

# Tillsonburg POST

FREE

APRIL 9, 2026

VOLUME 2 • ISSUE 27

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## Avondale runs warming centre pilot for unhoused

JEFF HELSDON  
 Editor

Another option is being tried to deal with the unhoused in Tillsonburg.

The Avondale Warming Centre is a trial program running from March 2 to April 30, which is endorsed, supported, and funded by the Avondale United Church congregation. Avondale has partnered with Operation Sharing – Woodstock to offer overnight shelter during the winter months since November 2023. The new program is different in it operates during the day.

The Avondale Warming Centre offers respite, safety, community fellowship, warmth, and food. Hot meals are offered during the program, which runs Monday to Friday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. It is operated by volunteers from Avondale United Church.

The Salvation Army ran its day program in the downtown, but it moved to the church on Concession Street West. Avondale Warming Centre facilitator Oliver Gauld believes part of the reason for the move was complaints from neighbours. While the Salvation Army program is working on Concession Street, he sees a need for a program downtown where people congregate.

"We don't have any neighbours," he said.

Church volunteers decided to try the day program on a trial basis.

"Part of the reason for the trial was the number of people involved and the cost," said program coordinator Chris Buchner. "We're a small congregation, so we don't have a lot of volunteers."

"Part of the trial is to see if there is a need," Gauld added. "The trial is to gather data for the community, and better define the need, if there is one."

CONTINUED TO PAGE 5



(STUART BLOWER PHOTO)

### A BIG EASTER EGG HUNT

The rain held off for Saturday's annual Kinsmen Easter Egg Hunt in Memorial Park to allow the event to run smoothly. Hundreds of chocolate Easter eggs were scattered prior to the event's start. The race was on for the seven to nine years-olds in this photo. Age groups included 3 and under, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12, in order to give everyone an opportunity to collect their own Easter eggs and win prizes. See more photos on page 20.

## Tillsonburg Chamber of Commerce celebrates 50th anniversary

JEFF HELSDON  
 Editor

As the Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce members celebrate the 50th anniversary this year, they are paying heed to a widely-respected organization that has grown from humble beginnings.

To think that Tillsonburg business owners didn't have any organization for the first 100 years since the town's incorporation in 1872 would be wrong. However, early business organizations didn't have the recognition that the chamber does today. Recorded history of the

early groups is scant, but it points to the chamber gradually fading away in the late 1960s or early 1970s.

Local solicitor Ian Linton is credited with the launch of the chamber as it's known today in 1976. President of the former organization, Linton wrote a letter that the chamber was being reorganized. Recognizing Tillsonburg was a regional centre for surrounding communities in not only south Oxford, but also west Norfolk and east Elgin, he saw the need for a group not restrained by political boundaries, thus the new organization was the Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

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# Tillsonburg Chamber of Commerce celebrates its 50th anniversary

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

John Lamers Sr., owner of CKOT, was also a strong advocate of reforming the chamber, and some research points to him being the driving force. Chuck McKnight, president of Otter Publishing Ltd., was another player in the reformation.

It could be said the chamber was reborn under trial by fire, starting in 1976. At the time, council was wrestling with applications for malls – what we know today as the Norfolk Mall and Tillsonburg Town Centre. Council was protective of its downtown and didn't want to see development on the periphery. Two developers, George Trotter and John Gilvesy Sr., had proposals for the downtown mall, causing further division amongst council and town residents.

Dave Morris, who started in Tillsonburg in 1973 as the deputy clerk, recalled the division in town associated with the two mall proposals. At the same time, there was industrial expansion going on in Tillsonburg.

"There was an interest in having a group that would represent the business interests in town," he recalled.

The new chamber made a deal with the Tillsonburg Public Library, which had a local board at the time, to allow Librarian Matt Scholtz to be executive secretary of the chamber. The agreement saw the chamber pay the library a monthly fee for Scholtz's services.

One of the benefits coming out of the deal was the chamber noticed the town didn't have a history book so the chamber had Scholtz, write, research and compile the book. It was published in 1995.

In the days before Tillsonburg had a staff person assigned to attracting industry, that is a role the chamber took on. Former president Eden McKinnon believed the chamber needed to do more to build the town's industrial base as tobacco started to fade in the 1990s.

## Blue Jays Day

The concept of having a Blue Jays Day was suggested by chamber member Hector Verhoeve.

His son, Maurice, remembers his father being helped by Mike Bossy and John Lessif. Their goal was to involve the entire community, and they did this by involving several community groups including Community Living Tillsonburg, and keep the price affordable.

"It was something they put a lot of thought into and carried it out with a great deal of efficiency," Verhoeve said.

Former chamber member Peter Burns was part of the organizing committee for Blue Jays Day. He recalls it started small with one bus and 47 people the first year. The second year it increased to 470 people.

"There were a number of other communities doing the same thing and the Jays offered the opportunity to have it named Tillsonburg day if we grew the size of the participants," Burns said.

And grew it the Tillsonburg committee did, with 940 people the third year. To consider is the population of the town was only about 12,000 people in the early nineties, so that was about eight per cent of all town residents. Organizers reached the threshold, and it became Tillsonburg Day. Tillsonburg resident Lisa Lofthouse sang the national anthem and Miss Tillsonburg Jeanine Assel was on the mound when the first pitch was thrown, although she didn't have the official duties. Tillsonburg Day was one of the largest group events for the Jays that year.

Although it was the largest chamber fundraiser of that year, Burns said the committee made a decision to not continue.

"Logistics were tough, organizing the bus pickups before and after the games, selling tickets, collecting payment," he said. "The last year we had to scalp a bunch of tickets outside the ballpark,

that was interesting. We could have gone back to smaller numbers but we decided to go out on top."

Rocio Salinas, the present chamber CEO, is looking at the possibility of bringing back Blue Jays Day in the future. Stay tuned for more updates.

## Another big milestone

In 2007 when Mike Bossy became president, there was only enough money in the chamber accounts to keep the chamber afloat for a year. The executive of the day – Shane Curtis, Lisa Gilvesy, Phil Esseltine and Bossy – decided they needed to make a leap and hire a full-time staff person.

Enter Suzanne Renken, who formerly worked for IBM, as the CEO.

"That was about the same time the town gave up the awards of excellence so we took over that and made it our major fundraiser besides the golf tournament," Bossy said.

He gave credit to Gilvesy, Curtis and Esseltine for the further evolution of the chamber.

"All three of them brought in different views of what the chamber could be," he recounted.

Curtis recalls the chamber was "near dead" with only three to four people coming out to the Business After 5 meetings, besides directors. Bossy convinced him to join.

"He got me out, saying, 'You're young and in business, it would be good for you,'" he recalled.

Curtis said his being younger was key. "We had a goal of getting a younger board," he said. "It wasn't an old boys club, but it had a reputation of being one. We built one of the youngest and most diverse boards in the country."

Benefits of chamber membership were promoted to local businesses and attendance to the AGM and monthly events increased with the higher profile. Curtis and Bossy were the first from the Till-



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

**Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce's annual awards night is its biggest event of the year, both in terms of numbers and as a fundraiser. Awards are presented in several different categories recognizing local businesses, industries and non-profit groups.**

sonburg chamber to attend an Ontario Chamber of Commerce event.

