "that Goldilocks zone in size," meaning it's not too big and not too small.

"We're not so big that we lose touch with our communities and residents throughout the region, but we're bigger and we have a bit more capacity and ability to have specialized staff (who) can support our region and to have some improvements in the services that we deliver and our readiness for future events and emergencies."

But finding and maintaining that "sweet spot" "takes a lot of work" and "change is hard," he noted.

Continuity under relationships, deep agency connections and partnerships with community organizations will also remain a focus moving forward, he said.

"For me, as a leader in public health, I'm also mindful that I need to get out and be part of conversations in the region."

Just one local example he pointed to included attending the recent Tattoos4Trauma Walk to End Suicide in



Eighteen months after the official creation of Lakelands Public Health, MOH and Dr. Thomas Piggott delves into the priorities and challenges the health unit is facing and plans to tackle over the next five years. /Lakelands Public Health photo

Cobourg, where he spoke with residents, community agencies and others.

"I'm trying to do everything that I can to get in and around Northumberland County and all through our region to make sure that folks know who I am, know (what) the health unit is, and know that we're there and here to support them."



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October 23, 7:00 pm	Hispania Jazz Concert	Victoria Hall Cobourg	55 King St, West, Cobourg



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'Brookside is not an anonymous parcel of vacant land'

Council hears concerns on proposed development for 390 King St. E.

NATALIE HAMILTON

Reporter

With intent to protect Cobourg's heritage buildings and environmental attributes and preserve the town's character and skyline, many residents are taking issue with a proposed development for the property long known as Brookside.

A proposed plan to build 950-plus residential units at 390 King St. E. would also put additional pressure on the town's roads and other municipal infrastructure, emergency services, and schools. Those were some of the concerns Town of Cobourg staff, councillors and representatives from the planning firm working on behalf of the site's owner heard from residents during a four-hour council planning meeting held earlier this month.

The Town of Cobourg held a statutory public meeting on Sept. 16, which is a forum that provides a formal opportunity for the public to learn about land-use proposals, allows staff to explain a development proposal, and permits applicants to present their projects.

For the parcel of land at 390 King St. E., which is the site of the former Brookside Youth Centre, the Town of Cobourg has received plans from the owner of the property to develop 970 housing units – one of the buildings with a proposed 16 storeys. The proposed plan also includes 5,000 square-metres of commercial space.

The developer is asking for an amendment to the town's official plan to provide relief from current height restrictions (with the current maximum height six storeys), permit low, medium, and high-density residential development, and permit commercial uses. It is asking for a zoning bylaw amendment to reflect the low, medium, and high density residential housing, recognize natural heritage and natural hazards, allow for commercial uses in the southwest corner of property, outline additional setback requirements of structures and alteration of special policy area (delineation and policies), which requires approval from the Town of Cobourg, Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA), Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

The landowner and applicant is Highland Hills (Cobourg) Inc. and the planning firm working on its behalf is the Planning Partnership.

"I'm excited to be with you early on in this planning process, to walk you through what the preliminary proposal is, and to hear (council) and public feedback and take that back and work with staff as we work on through the planning process," said Brandon Simon, of the Planning Partnership.

"We view the location along the King Street corridor as an important attribute here," he said. "It's a very important connection and transportation artery to downtown Cobourg (and other areas)."

"We think this, along with other opportunities on the site itself, present a very unique opportunity for well thought-out, comprehensively planned mixed-use rede-



Chris Challenger is Cobourg's director of development services. /Town of Cobourg photo

velopment."

Simon talked about the site encompassing a variety of housing types and including a public park along King Street. He highlighted opportunities to reuse the historic Strathmore Hall and incorporate the mature tree canopy that exists on the property.

The proposed development would have frontage on both King Street East and Cottesmore Avenue, and the proposal involves the creation of new access points on to both streets and a signalized intersection. It also includes the proposed realignment of Brook Creek.

Of the 970 housing units, the proposed plan encompasses 26 semi-detached homes, 106 street townhouses, 138 stacked townhouses and 700 apartments. The commercial space could include a grocery store, meeting attendees recently heard.

Development would be built out in three phases.

At least 29 pieces of written correspondence about the proposed project were submitted to the town's clerk prior to the meeting, in addition to several delegations made in-person by residents.

"Our family has been part of the Cobourg community for generations," shared David Holdsworth and Maria Drangova in their correspondence.

Drangova has also spoken up.

"They moved to a house just north of Brookside in the mid-1970s, and this neighbourhood has shaped our family's life for nearly 50 years. My wife and I write to council not to oppose growth – Cobourg should grow and grow well – but to submit that proposal submitted by Highland Hills (Cobourg) Inc. is not responsible growth. It is a scale and form of development for which this town is neither planned nor ready.

"We ask council to refuse the official plan amendment

and zoning bylaw amendment as submitted, and to direct the applicant to return with a proposal that respects the town's official plan, its heritage, and the practical realities of life in a small lakeside town."

Throughout the meeting, residents and some councillors raised concerns about the height of the proposed buildings and their projected impact on the existing townscape. Attendees heard that the property owner intended to distribute the density on the site, so the highest buildings would be built at the back of the property.

"Brookside is not an anonymous parcel of vacant land," said Justin Norris, in correspondence.

"It sits directly on King Street and forms part of the historic eastern approach into one of Ontario's most distinctive heritage towns. The property itself has recognized cultural heritage value.

"Redevelopment should respect that context rather than overwhelm it."

He said Cobourg's historic built environment "is one of the town's greatest assets ... preserving individual heritage buildings is important, but heritage conservation should also consider their setting, landscape and visual context. A historic building surrounded by towers may technically survive while much of what made its setting significant is lost."

The structures identified in the heritage designation at Brookside are Strathmore House, Cottesmore Stables and Winch Cottage and cannot be removed without approval from the town. There is an active appeal for the designations, and no development can occur until the appeal is resolved.

No decision is made during a statutory public meeting.

As for next steps, attendees heard from Chris Challenger, Cobourg's director of development services.

"Our goal is to get a comprehensive list of comments back to the applicant by (Sept. 25 end of day)," said Challenger.

The list includes comments shared both during the meeting and those that were submitted online as part of the public planning process.

"Generally, we'll group them and we'll bucket them into themes. We've heard a lot today about height, massing, density, environmental concerns, traffic concerns – so those are very clearly laid out in the comment letter back to the applicant."

Challenger said the comment letter will also include the reviews from the technical agencies, such as GRCA, and internal departments within the town, for example.

"Those comments will go back as the first round of official comments from the town."

"Generally, there (are) a few iterations of these," continued Challenger. "We have lots of questions that we've flagged that we'll be going back to the applicant – specifically looking for more information from a lot of the studies that have been submitted to the town."

Residents can continue to submit their comments to the Town of Cobourg by phone, through the municipal website or by mail.

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New associate medical officer of health

SARAH HYATT

Editor/reporter

Lakelands Public Health is growing with the appointment of Dr. Maxwell Tran as the health unit's new associate medical officer of health.

"I am thrilled to join the Lakelands Public Health team," said Tran. "I look forward to working closely with our amazing staff and with the board of health, municipalities, First Nations, and partners to improve the health of our communities."

The health unit formally announced Tran's appointment on Sept. 17, 2026, saying Tran brings a wealth of academic excellence, comprehensive public health training and diverse clinical experience to the region.

"Dr. Tran joins Lakelands following a distinguished academic and professional journey," said the health unit, in a recent release. "He completed his Doctor of Medicine (MD) and a combined Family Medicine and Public Health and Preventive Medicine (PHPM) residency at the University of Toronto, where he demonstrated exceptional leadership by serving as chief resident for both programs."

"During his residency, he also earned a Master of Public Health (MPH) from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, where he was recognized as a prestigious Sommer Scholar."

Officials stated that his foundational



Dr. Maxwell Tran has officially been appointed as Lakelands Public Health's new associate medical officer of health. /Lakelands Public Health photo

public health experience also includes extensive hands-on training across Ontario's public health landscape. As a senior PHPM resident, Tran also completed rotations at multiple public health units,

including Halton Region, Peel Public Health, Toronto Public Health, and York Region Public Health, as well as provincially with Public Health Ontario and the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of

Health, reads his bio.

"We are incredibly excited to welcome Dr. Tran to Lakelands Public Health," said Dr. Thomas Piggott, who also serves as medical officer of health/CEO for the health unit. "His outstanding academic background, paired with his extensive hands-on residency experience and deep clinical understanding of both urban and remote communities, makes him an exceptional asset to our team."

"I look forward to working closely alongside him to protect and promote the health of everyone in our region."

In addition to his public health specialization, Tran reportedly maintains an active clinical practice in family medicine and hospitalist medicine.

This clinical work has taken him across the province, serving diverse patient populations in North York, Parry Sound, Sioux Lookout, and Sandy Lake First Nation, noted the health unit.

"This dual lens of front-line clinical care and population-level health strategy will heavily inform his work protecting and promoting health within Lakelands' communities."

The board of health and Lakelands Public Health team are also welcoming Tran's leadership and collaboration as the agency continues to work on delivering more programs and services across the region, which you can read more about in this week's edition.

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POLICE BRIEFS

Crash probe, impaired, weapons calls, more lead to charges

INDEPENDENT STAFF

From impaired driving and crash investigations to stunt driving incidents and a weapons call, Northumberland OPP has been busy.

Here's your latest OPP rundown.

BREAK AND ENTER, IMPAIRED AND DANGEROUS DRIVING CHARGES LAID:

On Sept. 15, 2026, at about 6:25 p.m., officers said they received multiple reports about an individual who had entered a residence and was attempting to gain access to other homes in the area of Prince Edward Street and Stephen Street in the Municipality of Brighton.

Callers provided police with a description of the individual and their vehicle, and a subsequent report indicated the same person had been involved in a collision with a parked vehicle, said OPP, adding no injuries were reported.

Police said they found a vehicle matching the description provided by callers and took an individual into custody. Officers subsequently also initiated a parallel impaired driving investigation, reported OPP.

As a result of the probe, police said a 61-year-old Brighton resident was arrested and charged with operation while impaired – alcohol and drugs, failure or refusal to comply with a demand, dangerous operation, being unlawfully in a dwelling house, possession of break-in instruments, and break, enter a dwelling house with intent to commit an indictable offence.

REPORT OF PERSON POINTING FIREARM LEADS TO ARREST:

On Sept. 13, 2026, at about 4:50 p.m., police said they responded to a report that an individual had allegedly pointed a firearm at a number of people operating a personal watercraft in Presqu'île Bay from the area of Harbour Street in the Municipality of Brighton.