Renken and Curtis excelled in advocating for business, putting forward several policies the Ontario Chamber of Commerce accepted and has been pushing for with government.

"We hit way above our weight provincially and federally," Bossy said.

Curtis found his niche was policy after he went to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce AGM.

"We started bringing our own policies the next year and stayed involved," he said.

Some of the Tillsonburg chamber policies that have been accepted at the provincial level include access to primary health care in underserved rural communities, WSIB policies for employers, provincial oversize/overweight permits, changes to the Ontario Residential Tenancies Act and suggestions to reduce traffic congestion following vehicular accidents.

"Tillsonburg punches way above its weight on policy," echoed Curtis., explaining the town is more involved than chambers of this size.

Gilvesy led the charge on creating a new strategic plan for the chamber and rewriting many policy documents. She

gave Scholtz a lot of credit for the work he did, but said the local chamber needed to get involved with its provincial and national organizations.

She said that was one of the big differences, explaining, "We didn't think of going to an Ontario chamber convention before."

Bossy gave Renken a lot of credit for the strides forward the chamber made.

"We got all our ducks in a row and she came in with industry experience," he said. "She started a legacy in all of that."

Attendance at Business After 5 went from a handful of people to well over 100 in some cases. The annual mayor's address and awards of excellence also drew good crowds.

"I've seen a lot of business relationships be introduced, fostered and grow through the chamber," Curtis said.

One place Curtis saw a difference locally was during the Covid-19 shutdowns, when the chamber pushed for allowing the opening of outdoor patios.

Since taking the reins since Renken's retirement, Salinas introduced a new women's day event for the chamber. She is also looking at other initiatives to move the Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce forward into the next 50 years.



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## EDITORIAL

## Letter to the Editor

Realizing that the Ontario Government tested approximately 574,000 students at \$50 per student in 2024-25, costing \$28,700,000.00, it would appear that this money could be better spent on hiring more teachers to help the students that need special help and resources.

From my understanding, these tests are from the U.S.A. Further, these tests are marked by teachers of Grades 3, 6, 9 and 10 in Toronto at OISE, Ontario Institute of Studies for Education.

Teachers from the above grades are selected to form marking panels, housed, fed and given travel expenses, while at OISE to mark the tests. To fill vacancies of those chosen, school boards have to find and to pay supply teachers for a week or so.

This is my understanding of the process, although I cannot find exact details of the process at this time.

If the Ontario Government has a need for testing to evaluate the learning of the province's students, then let me suggest that marking be done at the board level as part of a professional development day. Each board's

teachers would mark another board's tests, not knowing whose tests they would be marking.

This would be done at the board office or at a designated school(s). Teachers not involved with the grades, 3, 6, 9 and 10, would carry on with professional learning for the day.

Eliminating the expense of marking at Toronto would be considerable, not to mention the paid staff at OISE to supervise.

But wait there might be some cheating if they weren't marked at OISE!

My American cousin who was a teacher, now retired, said the marking of tests at schools at the board level worked well.

We owe it to our children to demand change in how testing is going to be marked, and in how the savings be redirected to hire new teachers, and to buy needed resources. Come on Doug!

Write your local MPP, or Doug Ford.

Gary Hunt,  
Tillsonburg



Spring's first colour.

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

*Have something to say?*

*Submit your Letter to the Editor here:*

[info@tillsonburgpost.com](mailto:info@tillsonburgpost.com)

## Leave the world a better place than you found it



**EVERYONE  
HAS A  
STORY  
TO TELL**

ROBIN KRAFFT

*Tillsonburg Post Columnist*

Some people's lives are profoundly inspired by a significant individual. For Tamara Bull, that person was her father, Albert. He was an eternal optimist and had many adventures.

"Dad was a talker," Bull said, "he had a story for everything. He lived in Holland during the war and was shot at by Germans. He once strapped himself to a windmill to get aerial photos of his town. In 1954, he packed a suitcase and boarded a ship bound for Canada, he thought it was the land of opportunity."

Despite being a licensed electrician, he was assigned a job peeling potatoes for the army in Churchill. Feeling like there must

be more for him, he took a train to downtown Toronto, where he was homeless for a period of time.

A Salvation Army captain offered to help him, providing a hot meal, shelter, and a ride to facilitate his job search. He gradually built a life for himself.

"Dad instilled in us that you always need to help others," Bull said. "He said that when you leave this earth, it should be a better place than you found it. The outreach that I have done is because of the kindness that was shown to my dad."

Tamara and her father collected donations at a Salvation Army kettle together for many years, dispersing Tim cards to homeless people they befriended while they were there. Tamara also collects socks for unhoused people for 519pursuit, but she keeps some to hand out in town along with Tim cards and hand warmers.

Tamara grew up in Whitby, moving to Tillsonburg in 1989 after being hired by CAMI to train staff on the new computer system. She met her husband there, and after they were married in 1994, they built a house that they still live in.

Years later, having made the decision to stay home with the children, an opportunity presented itself at their school. Tamara

started the Maple Lane breakfast program, supported by the Oxford Nutrition Program and augmented by her own fundraising efforts.

When her children moved on to Annandale, she followed and started a breakfast program there. She did in-school mentoring with Big Brothers and Big Sisters. She started the SAFE Group, a supportive space for children who have experienced sexual abuse to gather with their caregivers while awaiting formal support.

Her endeavors are products of her father's influence and her own good heart, but there's an element of serendipity, too. She always seems to meet people that create the momentum to move each project forward, sometimes lending their knowledge and experience, sometimes providing direction and inspiration.

When her son was dealing with a rare cancer diagnosis and struggling to find treatment in 2023, those strange and miraculous meetings made all the difference in the world. The outpouring of support touched her deeply, and as she reflected on other families who might be in need, she decided to take action.

"In my life, when things have gone south, it's really important to turn that into making

something positive for someone else," Bull said.

A dedicated runner, she decided to create a race. The first Running with the Bulls event in 2024 was a remarkable success. The run is sanctioned and certified by Athletics Ontario. Tamara has raised \$52,000 in the first two years.

"The money we have raised has supported infants, children and young adults under the age of 30 with expenses related to their cancer treatment, from coast to coast across Canada, but the priority is for local families," Bull said.

Community involvement and sponsorship has been outstanding, she added, describing the incredible generosity and kindness of her supporters.

"I love this town," Bull said. "I love everything about it. I can't believe all of these people that have come into my life. I'm really blessed."

Tamara started running when she was 51. She runs every day on the Trans Canada trail.

"It's the best mental health tool for me," Bull said. "It makes me happy. I solve all the world's problems on that trail. There is a tree and memorial stone on the trail dedicated to my dad, so I see him every morning."

# Monarch butterflies are fighting for their survival



**THE  
STAGE  
IS THE  
WORLD**

LAUREL A. BEECHEY

*Tillsonburg Post Columnist*

Who hasn't stopped doing their gardening or glanced up from reading a book outside when a flash of orange caught their eyes? It's likely a monarch butterfly dancing from flower to bush, like a garden fairy. You are ecstatic when it settles on the milkweed you planted to help the monarchs, hoping one would visit your garden. And they did! For years we've heard how the monarchs have been dying and were at risk of extinction. Climate change, pesticides, deforestation, logging, and heaven knows what else, were killing off so many insects, birds, butterflies, and those who dined on them.