After responding to the scene, OPP said officers took one person into custody, and

an air pistol was seized during the investigation.

A 62-year-old Brighton resident was charged with pointing a firearm and possession of a weapon for a dangerous purpose, said police.

BREAK AND ENTER CALL:

On Sept. 8, at about 5:30 p.m., police said they received a report that a residence on Front Street East in the Municipality of Trent Hills had been broken into and property stolen.

As a result of the investigation, on Sept. 16, one person was taken into custody, reported OPP.

Police said the accused is a 41-year-old Oshawa resident who was charged with mischief – destroys or damages property, theft under \$5,000, and break, enter dwelling house – commit an indictable offence.

CRASH INVESTIGATION LEADS TO CHARGES:

On Sept. 12, shortly after 9 p.m., police said a single-vehicle collision was reported on Barnes Road in the Township of Cramahe. Paramedics were also dispatched after a pick-up truck was reported to be on its side and blocking the roadway, added OPP.

Police said one occupant allegedly fled into an adjacent field, and OPP's emergency response team (ERT) and canine unit were called in to help with a search.

During the investigation, police also allege that they determined the remaining occupant had provided false information.

As a result of the search, police said one individual was located on a nearby property and arrested.

There were no serious injuries reported as a result of the collision.

As a result of the investigation – and in addition to a number of Highway Traffic Act (HTA) offences – police said a 34-year-old Cobourg resident was charged with dangerous operation and four counts of failure to comply with a release order – other than to attend court.

Further, a 36-year-old Cramahe resi-

dent was charged with public mischief and obstructing a peace officer, reported OPP.

CITIZEN TIP LEADS TO ARRESTS:

On Sept. 10, at about 10:45 p.m., OPP said police received a complaint about a vehicle unable to maintain its lane on Elizabeth Street in Brighton. Another caller reported the same vehicle had collided with a commercial building on Elizabeth Street and caused damage, added police.

After arriving on scene and speaking with the driver, an impaired driving investigation was initiated, which resulted in an individual taken into custody, said police. Further investigation then revealed that the passenger had also allegedly operated the vehicle a short time earlier, resulting in second impaired driving investigation, explained OPP.

Both of the accused were arrested.

As a result of the investigation, police said a 24-year-old Belleville resident was charged with operation while impaired – alcohol and drugs, operation while impaired – blood alcohol concentration (80 plus) and obstructing a peace officer.

A 21-year-old Greater Napanee resident was also charged with operation while impaired – blood alcohol concentration (80 plus) and obstructing a peace officer.

In addition to the charges and a future court date, police said a 90-day administrative driver's licence suspension and seven-day vehicle impoundment were imposed.

STUNT DRIVING CHARGES:

Northumberland OPP is continuing to urge motorists to slow down and obey posted speed limits after several stunt driving incidents.

On Sept. 13, police said an officer was conducting patrols in the County Road 45 area in the Township of Hamilton when a passenger vehicle was allegedly clocked at 142 km/h in a posted 80 km/h zone.

As a result, a 57-year-old Etobicoke resident was charged with drive motor ve-

hicle – perform stunt – excessive speed.

Meanwhile, in another separate incident on Sept. 12, shortly before 2 a.m., OPP said officers conducting speed enforcement on Hwy. 401 eastbound in the Brighton area clocked a vehicle at 182 km/h.

In this instance, a 17-year-old Scarborough resident was charged with drive motor vehicle – perform stunt – excessive speed.

In addition to being dishd out a future court date, police said those accused of stunt driving also received a 30-day licence suspension and vehicles were impounded for 14 days.

In a third incident on Sept. 12, at about 2:30 a.m., officers said they observed a pick-up truck travelling on Hwy. 401 eastbound in the Municipality of Port Hope at 151 km/h.

The vehicle was stopped and police said several additional offences were identified.

The probe led to a 35-year-old Merrickville resident charged with drive motor vehicle – perform stunt – excessive speed, drive motor vehicle – not equipped with ignition interlock device, novice driver – B.A.C. (blood alcohol concentration) above zero, class G1 licence holder – drive on prohibited highway, class G1 licence holder – drive at unlawful hour, and failure to surrender an insurance card, said police. In addition to a future court date, the driver received a 30-day licence suspension, and the vehicle was impounded for 45 days, added OPP.

Whether travelling across town or along Ontario's highways, safe driving habits save lives, stressed OPP.

Police are again calling on all motorists to slow down, leave adequate space between vehicles, remain focused on the road, and move over for emergency vehicles and roadside workers who are carrying out duties in potentially hazardous conditions.

None of the charges in the above unrelated incidents have been proven in court.



Patrols in the County Road 45 area led to a stunt driving charge for an Etobicoke resident. /OPP photo



Northumberland OPP is again calling on drivers to ease up behind the wheel after several stunt driving incidents. /OPP photo

Quebec youth charged, stolen vehicle recovered: OPP

INDEPENDENT STAFF

A 17-year-old Quebec resident is facing serious charges after Northumberland OPP says police recovered a stolen vehicle in the Municipality of Trent Hills.

On Sept. 16, 2026, at about 2:15 p.m., OPP said an officer was on patrol in the County Road 35 area when in-cruiser automated licence plate recognition (ALPR) technology alerted them to a stolen vehicle.

“The same vehicle had earlier been observed travelling eastbound on Hwy. 401 near Cobourg and failed to stop for police shortly after 9 a.m.,” reported OPP.

Police said the passenger vehicle had been reported stolen from the Niagara region earlier in the week.

“The vehicle was last observed travelling northbound on County Road 25,” said police, adding officers later attempted to stop the vehicle at a commercial



ALPR technology as seen here helped Northumberland OPP recently with an alleged stolen vehicle incident. /OPP photo

property in Hastings, but again, the vehicle allegedly failed to stop. “A short time later, the vehicle was located abandoned on Lakeshore Drive.”

The alleged incident prompted an increased police presence in the area while officers – with help from OPP’s canine unit – conducted a search, explained po-

lice.

One individual was reportedly found in a nearby field and taken into custody, but police remained in the area until about 5:30 p.m. that day.

“Northumberland OPP would like to thank local residents for their patience and co-operation during the investigation,” said police, in a follow-up release after the alleged incident.

In addition to a number of Highway Traffic Act offences, police said as a result of the investigation, a 17-year-old from Quebec was charged with possession of property obtained by crime over \$5,000, two counts of dangerous operation, and two counts of flight from a peace officer.

None of these charges have been proven in court. Police added that the accused can’t be named in accordance with provisions under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

Police urge parents to talk with kids after ‘toy gun’ incident

INDEPENDENT STAFF

Cobourg police are urging parents and guardians to speak with kids about the risks of carrying toy or replica guns in public places after someone reported seeing a youth carrying what initially appeared to be a handgun in a residential neighbourhood last Saturday.

It turned out that the call involved a toy gun, police confirmed in an update issued on Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026.

Just the day prior, the Cobourg Police Service had issued a call for the public’s help following the report, which was

made on Saturday, Sept. 20 just after 4 p.m. Police said at that time they had received a report about a male youth seen walking westbound on Parkview Hills Drive “carrying what appeared to be a camouflage-coloured handgun.”

In their Tuesday release, police said the call prompted an extensive search of the area and then canvassing, but no one was found. This prompted investigators to put out the call for the public’s help and surveillance footage from the area.

Police earlier warned that it had not been determined whether the item was a real firearm, a replica or another object,

and noted there were no additional related calls received about the report.

In their latest update, the service said police had concluded their investigation into the report and “confirmed the item was a toy gun.”

Police are thanking the community for its help and providing information that helped bring the investigation to “a prompt conclusion.”

However, the incident has also led police to issue a reminder to the public that realistic-looking toy and replica firearms can be difficult to distinguish from real firearms.

“Reports involving possible firearms are taken seriously and responded to accordingly to ensure public safety,” explained the service. “Parents and guardians are encouraged to speak with their children about the risks of carrying toy or replica guns in public places.

“Objects that could be mistaken for a real firearm can cause significant public concern and result in an immediate police response.”

No other details were released by police.

Careless driving charge laid after crash involving pedestrian

Cobourg man accused of violating court conditions, drug-related offences in separate call

INDEPENDENT STAFF

A Cobourg resident is facing a careless driving charge after police say a vehicle hit a pedestrian in a parking lot.

According to the Cobourg Police Service, on Sept. 15, 2026, at about 7 p.m., police responded to a business in the Elgin Street West area for a report of a collision involving a pedestrian.

“Upon arrival, officers located the pe-

destrian, who had been struck by a vehicle in the parking lot,” said police, adding the pedestrian was sent to hospital with minor injuries.

As a result of the probe, police said the accused Cobourg resident was charged with careless driving. No other details surrounding the investigation or accused, including an age or whether the accused was a man or woman, were provided by police.

There was another unrelated incident in Cobourg that also resulted in a local man’s arrest on Sept. 15.

Police said at about 10:45 p.m. officers on general patrol reported observing an individual in the King Street East area in violation of a court-ordered curfew.

During a search incident to arrest, officers allege they found about 2.47 grams of suspected fentanyl and more than \$2,900 in Canadian currency.

As a result of the investigation, police said the 57-year-old Cobourg man was charged with failure to comply with a release order, failure to comply with a probation order, possession for the purpose of trafficking – fentanyl, and possession of proceeds of crime under \$5,000.

None of these charges have been proven in court.

OPP calls on public for help after fail-to-remain crash

Motorcyclist airlifted to Toronto trauma centre with serious injuries: OPP

INDEPENDENT STAFF

Northumberland OPP is calling on the public for help with an investigation into an alleged fail-to-remain crash in the Port Hope area that sent a motorcycle rider to a Toronto-area trauma centre with serious injuries, say police.

According to OPP, emergency crews

responded to the collision involving a sedan and motorcycle in the County Road 28 area, near Ganaraska Road, on Monday, Sept. 21, shortly after 9:30 a.m.

“The motorcycle rider – a 53-year-old male – sustained serious injuries and was airlifted by Ornge to a Toronto-area trauma centre,” said OPP. “The involved vehicle is described as a white sedan with

tinted windows and a possible spoiler.

“Investigators are continuing their efforts to identify the driver.”

OPP’s technical traffic collision investigation unit was also called and had to shut down County Road 28, between Boundary and Ganaraska roads, for the onsite investigation.

Police are urging anyone witnesses or

anyone who has dashcam or other video footage to reach out to Northumberland OPP 1-888-310-1122 and reference incident number E261373805. Crime Stoppers is also an option, where people can share tips anonymously by calling 1-800-222-8477 or visiting ontariocrimestoppers.ca.

'Low season' parking in effect in Cobourg: What you need to know

SARAH HYATT

Editor/reporter

"Low season" parking is now in effect, meaning residents and visitors can get their first three hours of parking free across the Town of Cobourg until May 14, 2027.

The Town of Cobourg's municipal enforcement and licensing office has confirmed the shift was effective Sept. 15, 2026.

"Earlier this year, the town's parking program was divided into two seasons: High season – (from) May 15 to September 14 – and low season – (from) Sept. 15 to May 14," explained municipal staff.

However, parking enforcement continues 24/7, noted staff.

"During low season, parking in waterfront parking lots and on-street spaces is free for the first three hours, after which the rate is \$2.50 per hour or \$20 per day," said staff, in a recent public notice.

The waterfront parking is the big change for the two "seasons," as during the "high season," waterfront parking is \$5 per hour or \$40 a day. And there is no free parking in these lots or on these designated streets.

However, amid several changes in recent years, parking rules have become a tad more complicated and confusing at times based on more than the time of year and where you're parking or where you live, et cetera.

In case you need a refresher, the Town of Cobourg is again breaking down the rules:

DOWNTOWN PARKING:

Year-round, downtown parking is free for three hours and after this, rates jump to \$2.50 per hour for both on-street and parking lots. Paying for additional time can be done at the pay-and-display machines or meters or through the HONK mobile app, noted staff.

PARKING PERMITS:

As for parking permits, people can buy them via parking.cobourg.ca or at 201 Second St. (the municipal law enforcement and licensing services office) and Victoria Hall during regular business hours, which are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekdays.

Staff said that two vehicles can be registered on one parking permit, and both vehicles can utilize the permit at the same time.

Here's an additional breakdown based on where you live:

If you're a Cobourg resident looking for a parking permit, it's \$10 monthly year-round. This permit is valid for downtown and waterfront lots and on-street parking, as well as includes overnight parking in lots and on-street downtown year-round, explained staff.

Meanwhile, if you're a Northumberland County resident, permits cost \$40 a month.

Again, with these permits this means residents have access to on-street parking, as well as downtown and waterfront lots. However, overnight parking is only permitted in lots, noted staff.

As for DBIA employee permits, it's \$20 a month year-round and these permits are for downtown parking lots only, and do not include waterfront designated



Parking rules have changed in the Town of Cobourg with the shift to 'low season' rules now in effect until next May. /Sarah Hyatt photo

areas.

The priciest parking relates to visitor waterfront permits. According to town staff, during the low season, it's \$35 a month and in the high season, it's \$80 a month. Meanwhile, a seasonal pass during the high season costs \$320.

These permits are valid for parking strictly in waterfront parking lots and waterfront on-street areas. The permits are not for downtown and do not include overnight parking, reiterated officials.

ACCESSIBLE PARKING:

Accessible parking is free for Cobourg residents who have registered for an annual accessible permit and includes both "accessible and other lawful parking spaces."

Visitors or non-residents are required to pay applicable parking rates, and accessible on-street parking spaces have a

three-hour time limit, noted staff.

OVERNIGHT PERMITS:

Staff are also reminding the public that overnight parking is from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m., and overnight permits are available for use in all municipal lots. Costs translate to about \$10 per night, or an overnight monthly permit is \$100.

The town also continues to maintain a map and brochure that is available for people via www.Cobourg.ca/parking. Printed brochures are also available at municipal buildings such as Victoria Hall, 201 Second St., the Cobourg Public Library, Experience Cobourg Tourism Hub, and Cobourg Community Centre.

Residents with further questions are encouraged to contact the municipal law enforcement and licensing services office by calling 905-372-8380 or emailing bylawenforcement@cobourg.ca.




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United Way launches campaign after record year

Breakfast event celebrates \$851,487 raised, kicks off this year's fundraiser

INDEPENDENT STAFF

Northumberland United Way has officially launched its 2026-27 campaign.

During an event earlier this month, members of local businesses, community partners, volunteers and supporters joined together to celebrate a year of growing impact and look ahead to the work still to come.

The annual campaign kick-off breakfast at the Best Western Plus Cobourg Inn and Convention Centre highlighted a 2025-26 campaign that surpassed its \$750,000 fundraising target, raising \$851,487 to support programs, services and initiatives across Northumberland County, attendees heard.

That support is reaching more people and organizations than ever, noted the organization.

Northumberland United Way reported 24,443 people served through 118 funded partners in 2025-26, compared to 17,101 people and 63 funded partners the previous year.

"I'm incredibly proud of what our team has accomplished over the past year, and I'm equally excited to officially introduce our new team members to the community," said Alicia Vandine, executive director of Northumberland United Way.

"Each person brings something different to our work, and I think that reflects what this campaign is really about. When people bring their strengths, ideas and commitment together, look what we can make possible."

The growing reach comes at a time when financial pressures are being felt by households across the country, noted Northumberland United Way. United Way Centraide Canada's latest Financial Anxiety Index found 60 per cent of people in Canada feel anxious when thinking about their personal finances, while 46 per cent said they could cover basic expenses for only one month or less before falling into debt.

The findings helped frame discussion around why listening to community needs and looking out for one another continue to matter.

Beyond fundraising, Northumberland United Way serves as a convener, collaborator and advocate, and the organization works with residents, businesses, community organizations and other partners to identify emerging needs, connect resources and invest where they can make a meaningful local difference, explained



Northumberland United Way support is reaching more people than ever before, and the organization has set another ambitious campaign fundraising goal. /United Way photo

the organization.

During the breakfast, the United Way team shared examples of that work through initiatives including Northumberland Eats, Haven for All, Backpacks for Kids, Period Promise and Hygiene Cabinets, Community Matters and Day of Caring, while outlining plans to continue expanding outreach and investment throughout the county.

That work will be guided by Northumberland United Way's soon-to-be-released strategic plan, which identifies key areas of community focus, including food security, affordable housing, housing and homelessness, mental health, youth mental health, employment and aging in place.

"The organization will continue working with its national office and broader sector partners to bring a Northumberland County perspective to these issues and the conversations surrounding them."

The year ahead will include continued investment in local programs and partnerships, expansion of food-security initiatives across rural communities, Period Promise and Hygiene Cabinets, a first Trent Hills Day of Caring, and new opportunities for workplaces and community partners to participate throughout the campaign year.

"Building on that momentum, Northumberland United Way has set a 2026-27 fundraising goal of \$875,000, with the community once again being asked to help turn local generosity into local impact."

Workplace campaigns will remain an important part of that effort, but the organization is encouraging businesses and employees to think broadly about what workplace giving can look like. Alongside payroll giving, workplaces can participate through volunteerism, staff challenges, activities, special events and their own creative ideas for bringing colleagues together around local needs, noted United Way.

The event also featured workplace and community partners who spoke about why their organizations continue to support United Way.

As the 2026-27 campaign gets underway, Northumberland United Way said it will continue listening to what people and organizations across the county are experiencing, connecting people and resources, and creating more opportunities for residents and workplaces to take part.

For more information about Northumberland United Way, its programs or opportunities to get involved, visit mynuw.org.

Vintage show fun in Roseneath supports donkey sanctuary



Northumberland's Vintage Show – dubbed the largest outdoor vintage show – returned recently to light up Roseneath and offered people a chance to shop for all sorts of antiques, retro treasures and more. /Peter Dounoukos photo



The Northumberland Vintage Show returned to Roseneath offering people a chance to visit with dozens of outdoor vendors featuring all kinds of goods, while also raising money for the PrimRose Donkey Sanctuary. /Peter Dounoukos photo

Capitol Theatre announces cast, team for 'Red!'

Single tickets on sale now for 'Red!...A Big Bad Wolf Panto'

INDEPENDENT STAFF

Theatre-goers will be seeing "Red!" this holiday season as Capitol Theatre has announced the cast for this year's annual holiday Panto.

The 2026 installment of the Panto will be "Red!...A Big Bad Wolf Panto," which is an original retelling of Little Red Riding Hood.

"Our annual Panto tradition brings our whole community together, whether you're looking for something naughty or something to share with your family," said Rob Kempson, the Capitol Theatre's artistic director. "This year, with an internationally-celebrated writer and director, it's sure to tickle your funny bone and get you singing along."

Kempson has announced the cast and creative crew behind the production. A Big Bad Wolf Panto is written by Rebecca Northan, writer of 2023's hit production, Jack: A Beanstalk Panto, with music supervision and arrangements by Jeff Newberry.

It will be directed by Aurora Browne (Baroness Von Sketch), and Scott Pietrangelo will be the music director and MJ Shaw the choreographer.

As is signature of the Capitol Panto, scheduled performances include both family-friendly and "naughty" adult-oriented versions of the show.

"When Red leaves home with a basket of treats for her granny, all she has to do is stick to the path and avoid talking to strangers, but there's a groovy beat in the darkest part of the woods, and every young girl is up for adventure," noted the Capitol, in a recent release. "When she crosses paths with a bad-ass wolf, Red's journey takes a turn that she never expected."

The Panto features an all-star cast including, Zoë O'Connor as "Red," and Paul Bates as "Wolf," as well as Gabi Epstein, Nicky Nasrallah, Colin Asuncion, Alex Furber, Malinda Carroll, and Griffin Hewitt, with musician Justin Han.

"I am delighted to be working with Capitol Theatre to dig into a very old, very dark story adapted by the wonderful Rebecca Northan," said Browne. "We are cooking up an evening of naughty laughs with incredible, talented performers – all the better to thrill the audience with, my dears."

The creative team includes Adam Campbell (sound design), Joe Pagnan (set design), Joyce Padua (costume design), and Michelle Ramsay (lighting design.)

Single tickets for the production are available via Capitoltheatre.com/red/.

In addition to the Panto, Holidays at the Capitol includes the 30th annual Festival of Lights and Trees. Since its inception in 1997, this annual fundraising initiative



The Capitol Theatre has announced its holiday lineup for this year. /Sarah Hyatt photo

has been a community favourite, becoming a yearly tradition for guests of all ages, while also raising essential operating funds for the Capitol Theatre.

Visitors can enjoy "a winter wonderland" of holiday wreaths and Christmas trees decorated by local businesses and community organizations and enter to win the decorations through the theatre's popular yearly raffle, added the theatre.

A series of festive concerts will also take place at the Capitol this winter, including the Good Lovelies: Christmas 2026 on Sunday, Dec. 20 at 7:30 p.m., and Tim and Tina: A Country and Rock Extravaganza on Thursday, Dec. 31 at 7:30 p.m.