Do you remember, in 2021, that the Monarch Ultra Relay Run, came to Tillsonburg? With local runners, they left London, down Hwy73, through Aylmer; onto Highway 3 to Tillsonburg, where they overnighted. While in town, people were able to learn what to do to help the butterfly. The next day, Sept. 5, the runners were off again along Highway 3, through Delhi, and Simcoe, then up to Waterford! They certainly brought attention to the plight of our gorgeous butterfly.

In 2022, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) listed the monarch butterfly as endan-

gered, placing it on the Red List of Threatened Species and Canada put the monarch on the endangered species list. In 2024, monarchs suffered a massive die-off due to pesticides. The huge death event prompted President Biden to consider listing the butterflies as threatened, which would protect them under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Alas, before anything was change, Biden was out, Trump was in, and he flatly refused to protect monarchs. Fortunately, individual citizens did care.

This year's Monarch Ultra Festival and Race is in Peterborough, Sep. 19, you can check it out at [www.themonarchultra.com](http://www.themonarchultra.com). The orange, black, and white, monarch butterflies are truly works of art but, more important than their beauty; they are pollinators, and as such, they help make sure plants continue blooming and thriving which affects many other species around them, including humans.

The first of the three largest threats to the monarch, is climate change, which besides rising temperatures, it also is changing the timing of plant blooms. It also throws off migration patterns for many insects and animals. Then there is the use of pesticides used by individuals or commercially, which poisons all the plants including the only plant the caterpillar eats, milkweed, which of course poisons the butterflies, too. Then, add deforestation and logging which has caused loss of their habitats from Canada into Mexico.

For years, monarchs have been dying and were even at risk of extinction. Yet suddenly, we have a surprise success to share. Despite previous population declines, monarch butterflies have suddenly made an incredible rebound! In only one year, their population jumped 64 per cent in Mexico! This proves we can prevent extinction, and that there is hope. The Living Planet Index, for Eastern Monarchs, as of March 2026, noted a 64 per cent increase from last season in Mexico., but still, the long-term average shows an 80 per cent decline in the last 25 years.

In recent decades, 165 million acres of milkweed habitat have been lost. Much of this is from using 'non-selective herbicides.' Western monarchs over the last 30 years have declined 99 per cent and have a high risk of collapsing due to the loss of the native milkweed.

Milkweed is so important as it's the only food the monarch caterpillar can eat. Unfortunately, our air is harming them too! Growing carbon dioxide levels seem to be making the milkweed too toxic for those caterpillars. As the earth warms, the monarch in its transformed butterfly state must travel further north to breed, causing their migration routes which are already over 3,000 miles, to become greater. Climate change has changed the size of the monarchs as well. Their wing size relates to the distance they migrate and over the last century their wing size has increased. Scientists believe their larger and longer wing size is due to the rising temperatures and the increased distance to their breeding grounds.

Expert's mathematical models predicts up to a 57 per cent chance that within 20 years, the species will not be able to recover and go extinct. To cut that risk in half, we would need more than five million butterflies, and to do that, more than a billion milkweed stems planted.

Experts say we have the ability to save the monarch; the question is will we? Will you?

What to do: Plant local native milkweed, even a pot or two. Provide native nectar rich plants to feed on when they have hatched. You can help track the monarch, milkweed growth, caterpillars and more. Learn more about climate change and what the solutions are and encourage others to help and learn more. Here are couple of sites to check out: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/global-warming-solutions/Butterflygarden>. <https://davidsuzuki.org/living-green/how-to-create-a-butterfly-garden/> The Wonderful news about the monarch butterflies! [themonarchultra@gmail.com](mailto:themonarchultra@gmail.com)

## Participation wanted in cultural master plan

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Funded by the Government of Canada  
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada



The Town of Tillsonburg is inviting community members to share their thoughts and ideas as part of the development of a new cultural master plan. This plan will help guide the future of arts, culture, heritage, and local community life — and your voice can make a meaningful difference.

Residents are encouraged to take a short online survey to reflect on what they value, what they'd love to see more of, and how culture can continue to grow in Tillsonburg. Every response helps paint

a clearer picture of the community's hopes and priorities.

The survey is open from March 31 to April 13, and as a small thank you for participating, all respondents will be entered into a draw for a \$100 gift card that can be used at the community centre or Annandale National Historic Site and Museum.

To share your voice, visit:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AnnandaleNHS-Cultural-Master-Plan>

**Tillsonburg POST**

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# Avondale runs warming centre pilot for unhoused

CONTINUED FROM FRONT



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Oliver Gauld, left, and Chris Buchner of Avondale United Church stand in the space where the Avondale Warming Centre has been offering the unhoused respite, warmth, and food since the trial began March 1. If everything is in place, the program will operate next year for the entire winter.

The first week saw 48 visits from 21 individuals who took advantage of the program. That number increased to 104 visits from 41 people in the fourth week.

Statistics also break down visitors into housed and unhoused. Unhoused are defined as those who are using the Out of the Cold Avondale night shelter, living rough, and living in their vehicles. Housed are people who are couch surfers and have an apartment or room. Use the first week was by 95 per cent unhoused. That number gradually decreased to 72 per cent by week four.

“We were expecting most of the people who were unhoused,” Gauld said. “To start, most of the people were from Out of the Cold.”

As the program has continued, inroads have been made into attracting some of the

people who live rough and in their vehicles. An increase has also been seen in the housed, Gauld and Buchner, who figure this is because people can’t afford food.

It was emphasized the Avondale Warming Centre is not meant to compete with the Salvation Army’s Hub, but is another option. In fact, organizers work closely with the Salvation Army, appreciate their support and sharing of resources.

With an upward trend in use, organizers are seeing this as an early indication that there is a need.

“We identified there is a need in Tillsonburg for a day program,” Buchner said. “We have some other churches willing to help, we just need to get those in place.”

If everything comes together, the plan is to operate the program from November to April next year.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

## GIRL GUIDE COOKIE TIME

Tillsonburg Guides, Sparks and Embers were busy in the Tillsonburg Town Centre Saturday selling Girl Guide cookies. Left to right are: Annie Oatman, Allie Oatman, Lily Wegg, Alianna Barton, Kaylee Goodwin, and McKenna Perovich. Funds raised will be used to assist with the cost of attending camp this summer. They will also be in the mall this weekend selling cookies.

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## Public information meeting

Oxford Road 59 (Stover Street South) bridge rehabilitation, Norwich

May – October 2026

Oxford County is beginning bridge rehabilitation work on Oxford Road 59 (Stover Street South) bridge, located just south of Tidey Street in Norwich. The work includes full removal and replacement of the entire bridge superstructure, including the deck and girders.

During construction, Oxford Road 59 from Front Street to Carman Street will be closed to all through traffic and there will be no vehicle or pedestrian access to the bridge crossing for the duration of the project. Two detour routes will be in place during construction, including a detour for pedestrians and cyclists. Access to businesses will be maintained during construction.