Interested attendees can learn more about visiting the Capitol Theatre's website.



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Port Hope's first turkey vulture festival taking flight

NATALIE HAMILTON

Reporter

Caolaidhe Keelor of Port Hope is always game to talk turkey (vulture.)

Keelor, a self-proclaimed “bird nerd,” is particularly excited about an upcoming turkey vulture festival, which is a first for Port Hope, and to her knowledge, a novel event for Canada as well.

She's organizing the festival, which runs on Sunday, Sept. 27 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Farley Mowat Park in Port Hope. Events will also take place in Rotary Park. The festival includes a variety of environmental vendors, education about vultures, live animals from turtles to birds, a scavenger hunt downtown, and more.

Keelor said the festival, where the bird is the word, provides an opportunity to celebrate all things turkey vulture and educate the community at the same time about “an often-misunderstood species – the vulture.”

Just last week, she saw about 50 birds roosting in trees, “thermallling” in the sky and scavenging on the ground near the river, during Port Hope's annual salmon run.

“Every year during the salmon run, hundreds of turkey vultures will congregate to clean-up all the salmon. It's a phenomenal experience to see all of those turkey vultures roosting.”

Turkey vultures and vultures in general have a bad reputation, said Keelor.



Caolaidhe Keelor is organizing a turkey vulture festival on Sunday, Sept. 27 in Farley Mowat and Rotary parks in Port Hope. /Caolaidhe Keelor Pacific Northwest Raptors photo

“So I've taken it upon myself to be their public relations representative to bring awareness. People often have misconceptions that vultures might prey on a domestic animal, for instance, when they see them circling over an area.

“Turkey vultures are obligate scavengers, meaning don't see anything living as food. They only eat what's already dead. They really are nature's clean-up crew.”

The acidity level in their stomachs is equivalent to battery acid so when they

do eat pathogens like rabies on roadkill or carrion, “they recycle it, so it comes out clean.”

“Vultures actually do stop the spread of disease and they're a keystone species for the environment so I just want to throw them the best party to make everybody love them as much as I do,” said Keelor.

She became fond of turkey vultures through her previous job at Pacific Northwest Raptors on Vancouver Island.

“I got to work with some amazing tur-

key vultures and learn more about vultures and “how cool they are. The art of evolution of how they're designed is so neat.”

Part of the festival encompasses education, and there will also be a variety of activities. At 1 p.m., Alderville First Nation will lead a cultural opening ceremony. At 2 p.m., music starts with Greg Keelor, a Canadian singer-songwriter known for his role in Blue Rodeo, and other musicians.

The conservation village will feature about 12 environmental vendors in both the Rotary and Farley Mowat portions of the park. Vendors include Ontario Nature, Wild Ontario with birds of prey, and the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre with turtles.

There will also be a scavenger hunt downtown for adults and kids alike with prizes.

The event is free.

“My goal is not only to bring awareness to turkey vultures, but also to nature. The more you know about a certain species or the environment, the more you want to protect it. I feel that we're all connected and so protecting the habits we all live in is very important.”

“I hope it does become an annual event,” said Keelor.

For more information, visit @turkeyvulturefestival on Instagram or visit <https://www.birdershewrote.com/>.

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'We created this circle for connection and community'

Drummers meet Thursdays in Cobourg, are looking for new members

NATALIE HAMILTON

Reporter

Sharon Stevens and Sheila Noonan are feeling "Good Vibrations" about the drumming circle they have formed in Cobourg and are welcoming others to also experience the benefits of playing percussion.

The Good Vibrations Drum Circle started after the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the djembe drum lessons they were attending in Bowmanville at the time. When the lessons started up again, Stevens and Noonan weren't enthusiastic about making the drive to Durham Region. However, they missed drumming.

"So we thought how great it would be to have our own drum circle right here in Cobourg," Stevens and Noonan shared in a joint statement.

"And so, in the interest of creating something for connection and community, we began to plan how we might do that. Eventually, as our plan evolved, we found a perfect space to rent at Trinity United Church, and in January of 2023, we were delighted to gather several drummers from Cobourg, Port Hope and Grafton."

Some people travelled from further away to join them, but Northumberland's winter weather was a deterrent.

"At this point, our numbers have increased and we have a core group who

come to our weekly gatherings and others who come when they can. We have had many come in just to see what we're all about – we welcome and encourage that. "Drop in, see and hear what we do, experience what we're all about, feel the connection among those who have been with us awhile."

Members of the Good Vibrations circle play djembes or frame drums, bongos, and several kinds of other percussion instruments. They have a few djembes and frame drums to share with people who want to try them out before they buy or rent their own.

"African rhythms for Djembe are quite complex and while we have learned a few of those rhythms, we tend to depend more on intuitive drumming," said Stevens. "One person starts a rhythm; others join in and create a wonderful sound."

Along with the music to one's ears, vibration caused by drumming is a healthy activity.

"Vibration caused by drumming has a positive effect on the whole person," she said.

There are specific positive effects of vibration on the vagal system, affecting several of the body's organs, including the heart.

"Drumming causes us to learn to listen."

The drummer learns to focus and avoid



The Good Vibrations Drum Circle, which meets Thursdays at Trinity United Church, is looking to recruit new members. /Sharon Stevens photo

distraction. Drumming provides time and space for creative expression, promotes connection with like-minded people and builds community, said Stevens.

"Our drummers often say they often feel better at the end of a session than they did when they came in. When, in our early days, we asked for suggestions for a name, the group chose Good Vibrations. "It has defined us well."

The Good Vibrations Drum Circle hopes to welcome new members.

"A newcomer (will) be welcomed by a supportive group whose experience with drumming varies. Some have been drumming for many years. Others are fairly new. We are careful to make sure everyone can be involved, learn as they go, and mostly enjoy themselves," noted Stevens.

The circle meets at 7 p.m. on Thursdays at Trinity United Church, which is located at 284 Division St.

Call 343-263-4686 for more information.



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Community rallies for Cobourg Parkinson Canada SuperWalk



Master of ceremonies Caroline Thornton from Port Hope shares her story of living with Parkinson’s while speaking to participants at the 2026 Cobourg Parkinson Canada SuperWalk fundraiser on Sept. 13.



Eight-year-old Declan made the trip with his dad to join Cobourg’s SuperWalk fundraiser in support of his grandfather and other family members living with Parkinson’s disease.



Olivia Spurio (left) and Angela McKinlay, of Cobourg, volunteer for Parkinson Canada’s SuperWalk event held at Victoria Park on Sept. 13. Online, it states more than \$62,000 was raised to help fuel critical research and ensure people have access to trusted programs and supports.



The Rogie’s Rockets team raised more than \$18,000 for the Cobourg Parkinson Canada SuperWalk. The team rallied in support of Roger Cole, who had Parkinson’s disease for 15 years until his death in December 2025. The team came from all over – as far as Nunavut, Toronto, Kitchener, and Ottawa.



Participants of the SuperWalk fundraiser are seen here making their way through Victoria Park in Cobourg.



Team members from “The Up and Adam’s” make the trek in support of Adam through Victoria Park in Cobourg. /Tim Burgess photos

The story of Mary (Mortimer) Wilby, a British home child

SUBMISSION BY MARG GRAHAM

Granddaughter of Mary (Mortimer) Wilby

Between 1869 and 1932, more than 100,000 children were sent from Britain to Canada through assisted juvenile emigration.

These migrants are called “home children” because most went from an emigration agency’s home for children in Britain to its Canadian receiving home. The children were placed with families in rural Canada.

According to Home Children Canada, Maria Rye, Annie McPherson and Barnardo were three of the more than 30 organizations that sent more than 100,000 children to Canada.

Barnardo’s sent more than 30,000 children here and was by far the largest organization sending children to Canada between 1866 to 1939. In 1882, Barnardo sent his first group of children to Canada using his own organization.

He also sent children to Australia during the same time period. His quest was driven by the need to lessen overcrowding in orphanages in the U.K. and to fill labour shortages in Canada and beyond. It is estimated that more than 10 per cent of the Canada population are descendants of home children. That is more than 4 million people.

The Canadian government, along with the British government and various charitable organizations, funded and supported the child migration schemes, viewing it as a way to provide cheap labour for Canada and to lessen poverty in England. The government initially paid a \$2 per-child fee to organizations bringing children to Canada.

In 1920, the \$2 per child payment was replaced by grants of \$1,000 to homes that brought over 100 children annually, with an additional bonus for further chil-



Granddaughter Marg Graham carries on the story of her grandmother Mary (Mortimer) Wilby, a British home child survivor, whose life was a testament to resilience. /Marg Graham photo

dren. Kids were sent with a trunk of personal clothing and a bible. Siblings were more often separated without any knowledge of where their sibling was placed.

My grandmother, Mary Mortimer, was a home child born in 1881 and was only four-foot-10 when she reached adulthood, but even as a child, the weight she bore seemed to shrink her further. She was taken from England and brought to Canada in 1893 on board the SS. Labrador, at the age of 11.

Mary’s life had been shaped by quiet resilience. Abandoned when her mother died at age of two, she was placed in the care of Barkingside Village, one of Dr. Barnardo’s homes for destitute girls in England.

She was described as a “dull” looking child with “promise of improvement.” Though the halls were clean and orderly, love was scarce and a quiet thing. She learned early to keep her chin and her heart guarded.

Once in Canada, she was stripped of familiarity and thrust into a life of labour. There were no tender welcomes, no soft landings, only cold floors, endless chores and the quiet expectations that she grow up.

While others her age chased dreams, she chased time, racing to finish tasks that never ended. In a land that should have offered new beginnings, she was instead handed a broom, pail and a life not her own.

She was placed in several different homes (12 in total) across Ontario. Some provided education, some provided a proper bed and food, while others challenged her to live in a barn and eat slop or leftover foods and provided severe abuse of every nature.

Her last placement in 1903 was at the home of a merchant, an English family in Hastings, Ont. She worked at the home and in the general store to assist the family. She was treated properly and received proper bedding and food.

At the age of 20, Mary noticed him, a handsome, young man with kind eyes. She stood behind the counter of the general store, wrapping his order in brown paper and string. After that day, he became a regular visitor, finding some small reason to return to the general store.

His name was John Wilby, a local farmer and well digger from Fenella, Ont. Mary was drawn to him. By late fall, the visits had become a rhythm of their own unspoken courtship woven amongst the shelves of canned

CONTINUED TO PAGE 29

Todd Attridge For Mayor of Port Hope

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'Her life a testament to resilience'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

peaches and sacks of grain.