Construction work is tentatively scheduled to begin in early May and is expected to be completed in October 2026. Please note that construction schedules are weather dependent and subject to change based on site conditions, contractor availability and other factors.

### Public Information Centre

Oxford County will be hosting a Public Information Centre (PIC) to allow the public to view plans and discuss the project with Oxford County Public Works Engineering staff and the consultant design team.

📅 Thursday, April 16, 2026  
Drop in: 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

📍 Norwich Community Centre, 2nd Floor (Optimist Hall)  
53 Stover Street South, Norwich

For project updates, follow Oxford County on social media or visit [www.oxfordcounty.ca/construction](http://www.oxfordcounty.ca/construction)

# Calling on local makers to join “Handcrafted Routes”

Oxford Tourism invites local makers and artists to help shape Handcrafted Routes, a tourism experience connecting visitors with Oxford County’s handcrafted products.

Oxford Tourism is currently consulting with local museums, arts-based businesses and cooperatives to gather input on how the program can best reflect and support the community. Recognizing that many creators are hobbyists or part-time makers, Oxford Tourism is issuing an open call for participants of all experience levels to sign up to receive information and provide feedback.

Planned for launch in September 2026, Handcrafted Routes will celebrate the region’s diverse maker community. Visitors will have the opportunity to engage directly with artisans, explore studios and shops, and gain hands-on insight into a diverse range of creative practices.

Handcrafted arts encompass items created by hand or with the aid of tools and machinery, which require creativity

and artistic design. This could include pottery, woodworking, metalwork, sewing, fibre arts, soapmaking, restoration, stonework, paper arts, culinary arts, floral design, and visual arts. The initiative will also highlight businesses that support makers, such as woodworking and fabric supply stores, as well as second-hand and antique shops offering materials and handcrafted goods.

“The talent and skill in Oxford County is astounding, and not many local residents are aware of the past and present wealth of handcrafted arts in Oxford County,” said Meredith Maywood, Oxford County tourism manager. “Our goal is to raise the profile and increase engagement in the arts and crafts in Oxford County.”

Local makers are encouraged to submit their information through an online form and take an active role in shaping Handcrafted Routes. By signing up, you will stay informed throughout the development process. To register your interest, visit: [www.oxfordcounty.ca/tourism](http://www.oxfordcounty.ca/tourism)

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# Tillsonburg author and strategy consultant shares approaches for harnessing the power of AI

ROBIN KRAFFT

Post Contributor

Tillsonburg resident Dr. Farzana Chohan is a qualified AI readiness and ethics consultant who is passionate about leadership, organizational development and workforce transformation.

Her 2025 book *AI Readiness for Leaders: A Human-Centered Framework to Future-Proof Your Organization*, provides a road map to prepare for the future of work.

The book describes how to become a leader in digital transformation while aligning artificial intelligence with human capability. Navigating this fast-paced technology can create confusion and risk if there is no strategy for change.

She cited the example of what happened at Samsung in 2023. When employees were using AI tools to support their internal work, sensitive information was leaked because there were no strategies or company guidelines in place. Quick action rectified the situation, but Dr. Chohan pointed out that it was a leadership and readiness issue, not a failure of the technology.

"There's a lot of conversation about AI, but very little clarity, especially for leaders," Dr. Chohan said. "Many organizations are experimenting with tools, but they don't have a clear strategy. I wrote the book to bridge that gap."

Dr. Chohan holds a doctoral degree in leadership and organizational development and has had extensive training on AI consultation. As an executive advisor and AI strategist, she provides cutting-edge solutions, based on over 20 years of experience integrating complex systems. Her work is centered on workforce transformation, preparing people and organizations for what's next. The book evolved out of what she was observing in real time.

"AI is not just a technology shift, it's a leadership and workforce shift," Dr. Chohan said. "My interest in AI didn't start with the technology, it started with people. Throughout my career, I've focused on how organizations adapt to change. When AI began accelerating, it

became clear that this was one of the most significant shifts we've seen in decades."

This is the point at which Dr. Chohan's work comes in, and she approaches it thoughtfully. AI is already here. Her work (and the book) helps leaders and organizations understand where they are, and what they value, while moving forward effectively and with clarity.

"I'm passionate about helping organizations adopt AI in a way that is practical, responsible, and human-centered, so that it strengthens the organization rather than creating confusion or disruption," Dr. Chohan said.

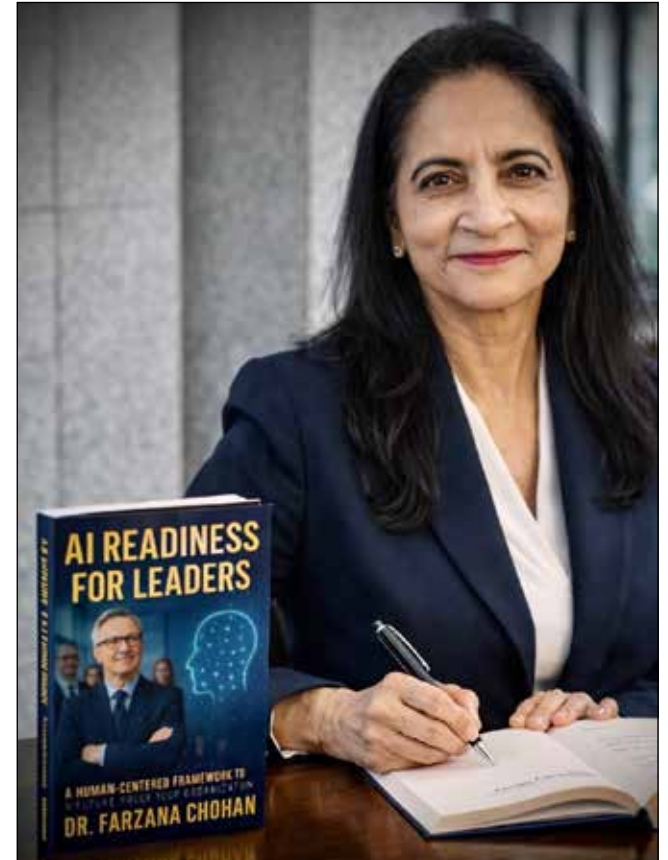
Bringing her considerable real world experience to bear, Dr. Chohan explained that it isn't just Fortune 500 companies, universities and large non-profits that can benefit from her framework and strategies. Small business owners can gain a real competitive advantage by applying her principles.

"Large organizations often struggle with complexity and slower decision making," Dr. Chohan said. "Smaller businesses, like many in Tillsonburg, can move faster and adapt more easily, because decisions can happen faster and trust is already established. There is a tremendous opportunity here."

She added that a proactive and informed approach to utilizing AI can strengthen the position of people, leaders and organizations while supporting their workforce and contributing to long-term growth locally. Connect with Dr. Chohan at [aiarchitect818@gmail.com](mailto:aiarchitect818@gmail.com) and get the conversation started!

"Tillsonburg has the kind of environment where relationships matter," Dr. Chohan said. "People support each other, and there's a strong foundation of local businesses that care about long-term impact, not just short-term gains. What stood out to me immediately is the strength of the community. There's a genuine sense of connection, collaboration, and pride here."

For leaders ready to take that next step, Dr. Chohan's book serves as a guide for overcoming trepidation and moving forward into the future, utilizing technology to enhance human intelligence and potential.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Dr. Farzana Chohan at a book launch event in December 2025 to promote her book, raise awareness, sign copies and have conversations about navigating the changing landscape of leadership and workforce shift.



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# Backus Mill needs public assistance for restoration work

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Backus Mill needs the public's assistance to be the "Next Great Save."

The centrepiece of Long Point Region Conservation Authority's Backus Heritage Conservation Area, and a National Historic Site, the mill did what no other structure of its type did on the north shore of Lake Erie by surviving the War of 1812. Several theories exist as to why the mill wasn't burned by invading American forces during the war, but the structure now faces a new challenge: structural issues associated with its 225-year-plus age.

"The architectural and structural assessment that we obtained recommends that the mill needs a comprehensive engineering report, temporary structural shoring, and drainage improvements, among various other repairs," said curator Chloe Anna. "LPRCA's priority is to obtain a full structural review and to re-grade the gravel around the building to restore proper drainage and prevent water accumulation to mitigate further deterioration."

Enter the Next Great Save.

The Next Great Save is a national program that provides funding to help protect cherished heritage structures. Funded by Ecclesiastical Insurance, the program provides \$65,000 in annual funding, with a first prize of \$50,000, second prize of \$10,000, and third prize of \$5,000. The winner is determined by online voting at [nextgreatsave.com](http://nextgreatsave.com) between April 7 and 24.

"We strongly encourage people to vote once every day during the duration of the competition and to share the news with everyone they know to maximize the amount of potential votes for the mill," said Jessica King, LPRCA's marketing and social media associate.

An online donation campaign is also being coordinated at <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/144784>

Anna explained there is no estimated cost yet, as the engineering report will provide the next steps, and at that time, a cost estimate can be completed. Previous



(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)

With its age now surpassing 225 years, Backus Mill is in need of restorative work so it can open again for the public. The first step in the process is an engineer's assessment, and the Long Point Region Conservation Authority is hoping The Next Big Save can assist with funding it. Members of the public are asked to vote daily to assist with funding for this regional historical landmark.

restoration work on the mill was completed in 2015 and 2019.

The mill is a vital part of the Backus Heritage Conservation Area, which attracts thousands of visitors annually, and is also the site of school day programs. It is a prominent feature in the annual War of 1812 re-enactment, and tours were offered of the interior until the mill had to be closed due to structural issues.

"The Backhouse Grist Mill is an extraordinary National Historic Site, surviving war, weather, and technological changes," Anna said. "It is a time capsule of ingenuity and tells the story of an important family legacy, and the labours of the local community. Today, the mill is a landmark for our local community, acting as a place for people to share interests, values, and history."

Tillsonburg Deputy Mayor Dave Beres, the town representative on LPRCA's board, spoke of the importance of this campaign.

"It's so important to keep our history alive and every vote counts. Vote every day and tell your friends to do the same," he said.

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## WEEKEND QUIZ

by Jake Grant

1. What is the only country that begins with "q"?
2. What American restaurant chain is the biggest purchaser of lemons worldwide?
3. A cutlass, gladius and katana are all types of what?
4. In Greek mythology, who are Artemis' parents?
5. Which U.S president was a peanut farmer before entering politics?
6. Finish the saying, "April showers bring \_\_\_\_\_"
7. Mount Everest is part of which mountain range?
8. In scrabble, each player starts with how many letters?
9. What acid gives sourdough its tangy flavor?
10. What is the strongest currency in the world?

This week's answers are found on pg. 25

## POLICE BRIEFS

## Fatal collision claims three lives

Three individuals are deceased and two individuals remain in life-threatening condition following a collision in Norwich Township.

On Tuesday, March 31, at approximately 3 p.m., members of the Oxford Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), along with Fire, and Emergency Medical Services, responded to a collision at the intersection of Highway 59 and Quaker Street in Norwich Township.

The driver of the SUV, a 39-year-old from Cambridge and two occupants, a 13-year-old and 17-year-old from Tillsonburg, were pronounced deceased on scene. Two other occupants were transported to hospital, by Ornge and ambulance, to be treated for serious life-threatening injuries. Their condition remains life-threatening.

The driver of the transport truck was un-

injured.

Roads surrounding the intersection of Highway 59 and Quaker Street were closed for several hours but have since reopened.

Oxford OPP along with members of the West Region OPP Traffic Incident Management and Enforcement Team continue to investigate the collision.

Investigators are asking residents and businesses along with members of the motoring public to check their security surveillance or dash camera footage in the event that they captured the collision, or the vehicles involved.

Anyone with information is being asked to contact the OPP at 1-888-310-1122. Should you wish to remain anonymous, you may call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) or visit [ontariocrimestoppers.ca](http://ontariocrimestoppers.ca), where you may be eligible to receive a cash reward of up to \$2000.

## Court order enforcement in Oxford County

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is aware of a video circulating on social media in relation to the enforcement of a police enforceable court order involving an elderly individual in Norwich Township.

On Friday, April 3, Oxford County OPP officers attended a residence under the authority of a valid court order in relation to a family dispute involving the care of an elderly individual. At this time, no enforcement action has been taken. Police involvement in this matter is strictly limited to enforcing a court order and ensuring the safety and well-being of all involved.

The OPP recognizes the emotional and challenging nature of family related disputes involving the care of elderly individuals. Officers remain committed to acting impartially, lawfully and with

compassion, while respecting the authority of the courts.

The OPP is also aware of misinformation circulating online. To be clear, the court order is not related to, nor does it involve, Canada's Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) legislation. Police do not have any role in authorizing, administering or facilitating MAID. Any comments or claims suggesting otherwise are false.

The OPP urges the public to refrain from speculation due to the sensitive legal and personal circumstances. As this matter involves private individuals, the OPP will not provide further details.

The OPP does not issue or amend court orders. Questions regarding the legal authority of a court order should be directed to the Ministry of the Attorney General.

## Municipal election 101 session held in Woodstock

LEE GRIFFI

Post Contributor

Those interested in running for a spot on one of the eight Oxford County councils later this year attended an information night in Woodstock. They learned not only how to get there, but also what happens if elected.

Two representatives from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing presented to a full Oxford County Council Chamber, attended by current and prospective elected officials, along with municipal staff.

Nigel Bellchamber, a well-known municipal consultant, recruiter and trainer, was on hand to explain to attendees how the municipal system works. He spent over 30 years in municipal government, including roles such as Chief Administrative Officer for counties like Middlesex and Huron, and Commissioner of Finance and Administration for the City of London.

Ingersoll Mayor Brian Petrie explained clerks from across the county organized the event and were concerned about a lack of attendance.

"This is great, and there is obviously interest and people are getting educated, which is important."

He added the evening provided the basic information people need in order to make an educated decision on whether to run or not.

"Campaigning and deciding to run is personal, it is a big decision, and everyone approaches it from a different direction, so it's good to provide that baseline."

The first-term Ingersoll mayor, who will be seeking a second term in the fall, said his best advice for candidates is to get involved in the local political process.

"Come to council meetings. I sat there for four years before I was elected. See what the job is really about because it may not be the

community involvement you think it is. It's not as exciting as people think it is sometimes, and starting on committees is a good way to get involved first."