As a Barnardo home child, her placement had given her work and shelter but not much say in her future. Yet, with each passing day, she and John grew closer. Her placement with the English family would end when she turned 21. Her only certainty was that she did not want to be parted from John.

On a cool morning, they boarded the train bound from Havelock to Peterborough, with little more than a small suitcase. There they became husband and wife. Mary called Hazelbrae, the receiving home for girls in Peterborough, to advise them she was married and leaving her contract.

Mary and John settled in the quiet village of Grafton, Ont., where the fields met the lake and life moved with the seasons. They farmed the land. From Grafton, they moved to a small home in Canton, outside of Port Hope.

Their home was modest but filled with laughter, the scent of fresh bread, and soft chaos that came with a growing family. Over the years, Mary gave birth to 12 children, a daughter in the beginning, 10 boys in the middle and her last, a baby girl.

Her last was at the age of 48, a small miracle she cradled with weathered hands and a full heart.

But, just 11 months after their youngest was born, tragedy struck. John passed away suddenly, leaving Mary a widow with 12 children and no time to grieve. The weight of it might have broken someone else, but Mary had long been

forged in hardship. She pressed forward, not out of ease, but out of necessity.

She took work at the Port Hope canning factory, standing long hours on her feet. It was backbreaking labour, but steady.

She stretched every dollar, mended every piece of clothing and somehow managed to keep her children fed, clothed and in school. Bit by bit, she saved enough to put a down payment on a home on Victoria Lane in Port Hope – proof of her grit, her sacrifice, her quiet determination to give her family something no one could ever take away.

Life had tested her from the very beginning: Abandoned as a child, shipped across an ocean, widowed too soon, but never once did she yield to bitterness or despair. She taught her children not just how to survive, but how to live with dignity.

She lived to the age of 81, her life a testament to resilience, love and quiet determination. By the time she passed, her children were grown, many with families of their own – each one carrying a piece of her strength within them.

Though her hands had known hardship, they had also built a life filled with meaning. Her children and grandchildren and the stories passed from one generation to the next keep her spirit alive.

This Sept. 28 is Home Child Day. It was enacted by the Ontario government in 2011 to recognize and honour the contributions of British home children. It was further enacted by the Canadian government in 2017 with the declaration of Sept. 28 of every year as British Home Child Day in Canada.

Ganaraska Financial Credit Union helps bowling club



Kathy Foster, CEO of the Ganaraska Financial Credit Union in Port Hope, and board Chair Lynda Kay, attended a Cobourg Lawn Bowling Club tournament on Sept. 17 to present the club with a donation of \$2,500 to support the purchase of new lawn bowls. This equipment will be used for the youth bowling program and by their senior members. The donation is part of the Ganaraska Financial Credit Union's community investment fund, which people can learn more about via www.ganaraskacu.com. /Lynda Kay photo

West Northumberland Independent

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Screening of Gord Downie's The Secret Path

September 30, 2026

Doors open at **6:30 p.m.** Screening at **7:00 p.m.**
Capitol Theatre, 20 Queen St., Port Hope

The Secret Path is a powerful Canadian documentary and animated film project created by Gord Downie that tells the story of Chanie Wenjack, a 12-year-old Anishinaabe boy who died in 1966 while attempting to walk hundreds of kilometres home after escaping from a residential school in northern Ontario. Through music, animation, and storytelling, the film follows Chanie's tragic journey and highlights the devastating impacts of Canada's residential school system on Indigenous children and families.

Admission is free. Donations gratefully shared between:

Aron Indigenous Circle, Campbellford and

Past Time, a legacy project in honour of Indian Residential School Survivor Stephen Pashagumskum



Information, tickets or to make a donation:
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SPORTS

Cougars defeat Hurricanes 7-6 for third straight win

'He's a little water bug out there, and he competes'

ALAN RIVETT

Sports correspondent

Rookie forward Garrett Jones had exactly zero concerns about signing on with the Cobourg Cougars for the current junior hockey campaign.

"(Part-owner/General Manager) Ryan Ramsey runs a great program here and he was very persuasive, so I knew it was gonna be a good fit when I first came here," said Jones, 17, who joined the Cougars after completing last season with the Peterborough AAA Junior (U18) Petes.

The speedy forward has proven to be a productive asset thus far as part of the Cougars' current crop of first-year players. In three regular-season games, Jones has a goal and two assists, including a helper in the Cougars' 7-6 victory over the visiting Newmarket Hurricanes in Ontario Junior Hockey League action at the Cobourg Community Centre on Monday, Sept. 21.

The Cobourg juniors' victory over Newmarket represented their third consecutive win so far this season, but the wheels nearly fell off for the Cougars in the third period. With Cobourg leading 6-3 in the final stanza, the Hurricanes responded with three unanswered goals to knot the score at 6-6.

It took a goal by Briir Long (assists to Cayden Smith, Isaac Larmand) with 2:36 remaining to secure the win and keep the undefeated string intact.

Jones has definitely caught the attention of Cougars' head coach Derek Smith with his blend of speed and tenacity thus far in the young season.

"Jonesy's somebody who's getting better every game," said Smith, of Jones, a resident of Fraserville. "He's a little water bug out there, and he competes.

"He's still getting used to junior hockey, but he's play-

ing hard, and he's playing with a lot of pace."

Jones credits the coaching staff in addition to his line mates Colton Bain and Julien Davis for a good start to the season and making his transition to junior hockey easier.

"I know my role, and the boys are great and there's a great leadership group and great coaching, so it's been super welcoming," said Jones.

As for his line mates, Jones said: "They've been unreal – they're veterans – so they've been helping me through the ways and it's been really comforting."

Like any rookie, Jones said he's still adapting to junior hockey as the players are bigger and the speed of the game is also a step up from his last year of minor hockey.

"Yeah, I feel like I've just got to keep my feet moving. That's the biggest thing," said Jones. "Obviously, it's a lot faster, more physical, so I gotta have my head up and keep skating."

While the two points and the undefeated record to start the 2026-27 season are important, Smith said the coaching staff is aware the players' defensive work has to catch up to their offensive prowess if their current run of success is to continue.

"Obviously, (we're happy with) the outcome, we get two points at home, which is huge, and we scored seven goals, but we've got to be a more connected group, and we've got to find a way to, like I said, string together some positive shifts, and get the momentum back, and it comes down to the willingness to defend and play hard. It's stuff we're working on," he explained.

"We show spurts of being connected, and playing good team defence, and then, you know, it gets away from us. Hockey is all about pride in winning battles and we're going to have to do a better job with it," he added.

Cougars' captain Larmand led the way on the score-sheet with a four-point night (goal, three assists) against Newmarket. Other goal scorers were Jonny Brooks, Davis, Carter Petrie, Bain, Cayden Smith, and Long's game winner. Other assists went to Alexis Boily with



Cobourg Cougars' Jonny Brooks reached for the puck following a face-off in the offensive zone during first-period action against the Newmarket Hurricanes at the Cobourg Community Centre on Monday, Sept. 21. The Cougars needed a goal by Briir Long with 2:36 remaining in the third period to secure a 7-6 victory over the visiting Hurricanes.

two, Daniel Tout, Liam Oravsky, Bain, Nole Faulkner, Long, Keegan Shirley, and Cayden Smith.

The three stars of the game for the Cougars were first star Bain, second star Larmand and third star Cayden Smith.

The Cougars are on the road to Pickering to play the Panthers on Saturday, Sept. 26. They also played in Markham against the undefeated and conference-leading Royals (7-0-0-0-0-0) on Sept. 24, with the result unavailable at our press deadline.

The next home game for the Cougars is against the North York Rangers on Monday, Sept. 28. The Cougars plan to honour the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation during the game.

At press deadline, the Cougars sat in third place in the OJHL East Conference standings with a mark of (3-0-0-0-0-0).



Garrett Jones (86) is enjoying life as a Cobourg Cougars' rookie. The 17-year-old right winger joined the Ontario Junior Hockey League team after playing with the Peterborough AAA Junior Petes last season. Jones has a goal and two assists in three games so far this season.

CORRECTION:

In our Sept. 18 edition, the Independent featured an article on the Cobourg Cougars 6-5 triumph over the Muskies on page 20. In the ceremonial puck drop photo outline, Town of Cobourg Chief Fire Prevention Officer Aaron Blair was incorrectly identified as Chief Ellard Beaven. The Independent regrets the error.



Cobourg Cougars' Joseph Cadorin's (16) stick bends as he released a shot on goal in the first-period against the Newmarket Hurricanes at the Cobourg Community Centre on Monday, Sept. 21. /Alan Rivett photos

LEAVE THE LEAVES TO SOMEONE ELSE

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COLUMNS

‘Community Lives Here’: Sandy Ward’s care at NHH didn’t end when treatment did



JENNIFER GILMER

Independent columnist

At the hospital foundation, we often talk about the impact community support has on patient care.

But the true measure of that impact is found in the lives and stories of the people behind it.

I am frequently reminded that healthcare is about more than treatments and technology. It is about lives changed. Sandy Ward’s story is a powerful example.

As a more than 20-year breast cancer survivor, and a dedicated member of Survivor Thrivers, she has faced challenges with courage and come through them with a renewed appreciation for life. I am honoured she trusted me to help share her story.

Ward was born and has lived

most of her life in Port Hope. She was a registered nurse and worked the majority of her career at Northumberland Hills Hospital until her retirement 10 years ago. Her friends would describe her as someone who doesn’t sweat the small stuff, who is helpful, funny and empathetic, and someone who has appreciation for the life she is living.

From her perspective, much of that attitude can be credited as a silver lining to having gone through breast cancer. She changed through the experience – became more outgoing, left her shell behind, and emerged stronger.

In the early days after diagnosis, there were many tears and moments of uncertainty.

“I didn’t think I was going to survive to see my daughters graduate high school,” she recalled. “Now, I’ve seen so much, including university graduations, marriages, and them becoming mothers themselves. I’m lucky to have five grandkids who I now get to watch grow up as well.”

She went through much of her journey on her own and was determined to keep things as nor-

mal as possible for her girls, who were just ages 14 and 12 at the time of her diagnosis. This solo approach is not something she would recommend to others and is part of why she co-founded the Northumberland breast cancer support group in 2007, which is facilitated by members of the Survivor Thrivers.

It fills her heart to know her experience can help others on their breast cancer journey, and she is pleased to see how much local healthcare and access has evolved since her treatment. She’s seen the growth of our hospital firsthand, as a patient, a staff member, and now as a volunteer with the NHH Auxiliary.

“The team at NHH goes above and beyond and that support can make such a difference during a care journey,” she shared. “Having state-of-the-art equipment so close to home is amazing and is a worthwhile investment for anyone who is able to donate. Health is wealth.”

The care Ward received at NHH didn’t end when her treatment did. It gave her a foundation to heal, grow and embrace a future she once wasn’t sure she would have.

Ward will be share more of her



Sandy Ward shares her story of breast cancer survivorship. /Chris Knox Photography

story of survivorship publicly at our Oct. 7 event entitled “Stronger Together: Stay ABreast,” co-hosted with the Survivor Thrivers. Residents can learn more about this event and the

difference community support makes at NHHFoundation.ca.

Jennifer Gilmer is the director of communications and engagement for the Northumberland Hills Hospital Foundation.

‘The Mason Line’: An eye-opening experience



PAUL NICHOLAS MASON

Independent columnist

I had a profoundly unsettling experience when I was 28 years old.

I’d just been given a full-time teaching contract at a prestigious independent school – and with only an Honours B.A. and no B.Ed., I was reinventing the wheel every night. My first wife and I had a 15-month-old, and we had just bought our first

home.

Psychologists tell us that’s a fearsome combination of stressors.

Preparing lessons, marking papers, tracking 14 advisees, coaching my debating team and helping with the baby meant I rarely made it to bed before 2 a.m. – and that was when little Rachael usually woke up. I rarely got more than four hours sleep, more often three-and-a-half hours.

So my doctor prescribed “a mild sedative” known as “Halcion.” I took it gratefully.

The first night, I felt odd, which he’d warned me was possible. The second, I found it very hard to focus. The third, a Saturday, I came up from my basement study, sat on the living-room floor, put my arms around my knees, and gazed

at my skin. It appeared to be crawling. The walls appeared to be closing in.

And I don’t mean that figuratively: My skin literally seemed to be crawling, the walls to be literally closing in.

I went to the emergency department around 3 a.m., and a psychiatric nurse admitted me to the hospital’s psychiatric facility. My roommate was an older fellow I’ll call Walter, who sat up when I came in and began yelling at the top of his voice: “Nuk, nuk, nuk!” And so it went for the next few hours.

My situation was delicate. I’d received my contract only months before, and private schools found it easy to dismiss teachers who failed to perform. So I negotiated to stay nights at the hospital, leaving to teach at 7 a.m. I returned home after

school, helped with the baby, ate dinner, worked until 10:30 p.m., then went back to the hospital, finishing my marking under the watchful eye of nurses, who continued to give me Halcion.

After roughly six weeks I was allowed home – not a great deal better, to be honest – but fortified with anti-depressants and anti-anxiety meds.

Skip ahead several years. I was watching the CBC National News when the anchor revealed that Halcion had been banned in the U.K. and Denmark because it caused psychotic episodes or hallucinations in two to three per cent of those who took it.

It’s hard to overstate the impact of that experience, and I wonder to this day to what degree it affected my body chemistry. It hasn’t stopped me from taking other medications since

– which, given the depredations of cancer, is just as well – but it has made me anxious whenever I take a new drug, and I read the cautions very carefully.

Putting aside the trauma, I’m a little grateful to have spent time in a psychiatric ward. I saw firsthand the small kindnesses patients showed each other, and the patience of psychiatric nurses in the face of some patients urinating or defecating in the halls.

And I learned what it is to feel confused, vulnerable and almost hopeless – and unsure whether I would ever feel sane and whole again.

Paul Mason is a voice-, film- and television-actor, and the author of six novels, most recently *To Our Graves and Sackville House*.

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'Head Space': Being alone doesn't have to mean being lonely



BRANDON W. HAHN

Independent columnist

I don't think they explain loneliness very well in the manual for dealing with life on planet earth.

Being alone and being lonely are completely different things and relatively hard to wrap your brain around. I love being alone. Being in solitude. Being with

"just me."

I also love company and being social.

Both things can be true.

There are times when I feel lonely. Usually, I feel most lonely within crowds of people. Or standing in line at the bank. There's something strange about feeling alone when you're surrounded by people.

I think my loneliness is mostly due to believing I am not heard. That's hard to explain.

I love being around like-minded people. People who understand where I'm coming from. People who can listen to one of my weird ideas and maybe even throw one back at me. I feel connected when I'm around people like that.

I can feel deeply, tragically

alone when I'm not.

Then, there's boredom.

When I'm by myself and can't find anything to do, I'm both lonely and bored. I sometimes wonder if boredom might just be a side effect of loneliness. Or even a cause of it?

Maybe boredom is loneliness with nothing good on TV.

Occupying my time with worthwhile pursuits is the antidote, for me anyway. Having something to do that makes me feel productive with my time pretty much counters the lonely feelings.

Writing. School. A project. A walk. A conversation. Something creative. Something that makes me feel like I've made progress. Purpose.

But there are also times when

doing absolutely nothing is beautiful for me.

Focusing on my inner self, my chi, every fabric of my being really is one of the ways I counter what irks me about consciousness and the mundane parts of everyday life.

Sometimes I need to occupy my mind. Sometimes, I need to let it be.

I'm constantly searching for things to occupy my fragile little mental state. I don't necessarily think that's a bad thing anymore. Curiosity keeps me moving. Creativity keeps me interested.

Having something on the horizon gives me somewhere to go.

All in all, this pursuit gives me something to look forward to in this world. Maybe that's part of my answer to loneliness.

Not simply surrounding myself with people, but finding people, places and things that make me feel connected. Finding something that makes me want to get up tomorrow morning and see what happens next.

And maybe accepting that everybody else is trying to figure out their own version of this at the same time.

Being alone doesn't have to mean being lonely.

Being in my element. Allowing other people to be in theirs.

And hopefully, every once in a while, our elements overlap.

Brandon W. Hahn is a podcaster, screenwriter and mental health advocate. He hosts Snackable Mental Health on YouTube and writes about the strange business of being human.

'Sustainability Corner': End preventable child deaths



SIMON CHORLEY

Independent columnist

Welcome to Sustainability Corner where each week we will look at a global issue making a local impact.

These issues are based on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which were set by governments, including Canada, in 2015, with the aim of achieving them by 2030. The aim is not to provide all the answers, but to spark constructive conversations

about our role in addressing these challenges.

Week 3: End preventable child deaths

In September 2025, an infant tragically passed away after a motor vehicle collision involving a child care centre in Richmond Hill. As a precaution, the Government of Ontario directed all licensed child care centres to close parking spaces near child care areas as short-term measures to protect children, while longer-term solutions were developed. Preventable child deaths don't just happen somewhere else in the world but can affect us all.

The United Nations reports that deaths of children under the age of five has fallen in the last decade, from 6.1 million to 4.9 million. The global maternal mortality ratio has also fallen,

from 228 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births to 197. But funding cuts and ongoing crises are putting decades of global health progress at risk.

Official overseas development assistance from high to low-income countries has fallen to levels not seen since 2015, with a further decline projected, and there has been a drop in childhood vaccination rates since the COVID-19 pandemic. Deep inequalities in healthcare access remain, and critical shortages of health workers persist in many regions of the world.

Inequitable access to healthcare is also present in Canada, particularly among remote and Indigenous communities. UNICEF's 2026 report on Canadian child wellbeing finds that Canada ranks 31st of 44 high-income countries for child mor-

talidity, with the rate rising over 10 years from 0.88 to 1.09 per 1,000 children under five, surpassing 2018 levels (0.94 per 1,000) in a concerning reversal of progress.

Statistics Canada reports that while Canada's maternal mortality is low at 11.65 deaths for every 100,000 live births (significantly less than the U.S. rate), this has actually risen since 2015. The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada points to several factors: People are delaying child-birth until later in life, or they are having children at younger ages unintentionally – both of these scenarios carry increased health risks.

While child and maternal mortality are not the health issues that immediately come to mind here in Northumberland

County, the preventable death of even one child in our province is one too many. In December, the Government of Ontario invested \$20 million to launch a memorial fund following the Richmond Hill tragedy. The aim is to help protect children in child care by helping community-based licensed facilities install concrete barriers free of charge. So if there's one thing we can all do, as parents, grandparents, family or friends, we can ask our child care centres if they are installing these barriers, so that this never happens again.

Simon Chorley is a Cobourg resident and a human rights and sustainability consultant. He has previously worked at a human rights charity tackling human trafficking, and for the United Nations. Connect with him on LinkedIn.

'The Next Chapter': Get loud for libraries in October



RACHEL SPENCE

Independent columnist

There is something about the crisp shift in the air that makes you want to grab a warm drink and a stack of good books.

That seasonal change always

brings a brilliant, cozy energy into the Cobourg Public Library, turning our space into a natural hub for connection and discovery. This October, we have double the reasons to roll out the welcome mat – it's officially Canadian Library Month and Ontario Public Library Week, running from Oct. 18 to 24.

The theme for this year is "Get Loud for Libraries."

We want our community to raise its voice and share just how essential these spaces are for learning, gathering and growing. To join in the noise, be sure to check out our Facebook

and Instagram pages @cobourg-pl starting Oct. 1. Throughout the month, we will be sharing eye-opening impact facts that highlight the real, everyday difference our library makes right here at home.

We also want to reward your curiosity. From Oct. 1 to 24, our "checkout receipt contest" is back. Every time you check out your next stack of reads, hang onto that receipt; it quietly tracks the exact value you are saving through public resource sharing. Snap a quick photo of it and send it our way to be entered for a chance to win a gorgeous,

curated library-themed gift basket.

Looking for an early autumn adventure?

Clear your schedule for Saturday, Oct. 3 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. for our silent auction and book sale. Every dollar raised goes straight toward expanding and enriching our collection, making it the ultimate treasure hunt for book lovers who want to reinvest in our shared community resources.

We are equally proud to team up with the Cobourg Rotary Club for "Socktober."

From Oct. 1 to 31 all of our

locations will serve as drop-off hubs for brand-new socks to help support individuals and families experiencing need or housing vulnerability through the changing weather.

Libraries are so much more than brick and mortar – they are an inclusive pulse of our town.

Whether you're scoring a deal at the book sale, dropping off a warm pair of socks or connecting with us online, let's make some noise together this October!

Rachel Spence is a community engagement co-ordinator with the Cobourg Public Library.

Several events to mark National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Film screening, artwork viewing along waterfront, Victoria Hall lit orange among recognitions

INDEPENDENT STAFF

The Town of Cobourg is inviting residents to reflect on the history of Indigenous people by participating in a variety of activities on Wednesday, Sept. 30.

Cobourg is hosting events to commemorate the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, which is Wednesday.

“The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is a time to reflect on the history of Indigenous people, remember the thousands of children that attended harmful residential schools, and understand how we as allies can help create a better future,” said the town, in a recent release.