The future of the Ontario School Board system remains in the air as Education Minister Paul Calandra promised system reforms by the end of 2025 but has yet to table new legislation.

Anyone interested in running must complete what's called a Form 1 nomination paper and submit it to a municipal clerk with a filing fee of \$200 for the head of council and \$100 for all other offices. The clerk may require candidates to show proof of eligibility or fill out a declaration that the individual is eligible to run.

To be eligible, candidates must be a resident, owner or tenant of land in the municipality or the spouse of someone who does, be a Canadian citizen of 18 years of age or older and not be legally prohibited from voting and not disqualified by any legislation from holding municipal office.

Occasionally, a candidate changes their mind and decides to run for a different position but can only run for one spot at a time. If a candidate files a second nomination, the first one is automatically withdrawn.

Woodstock Mayor Jerry Acchione was also present and said the turnout was very encouraging.

"It's great anytime you have standing room only during an information night. I think democracy is exactly that. Everybody should come out and at least investigate if they are interested, find out about the process and how to contribute to their communities."

Acchione is in his twelfth year as an elected official and added he's been asked for advice many times from people interested in a political career.



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTO)

**Dozens of Oxford County residents packed County Council Chambers in Woodstock recently for an information night to prepare candidates for the Monday, Oct. 26, elections.**

"I have had dozens of people sit down over different terms. Most of them are surprised at the amount of dedication the job takes. It is what you make it and I've always been one to put that extra effort in. You can always see those who do."

He added someone with a history of community involvement is a better fit than a candidate leaping straight into a position on a council.

"If you are jumping into it and have never volunteered, take a look at your commitment level and your family support. This is a job that is all hours of the day, mostly evenings and weekends, so you want to make sure you have the support of your family."

Lindsey Mejaski, who plans to run for Tillsonburg council, and was in attendance at the meeting. She learned more about the responsibilities of council, the time commitment for councillors and the impact on

people's personal lives.

"It also provided helpful guidance on the nomination process and what's required to run," she said. "Overall, it highlighted how important it is for people to step forward, get involved in their communities, and take on roles that truly make a difference."

The nomination for an office must be endorsed by at least 25 persons using Form 2 - Endorsement of Nomination Form. This step is not needed in municipalities with fewer than 4,000 people. Anyone endorsing a nomination must be eligible to vote within the municipality.

If you're planning to run for mayor, council, or school board trustee in Ontario, you can officially file your nomination with your local clerk starting May 1 up until 2 p.m. on Aug. 21.

With files from Jeff Helsdon

# TOWNSHIP OF NORWICH NEWS



## Gravel road conversion program to tackle sections of Beaconsfield Road and Substation Road

LUKE EDWARDS

Post Contributor

The first two sections of road identified for work under a new gravel road conversion policy in Norwich have been approved.

Councillors supported a report at the March 24 meeting that recommends “Beaconsfield Road from Highway 59 to 299 metres east of Middletown Line” and “Substation Road from Highway 59 to Middletown Road” be converted to hard surface in 2026. Staff estimate these two projects could use up the bulk

of the nearly \$1.5 million the township has in its currently gravel road conversion reserve fund.

About 12.5 per cent of the project costs can come from development charge funds.

“I’m happy we can begin to start to move forward,” said Coun. Shawn Gear.

“We’re somewhere in the region of five and a half kilometres of road, which would be probably the most significant project we’ve done in quite some number of years,” said CAO Matt Smith.

Councillors approved a new policy for road conversion earlier this year. The

policy provides a scoring matrix for the township’s gravel roads where they’re graded out of 35 based on a number of factors.

While the two proposed roads weren’t at the top of the scoring - The Beaconsfield section was 14th with a score of 20, and the Substation section was 10th with a score of 22 - staff still recommended the two roads. Beaconsfield was previously approved for conversion, and the report suggested the matrix underscored the traffic levels of the section of Substation Road.

While councillors appeared content

with the recommendation, Coun. Adrian Couwenberg did have some concerns that there was no mention of Firehall Road, another road that had previously been identified.

“If there’s leftover funds, I think we should seriously look at the health and safety of the general public and on our emergency response vehicles on that Firehall Road,” he said, adding he also had technical concerns since there was no overt motion to remove Firehall Road from the immediate plans after it had previously been approved for conversion.

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Attention: Board Chair, Rural Roads Health Services  
c/o Lisa Dahm, Executive Assistant [lisa.dahm@rrhs.ca](mailto:lisa.dahm@rrhs.ca)

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## SPORTS

# Gemini basketball program coach Terry Coulthard honoured at 2026 Captains-Veterans game

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

The 2026 Captains/Veterans Boys' Basketball Game gave the Tillsonburg Gemini program multi-faceted cause for celebration.

"Just came out and had some fun," said Gemini Junior Wiredu, suiting up with the junior White team (Woodstock St. Mary's, Ingersoll DCI, Lord Dorchester and Glendale) Wednesday, April 1 at Woodstock CI against the Purple squad (Woodstock CI, Woodstock College Avenue, Woodstock Huron Park and Dorchester).

"New players, way better competition," added Wiredu's Gemini and White teammate James Strathearn.

The White team would come out on the wrong end of a 91-65 decision, however the evening was far more about sharing

an enjoyable experience and putting up some points than recording a 'W.'

"Not a lot of defence being played either," said Wiredu, admitting the lack thereof would not have been acceptable to Gemini coach Terry Coulthard. "Not at all, she'd put me on the bench right away."

Strathearn (five points) and Tillsonburg teammate Trevin Patrick (six) hit a White team scoresheet led by 15 points from St. Mary's Jessie Adeoye and 16 from fellow Warrior Josh Morgan. CASS Knights Lukas Mickevicius (28) and Kameron Roos (22) paced the Purple team's attack.

Wiredu's unofficial shout out to his bench boss was backed up prior to the senior game with The Oxford Basketball Officials Association (OBOA) Bill Gillespie Memorial Award. Recognizing service to basketball in the county prior to the senior game, it was presented to an 'honoured and humbled' coach Coulthard.

OBOA Vice-President Paul Cowan did the honours, describing how Coulthard - nee Carson - played high school basketball for College Avenue before going on to compete with the University of Waterloo Warriors. After a career as an educator and administrator and coaching experience, including she and husband David's sons, Terry retired to the Tillsonburg area. Stepping up to fill post-COVID need within the Gemini program, Coulthard has coached both the boys' and girls' junior and senior teams since.

Beyond significant contribution to a program in need, Coulthard brings a wealth of knowledge and experience, and the trademark of teams which compete game in, game out.

"They give maximum effort - or else," smiled Cowan.

'Honoured and humbled' to accept the award, Coulthard spoke to the extra meaning the award imparted due to the fact she knew, admired and respected its namesake.

"Bill led by example and touched many lives."

She thanked Glendale staff members Kiersten Sanderson and Kait Buchner for their invaluable support, and many volunteer hours contributed.

"And they willingly subject themselves to my running commentary every game," Coulthard smiled.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Gemini James Strathearn soars to block a shot by team Purple's Jack Lichty.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Oxford Basketball Officials Association President Nino DeLuca (left) and Vice-President Paul Cowan (right) presented Tillsonburg Gemini coach Terry Coulthard (centre) with the Bill Gillespie Memorial Award prior to the 2026 Senior Boys Captains-Veterans game Wednesday, April 1 at Woodstock CI.

Her approach is to back up player development in the game's X's and O's with the intangibles of sport, commitment, sportsmanship, respect, accountability and teamwork.

"The we over me."

Coulthard emphasized how coaching is a two-way street, she learning from the players while thoroughly enjoying a courtside seat to their broad-based development.

"It's the relationships that drive me and I truly value," Coulthard concluded.

Her Gemini senior boys had as much fun through their game, coming out with both a victory and a sense of appreciation for the award Coulthard received.

"She deserves it, been a great coach all four years," said Tillsonburg graduating Grade 12 senior Jacob Mogg. "Inspirational - taught me a lot."

Mogg scored 12 points through a 93-81 White team win over their senior Purple counterparts. Gemini teammates Sean Krahn (10) and Kayden Pittao (seven) also hit the scoresheet.

Huron Park's Jance Jorgensen had 22 in a losing cause for the Purple team, a total highlighted by several dunks.

"Next year, hopefully," concluded the returning Grade 11 Krahn, who came close on several occasions.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Gemini Sean Krahn (left) attempts a reverse layup against Purple's Zack Paton.

Edward Jones

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Tillsonburg Fun 2 Hollister Twisters ringette teams attempt to keep the ring away from a Dorchester player in a recent game.



Tillsonburg U-8 players gave it their best to score on Ayr during a scramble in front of the Ayr net.



Tillsonburg Twisters U 12 player Morgan Swanton moves in for a goal in a ringette game against London Lynx.



Tillsonburg was one of the sites for the Elgin Thames Minor Hockey Year End Rep tournament. This one day tournament brought teams from as far away as Muskoka, Lambton and Port Colborne.



It was two-on-one with two Tillsonburg U13 McLaughlin forwards in position for a scoring attempt against the Ingersoll Express in recent house league action.



Tillsonburg McLaughlin U-13 players cross the blue line with an Ingersoll player in pursuit during a recent game.

# Club Oxford wraps up for the season



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

ReMax Realty were the A Division champions in Club Oxford. Team members are, left to right: (front row) Parker Terryberry, Ben Sharp, Greg Buchner, Dylan Ralf, Brendan Soares, (back row) Rob Smith, Jordan Kobayashi, Cory Campbell-Smith, Brady Sutherland, Dan Andersson, Brian Velthove, and Cory Turner.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Jeff Prouse Mortgages were the B Division champions for 2025-2026. Left to right are: (front) Kris Sebok, Stephan Coulombe, Jeff Prouse, Tom Huberty, Kris King, Dan King, (back) Kyle Underhill, Jake Patterson, Andrew Behrens, Ryan Jamieson, Mike Harper, Dan Irvine, John Rachar, and Jason Beard.

JEFF GWYN

Post Contributor

Club Oxford play finished for the season with the A Division title going to ReMax, and B Division to Prouse Mortgages.

**March 29**

**A Division**

**ReMax 2, Apple Shack 0**

ReMax has been playing a great two-way game. They make sure to get their chances, but regroup quickly. ReMax is playing it close as they know the Apple Shack team is dangerous at any moment. Apple Shack had a tough first period where they couldn't get their shots on net, or rebounds on their sticks. They were fighting hard to keep ReMax off the board and it's making for some very close games.

Parker Terryberry and Rob Smith had goals for ReMax. Greg Buchner had the shutout.

**B Division**

**Prouse Mortgages 3, Source 0**

A solid team effort by Prouse Mort-

gages as they played well in every zone. They buckled down and didn't let Source get many second chances at all. Source had a full team, but couldn't get a bounce to go their way. They had some pressure but were stymied by a tough defence and goalie in this one.

Stephan Coulombe and Ryan Jamieson had two points each for Prouse Mortgages. Tom Huberty had the shut-out.

**April 1**

**A Division**

**ReMax 3, Apple Shack 2 Overtime**

ReMax looked to be in control for most of the game. They pressured with rushes and by working the zone for extended time. A hard forecheck in overtime led to a quick chance and that's all they needed. Apple Shack put up a valiant effort. They didn't give up, and finally found some chances in the second. Forcing overtime late gave them a chance. A bad break in OT didn't go their way, but what a playoffs they had.

Cory Campbell-Smith had two goals for ReMax. Kelsey VanYmeren had a goal for Apple Shack.

**A DIVISION PLAYOFFS**

FODY'S AUTOMOTIVE (1) VS APPLE SHACK (4)  
**APPLE SHACK WINS 3-2**

REMAX REALTY (2) VS THE HEALTH HUT (3)  
**REMAX WINS 7PTS TO 3PTS**

**A CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL**

REMAX REALTY (2) VS APPLE SHACK (4)  
**REMAX WINS SERIES 3-1**

**B DIVISION CHAMPIONSHIP**

SOURCE FOR SPORTS (1) VS TILLSONBURG GLASS (4)  
**SOURCE WINS SERIES 23-2**

JEFF PROUSE MORTGAGES (2) VS ROYAL LEPAGE REALTY (3)  
**PROUSE WINS SERIES 3-0**

**B CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL**

SOURCE FOR SPORTS (1) VS JEFF PROUSE MORTGAGES (2)  
**PROUSE MORTGAGES WINS 3-0**

**B DIVISION CONSOLATION**

CARQUEST AUTO PARTS (5) VS AIRMOUNT FARMS (8)  
**CARQUEST WINS SERIES 3-0**

B-LINE TRUCKING (6) VS RND CONSTRUCTION (7)  
**B-LINE WINS SERIES 3-0**

**B CONSOLATION FINAL**

CARQUEST AUTO PARTS (5) VS B-LINE TRUCKING (6)  
**B-LINE WINS SERIES 3-0**

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# Red Sox in spring training, set for home opener May 8

GRAHAM NICKERSON

Post Contributor

The Tillsonburg Red Sox held their first work out of the new season recently at an indoor facility in Woodstock. Hitting and throwing drills helped to shake off the rust from a long winter.

Team executive Kevin Listar, met with representatives from Port Dover and Simcoe to draw up the Southern Counties Baseball Association four team schedule, which sees the Red Sox kick off their season May 8 at home against the Simcoe

Seniors.

A handful of Red Sox players from the previous season will not be returning this year which leaves roster spots open for anyone wishing to try out for this fine ball team. Those interested are encouraged to email Kevin Listar or manager Alex Fishback at [Tillsonburgredsox@hotmail.com](mailto:Tillsonburgredsox@hotmail.com) or message the team on Facebook or Instagram.

The team is excited to return to the diamond in May where they hope to improve on their record from last season and their quarter final appearance at OBAs.