“Cobourg residents are encouraged to take the extra step on this very important day to do their part in reconciliation by educating themselves on the history of the land we live on.”

The town said residents can attend a film screening of “Indian Horse” as one activity happening locally. The film is being shown at 2:30 and 7 p.m. in the citizen’s forum at Victoria Hall. The 2017 film is an adaptation of Ojibway writer Richard Wagamese’s award-winning novel.

The film follows Saul Indian Horse, an Ojibway boy, who is torn from his family and committed to a residential school in the 1950s, reads the town’s release. At the school, Saul is denied the freedom to speak his language or embrace his heritage and is a witness to abuse by the people sworn to protect him. But Saul finds salvation in the unlikely of places – the rink. His hockey talents lead him away from the school to bigger and better opportunities, but no matter how far Saul goes, the ghosts of his past are always close behind, reads the town’s provided description of the film.

Admission is free and open to the public.

The town cautioned that Indian Horse contains mature themes and depictions related to the experiences of Indigenous children and families in Canada’s residential school system. The film, which is rated 14-plus, includes references to and portrayals of racism, colonialism, family separation, cultural suppression, abuse, neglect, grief and trauma. It aims to reveal a painful history, but it can be distressing or triggering for some viewers.

“Be mindful of your feelings when watching and reach out for help if needed.”

The Hope for Wellness Helpline offers immediate help to all Indigenous people across Canada by calling 1-855-242-3310.

Cobourg also invites residents on Sept. 30 to visit the Waterfront Wisdom Pathway, a collection of 26 banners created by local Indigenous artists Rick Beaver and Koren Smoke, of Alderville First Nation.

“The banners, displayed on the lampposts along the Cobourg waterfront, bring vibrant expressions of storytelling and tradition reminding us of our deep connection



There will be several events locally to mark National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, including a film screen of ‘Indian Horse’ at Victoria Hall. Victoria Hall will also be lit up in orange on Sept. 30, and flags will be at half-mast. /Natalie Hamilton photo

to the land. The artists intentionally chose the harbourfront location, reflecting the cultural and spiritual significance of water in Indigenous life. Take a walk along the shoreline and explore the stories behind each piece.”

To view the gallery online, people can also visit www.ExperienceCobourg.ca/waterfrontwisdompathway.

The Waterfront Wisdom Pathway has been nominated for the Creative City Network of Canada Impact Awards in the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility award category.

“This recognition is a wonderful reflection of the collaboration, care and commitment that went into bringing this special project to life, and the meaningful relationships and community impact it has created along the way,” noted town officials.

While visiting the Waterfront Wisdom Pathway, visitors may also notice two orange Adirondack chairs featuring written reflections shared by residents during past National Day for Truth and Reconciliation commemorations. Visitors are encouraged to take a moment to read the reflections, pause and consider what Truth and Reconciliation means to them.

Also on Sept. 30, residents can join Alderville First Nation for the Every Child Matters Walk starting at Alderville Health and Social Services (AHSS), which is located at 8467 County Rd. 45 in Roseneath. Participants will meet at 10:45 a.m. with the walk starting at 11 a.m.

Attendees will walk north to the Alderville First Nation Community Centre, and a bus will be provided to return to the AHSS building.

“The walk is open to everyone to honour and raise awareness (about) what Orange Shirt Day represents while encouraging Canadians to answer the Calls to Action for Truth and Reconciliation.”

Guests are encouraged to wear an orange shirt.

Also on Wednesday, flags across the Town of Cobourg will be at half-mast.

In 2023, Cobourg council passed a resolution to permanently display the Every Child Matters flag on the flagpole in Rotary Harbourfront Park.

“The flag permanently flies not only as a commemoration but also a commitment to remembering Indigenous lives that were tragically lost within the residential school system, which spanned over 150 years, with the nearest such institution to Cobourg being situated in the Alderville First Nations Reserve.”

Victoria Hall will also be lit orange on Sept. 30 in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

In addition, the Cobourg Public Library is recognizing Indigenous voices and stories through a variety of book displays throughout the library. The library has also introduced a new orange feather sticker, which is placed on materials written by Indigenous authors to help readers discover and explore these works.

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Cobourg Stamp Club COPEX show this Saturday

COBOURG STAMP CLUB

Special submission

The Cobourg Stamp Club was established in 1960 from a group of armed forces personnel from the base located in Cobourg.

The club is a registered chapter member of the Royal Philatelic Society Canada.

The club held its first show and exhibition in 1970, and the shows have been held annually since, with exception of two years during COVID.

The shows have been known as COPEX and then the year they are taking place – i.e. COPEX 2026.

The first show cover was prepared for the 10th anniversary of the COPEX shows held on Sept. 15, 1979. The cover features St. Peter's Anglican Church for its 160th anniversary in Cobourg where the show was held. The soft-shell turtle stamp (#813) was cancelled with a special slogan cancel promoting the

exhibition.

This year, the COPEX show is being held on Saturday, Sept. 26 at the Salvation Army Church at 59 Ballantine St., Cobourg. Hours are from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Along with the members exhibits, there is a large consignment table and silent auction, and there are eight dealers with a wide assortment of collectable material and supplies. The dealers attending are Nigel Mackey, Mark Kasso, Steve Anderson, Rusty McQuaid, Hugh Anderson, John Bedows, Peter Rainey and Mike Cole.

Club meetings are held every second and fourth Wednesday of the month at the Salvation Army Church from 5:30 to 8 p.m. from March to November, then 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. in January and February, and there are no meetings in December and July.

To learn more, you can reach out to chevy4life@hotmail.com.

The show is free to attend Saturday.



The Cobourg Stamp Club is hosting COPEX 2026 this Saturday, Sept. 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Salvation Army Church. /Club photo



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Location: Hamilton Township Office

Additional Benefits:

Option to participate in the Compressed Work Week Program

Comprehensive benefits package • OMERS pension plan

The Township of Hamilton is a vibrant rural community nestled between Lake Ontario and Rice Lake in Northumberland County, one hour east of Toronto and next door to the Town of Cobourg. With a population of approximately 11,000 residents the Township offers a delightful blend of the Oak Ridges Moraine, active farms, residential subdivisions and estates, historic villages, waterfront, and tourism.

The Township is situated within the traditional territory of the Mississauga Anishinaabeg and Chippewa nations, collectively known as the Williams Treaties First Nations. Our work on these lands respectfully acknowledges their resilience and their longstanding contributions to the area now known as the Township of Hamilton.

All positions in the Corporation of the Township of Hamilton support the Township's vision of making life better every day by creating a vibrant and sustainable township we are all proud to call home. Employees demonstrate empathy and respect in all interactions, are committed to service excellence.

As part of our mission to provide effective and efficient services to our residents, the Township is now accepting resumes from qualified applicants for an existing vacancy of the position of **Financial Analyst**.

Interested in learning more about what you will do and how to apply?

Check out the full posting on the career opportunities page on the Township website at www.hamiltontownship.ca

Job Posting: **MECHANIC**

Full – time: 40 hrs / week Job Posting #: 2026-14

Hourly Rates:

2026: \$39.40 • **2027:** \$41.07 • **2028:** \$42.82

Location: Hamilton Township – Public Works Building

Additional Benefits:

Option to participate in the Compressed Work Week Program

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The Township of Hamilton is a vibrant rural community nestled between Lake Ontario and Rice Lake in Northumberland County, one hour east of Toronto and next door to the Town of Cobourg. With a population of approximately 11,000 residents the Township offers a delightful blend of the Oak Ridges Moraine, active farms, residential subdivisions and estates, historic villages, waterfront, and tourism.

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As part of our mission to provide effective and efficient services to our residents, the Township is now accepting resumes from qualified applicants for an existing vacancy of the position of **Mechanic**.

Interested in learning more about what you will do and how to apply?

Check out the full posting on the career opportunities page on the Township website at www.hamiltontownship.ca



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'There are so many ways for children to be active'

INDEPENDENT STAFF

Northumberland County partners are hosting an upcoming event in Cobourg that targets keeping kids on the move.

Northumberland County, Northumberland EarlyON Child and Family Centres, and Active for Life invite families, educators, early years professionals, and residents to join their free community event focused on "helping children stay active, healthy and thrive in today's digital world."

The event runs from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 3 and takes place in the theatre within the Cobourg Collegiate Institute (CCI), which is located at 335 King St. E. It will feature a keynote presentation by Richard Monette, executive director of Active for Life, which is a nationally-recognized initiative that supports children's healthy development through movement and play.

"Supporting children's healthy development is a shared responsibility, and collaboration between families, educators, and community partners is key," said Lesley Patterson, the county's Early Years services manager, in a media release.

"There are so many ways for children to be active, in addition to traditional methods like sports. Incorporating movement in the early years of child development

doesn't need to be an added task – it can become a mindset that is a natural part of childhood.

"During this presentation, Mr. Monette will provide valuable insights into the benefits of active play and offer tangible ways to incorporate more movement into our everyday lives."

Drawing on more than a decade of experience developing the Learn Through Active Play (LTAP) professional development program, this presentation will explore how educators can intentionally integrate active play into daily practice and support children's overall development, added organizers.

With growing concerns about increasing screen time and declining levels of physical activity in young kids, the session is designed to be engaging and informative. It will explore how active play supports children's physical, cognitive, emotional and social development, while offering practical strategies families and educators can apply in everyday settings.

Participants will gain an understanding of how movement and active play support healthy brain development in early years and gain insight into how active play has declined in the digital era and the potential impacts on child development.

They will hear about practical ideas for incorporating active play into everyday

routines at home, school, childcare, and community settings, identify barriers to active play within their own environments and explore realistic, community-based solutions.

The event includes a real-world example of successful implementation through the LTAP program in childcare settings.

Following the presentation, attendees will have a chance to participate in a question-and-answer session with the keynote speaker.

Complimentary childminding services will be available for registered participants. Advance registration is required to reserve a space and arrange child care.

This event is promoted in partnership with Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, Peterborough, Victoria, Northumberland and Clarington Catholic School Board, and the Community Training and Development Centre.

To register, visit Northumberland.ca/EveryMoveMatters.

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SATURDAY, SEPT 26 @ 3PM

A fundraiser to help
support the choral
scholar program at
St Peter's Church

Wayne Robinson, a Peterborough Pathway of Fame Inductee and lead bass in the church choir, will be including songs of Sinatra and Buble in his varied program that also features recollections of his life as a professional singer. His piano accompanist is Syd Birrell, organist and choirmaster of St. Peter's Church.

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Nominate your pet to be featured by emailing info@wnuindy.ca

Riddles

What is the richest nut?
A cash-ew!

Why did the fruit salad skip its own wedding?
It had a lot of can't-elope!

What kind of beer won't get you tipsy?
Root beer!

What kind of poultry is always going to the bathroom?
Chick peas!

Why did the citrus tree go to the hospital?
Lemon-aid!

You cut me, slice me, dice me, and all the while, you cry. What am I?
An onion!

What kind of apples do computers prefer?
Macintosh!

What has many ears but cannot hear?
Corn!

What vegetable always loses in every competition yet is a terrific rapper?
Beets!



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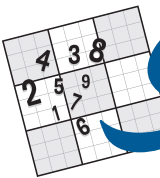
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N Z W M I E D U W A X L B Y M O J U Y L Y A D H V

- Address
- Organize
- Treasures
- Vintage
- Signs
- Traffic
- Books
- Clothing
- Dishes
- Furniture
- Linens
- Glassware
- Tools
- Toys



Sudoku

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

Solutions on pg. 38

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GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

DIGNITY DRIVE:

The Rose Quest is hosting a Thanksgiving Dignity Drive on Oct. 10 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Giant Tiger in Cobourg.

The organization is asking people to help their neighbours in need by donating new hygiene products. Items accepted include everything from toothpaste to socks.

Residents can learn more at www.therosequest.ca.

COBOURG STAMP CLUB COPEX 2026 SHOW:

The COPEX show returns Sept. 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Salvation Army Church at 59 Ballantine St.

In addition to member exhibits, there will be a large consignment table, silent auction and several vendors with a wide assortment of collectable material and supplies. The club's annual show has been a tradition since 1970.

ART SHOW AND SALE:

The Pine Ridge Art Association hosts its 34th annual Art Show and Sale at the Cobourg Public Library on Nov. 6, 7 and 8.

The hours will be 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the Friday and Saturday, and 1 to 4 p.m. on the Sunday.

The show will feature more than 70 original artworks from local artists who are members of the association. To learn more about the group, email info@pineridgeartassociation.com.

COBOURG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTATION:

The Cobourg and District Historical Society hosts its first monthly presentation of the season on Sept. 29. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the presentation is at 7:30

p.m. at Victoria Hall.

John Boyko is the speaker, and the topic is "In Pursuit of Tomorrow – The Inventive Life of Sir Sanford Fleming."

Members attend for free. Guests pay \$5. All are welcome.

TURKEY VULTURE FESTIVAL:

Happening on Sunday, Sept. 27 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Farley Mowat Park in Port Hope at 44 Mill St. S. Events will also take place at Rotary Park. The festival includes educational vendors, live animals, a scavenger hunt and more.

60 YEARS OF SONG:

St. Peter's Anglican Church, located at 240 College St., Cobourg, is featuring Wayne Robinson's "60 Years of Song" on Saturday, Sept. 26 at 3 p.m. The concert is a fundraiser to help support the choral scholar program at St. Peter's Church. Robinson, a Peterborough Pathway of Fame Inductee and lead bass in the church choir, will be including songs of Sinatra and Bubl  in his varied program that also features recollections of his life as a professional singer. His piano accompanist is Syd Birrell, organist and choirmaster of St. Peter's Church. Tickets for adults are \$20, for students it's \$10 and kids pay 5.



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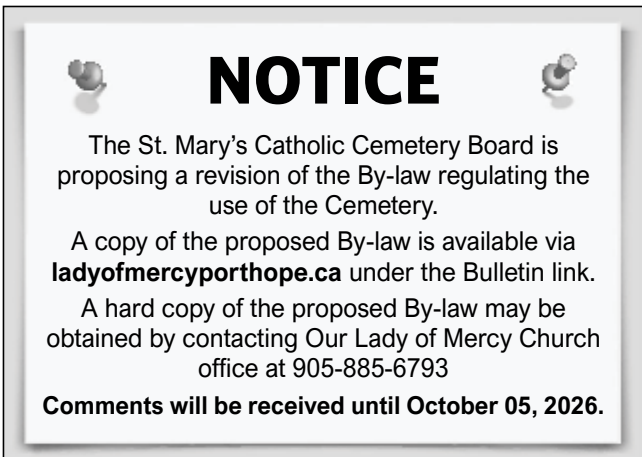
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NOTICE

The St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery Board is proposing a revision of the By-law regulating the use of the Cemetery.

A copy of the proposed By-law is available via ladyofmercyporthope.ca under the Bulletin link.

A hard copy of the proposed By-law may be obtained by contacting Our Lady of Mercy Church office at 905-885-6793

Comments will be received until October 05, 2026.

QUIZ ANSWERS									
1. Augustus	2. South Africa	3. 32	4. The Simpsons	5. China	6. Titanic (1997)	7. The colossal squid	8. King Midas	9. Citric acid	10. The Kiwi

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

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OBITUARY

Rawn



Carolyn Ann Rawn (Morgan)
March 11, 1941 - September 22, 2026

Peacefully passed surrounded by loved ones on Tuesday September 22nd, 2026 at Ed's House Hospice in Cobourg at the age 85. Beloved wife of the late Leslie Rawn and cherished mother to Dennis (Francine) Rawn, LeeAnn (Barry) McBride, Tim (Corey) Rawn, Terri (Art) Chapman and the late Michele. Loving Granny to Jennifer (Dan), Devan, Kjell (Felicity), Caitlyn, Tex, Luke (Lindsay), Dillon (Brittany) and Samantha (Craig). Dearly missed Great-Granny to 11 and Great-Great-Granny to 2. Fondly remembered by her brother Jim (Phyllis) Morgan. Carolyn will be missed by many extended family and dear friends.

Carolyn enjoyed her time at the Legion playing pool and darts and she also enjoyed her time as a member of the Red Hat Society as well volunteering at the Cramahe Family Thrift Shop. She was an avid Blue Jay's fan and enjoyed going to the games with her long-time friend Janet. The family would like to thank Dr. Mule, Dr. Chang, Dr. Caldwell, all of the staff at Ed's House and the NHH Cancer Clinic.

A Celebration of Carolyn's Life will be held on Saturday October 3rd, 2026 at the Colborne Legion, 92 King St E, Colborne, ON from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. A private interment will be held at the Colborne Union Cemetery for close family and friends. If desired, memorials donations to Ed's House Northumberland Hospice would be appreciated by the family.

OBITUARY

Lazure



Richard Alvin Lazure
(Former Owner of Rick's Lawn Sprinklers)

Peacefully at the Northumberland Hills Hospital on Monday September 23rd in his 80th year. Beloved husband of Jayne Lazure. Loving father of the late Jeffrey Lazure and late Jennifer Lazure. Dear brother of Flo and Jenny and the late Ray, Danny and Jean and brother-in-law of Shirley and the late Robert. Lovingly remembered by many nieces and nephews. A graveside service will be held at St. Peter's Cemetery, Cobourg on Saturday October 3rd at 11 am. Coffee & sweets will be available in the cemetery chapel following the graveside service. If desired donations may be made to the charity of your choice.

OBITUARY

Matthews



Penny Alora May Matthew
August 14, 2002 - September 18, 2026

It is with profoundly heavy and aching hearts that our family announces the passing our precious girl, Penny Alora May Matthews, on the morning of Friday September 18, 2026 at Princess Margaret Cancer Center in Toronto, with family and her cherished service dog by her side. She was 24 years old. Penny was the beloved daughter of Cindy Matthews and Jack NicholSEN, and cherished sister to her brothers Jackson Matthews and Tristan Leis. She is lovingly remembered by her grandparents Tom and Mary Matthews and Renate Leis, her Aunts Laura and Elizabeth Matthews, her aunt and uncle Jennifer and Brad Noakes, her cousin Gracie Matthews, her Godmother Ishbel Buchan, and her big-hearted and devoted fiancée Udayveer Singh Dhillon.

Penny's light shone brightly on the lives it touched. The strength, courage, and relentless sense of humour she had met her cancer prognosis with inspired all who witnessed her fight. An intelligent and creative problem solver, she was a loyal and caring friend with a tenacious love for nature and all of it's creatures, especially big cats, wolves and her two adopted huskies Kybo and Whiteout. She will be missed dearly by all who were close to her.

Cremation has taken place and a private celebration of Penny's love and light will be held at a later date. Interment will take place at Prospect Cemetery in Toronto. If desired, memorial donations to the husky rescue organization "Smart Rescue" (<https://smartrescue.ca/support-us>) would be appreciated by the family. Our heartfelt thanks to Ontario Health at Home, PEACH and all who contributed to Penny's care and wellbeing throughout her extremely difficult struggles.

OBITUARY

Smullin



Jane Victoria Smullin
Peacefully at her home on Sunday September 13th, 2026 in her 81st year. Beloved partner of Joey Todd. Loving mother of Jeffrey Smullin and Jennifer Smullin. Cherished grandmother of Tyler Olson, Natalie Olson, Lauren Chesterton and Jean Livingston. Dear sister of Danny Woodcock, Wilfred Woodcock and Charlotte Letourneau. Lovingly remembered by her nieces and nephews. Jane is pre-deceased by her parents Bert & Audrey Woodcock. A celebration of life will be held at the Columbus Community Centre, Cobourg on Saturday October 3rd, 2026 from 12 – 2:30 pm. If desired donations may be made to the Alzheimer Society.

OBITUARY

Mellis



MELLIS, Murray Paul – Peacefully, on Wednesday, September 16, 2026, at Northumberland Hills Hospital, Cobourg, at the age of 86.

Beloved husband of Gwenyth (nee Gooderham). Loving father of Chris (Kelly). Cherished grandfather of Andrea(Justin) and Danielle(Dillon). Dear brother of Heather, and William. Pre-deceased by his siblings Carol, Kitty Laura, Clara and Mary Field. Murray will be sadly missed by many nieces and nephews.

A graveside service will be held at the Heritage Cemetery of St. Peter on Tuesday, September 29, 2026, at 12:30 pm, followed by, a celebration of Murray's life in the MacCoubrey Funeral Home Reception Centre from 1:00 – 4:00 pm. Donations may be made to a charity of your choice.

CELEBRATION

Vera Irene Hadwen
1937-2026



Vera passed away June 10, 2026 at Streamway Villa in Cobourg. She is predeceased by her husband John Hadwen. She is survived by her son Adolphus (Doff), his wife Deborah and their children Amanda and Dalton.

Relatives and friends are invited to join the family for a celebration of life for Vera

**Friday October 2, 2026
at the Grafton Legion
from 12pm to 2pm.**

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