## TILLSONBURG RED SOX SCHEDULE 2026

DATE	TIME	WHERE	AGAINST
<b>MAY</b>			
FRIDAY 08	7:30	TILLSONBURG SAM LAMB	SR SIMCOE
FRIDAY 15	7:30	TILLSONBURG SAM LAMB	JR SIMCOE
FRIDAY 22	7:30	TILLSONBURG SAM LAMB	PORT DOVER
FRIDAY 24	7:30	SIMCOE MEMORIAL PARK	SR SIMCOE
FRIDAY 29	7:30	TILLSONBURG SAM LAMB	SR SIMCOE
<b>JUNE</b>			
TUESDAY 02	7:30	PORT DOVER MISNER PARK	PORT DOVER
FRIDAY 05	5:00	TILLSONBURGTOURNAMENT	WOODSTOCK
SATURDAY 06	10:00AM	TILLSONBURGTOURNAMENT	PORT DOVER
SUNDAY 07	3:30PM	TILLSONBURGTOURNAMENT	BEAMSVILLE
FRIDAY 12	7:30	TILLSONBURG SAM LAMB	JR SIMCOE
SUNDAY 14	4:00	SIMCOE MEMORIAL PARK	JR SIMCOE
FRIDAY 19	7:30	TILLSONBURG SAM LAMB	PORT DOVER
SUNDAY 21	7:00	SIMCOE MEMORIAL PARK	SR SIMCOE
FRIDAY 26	N/A	BYRON TOURNAMENT	N/A
SATURDAY 27	N/A	BYRON TOURNAMENT	N/A
SUNDAY 28	N/A	BYRON TOURNAMENT	N/A
TUESDAY 30	7:30	PORT DOVER MISNER PARK	PORT DOVER
<b>JULY</b>			
FRIDAY 03	N/A	EXHIBITION GAME? PRACTICE	
FRIDAY 10	7:30	TILLSONBURG SAM LAMB	PORT DOVER
SUNDAY 12	4:00	SIMCOE MEMORIAL PARK	SR SIMCOE
FRIDAY 17	N/A	EXHIBITION GAME? PRACTICE	
SUNDAY 19	7:00	SIMCOE MEMORIAL PARK	SR SIMCOE
FRIDAY 24	N/A	EXHIBITION GAME? PRACTICE	
FRIDAY 31	7:30	TILLSONBURG SAM LAMB	JR SIMCOE
<b>AUGUST</b>			
FRIDAY 07	7:30	TILLSONBURG SAM LAMB	SR SIMCOE
TUESDAY 11	7:30	PORT DOVER MISNER PARK	PORT DOVER
FRIDAY 14	N/A	SIMCOE MEMORIAL PARK	YEAR END TOURNAMENT
SATURDAY 15	N/A	SIMCOE MEMORIAL PARK	YEAR END TOURNAMENT
FRIDAY 28	N/A	OBA PORT HOPE	N/A
SATURDAY 29	N/A	OBA PORT HOPE	N/A
SUNDAY 30	N/A	OBA PORT HOPE	N/A
MONDAY 31	N/A	OBA PORT HOPE	N/A



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

### SILVER MEDALISTS



The Tillsonburg Special Olympics D team were silver medal winners in the Special Olympics basketball tournament held in Tillsonburg last weekend. Left to right are: Devon Couwenberg, Zack Hill, Coach Matt Bowers, Derek Smith, Dylan Osipenko, Adelaide Jackson, Dustin Neufeld, Jillian Polfiet and Zac Robb.

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# TILLSONBURG CURLING CLUB YEAR END WINNERS



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The gold medal team from the Smith/Smith pool was, left to right: skip- Al Robinson, vice - Karen Robinson, lead - Michelle Veit-Krossey, second - lead - Jeff Krossey.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The silver medal team from the Smith/Smith pool were, left to right: skip - Dennis McCarroll, vice - Dale Wright, lead - Susan Goble-Hall, and second - Gary Hall.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The bronze medal winners from the Smith/Smith pool, left to right, were: vice - Linda Durston, lead - Juliana Mitchell, skip - Dan Hamm, and second- Lucas Bernardo



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Tillsonburg Seniors Lang Memorial Cup Champions for 2026 were, left to right: Jerry Hetherington, Kari Silventoinen, Ches Sulkowski, Stephan Pelland & Doug Moulton.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The gold medal and championship winning team from the McCarroll/Wright pool were, left to right: skip - Gail Harris, vice - Brian Jamieson, lead - Cody Shepherd, and second- Samantha Lalonde.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Winners in the ladies' were, left to right: Linda Fenn Garden Gate sponsor, Jenn Cadman, Brenda Jones and Patti Tutt. Absent was Judy Blodgett.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Finishing second in the ladies's final draw were, left to right: Linda Fenn, sponsor from Garden Gate, Gail Harris, Yonna Dilella, and Susan Howe. Absent was Cathy Kovacs.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Top percentage players for the season of the Monday Night Mixed curling league were, left to right: skip - Gail Harris, vice - Cathy Kovacs, second - Terry (Gump) Hikdebrant, lead - Patti Tutt.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The silver medal team from the McCarroll/Wright pool was, left to right: lead - Lisa Gilvesy, skip - Frank Vandeslyke, vice - Ruth Magee, Second - Layne Magee.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The bronze medal winning team from the McCarroll/ Wright pool were, left to right: second - Gary Smith, vice - Teresa Dockx, lead - Christine Wade, and skip - Ron Gasparetto

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# Thunder finish half-a-goal-short season

MIKE HOLLY

Post Contributor

This article is going to be more of an opinion piece, as opposed to a simple description of the last game.

Half a goal short has been the story of the 2025/2026 Tillsonburg Thunder season. For those people that I have not had the pleasure of describing what I mean by that, I will explain.

The Thunder's record during the regular season was 8-11-1. A sub 500 record is not normal, or acceptable for the Thunder. Of those 11 loses, nine were by a goal. I am counting an empty net goal as a one-goal loss. In those games, the opposing team scored one more goal and the Thunder scored one goal less that needed...hence the half goal short. If half the games had the half goal go the other way, the Thunder would have been in the top four in the OEHL Southern Division. Not bad for a team that lost 20 out of 27 players from the year before.

If you have come out to see the Thunder, we have to acknowledge that there was no quit in these guys. They simply would not give up in any game, and came so close to pulling it out. The Thunder goaltending of Ben Blacker, Zack Johnston, and Spencer Robinson stopped far more shots than any Thunder tenders ever have done. The Thunder are very hopeful that all three come back as promises of additional defense and back-checking wingers have been made to the trio. We also will be adding some front-line scoring punch. The scouting team has already been hard at work to this end. The season may have ended on April 4, but now the work started on April 5 for next season.

As the president of the Tillsonburg Thunder, I am very proud of the guys. For the returning players, they came back to the team not knowing what the loss of 20 guys could mean. To the new players, they came not knowing what league we were even going to play in. The Thunder had options to go to three different Leagues last year. To quell any rumors out there this

year, the Thunder are staying in the OEHL under the OHA umbrella and have no intension of moving anywhere. I actually have had inquiries already to move the team, but that is not going to happen. The OEHL is a highly competitive league, and I expect the Thunder to make their mark very soon.

I hope I have explained some of the behind-the-scenes operations of the Thunder. I encourage everyone to monitor the Thunder Facebook page for updates as the spring/summer really is not hockey season and it will appear that it is quiet...but it will not be.

Game 4 versus Saugeen Shores in Tillsonburg opened with a quick goal by the visitors. Things looked grim until Cory Mallet from Harlen VanWynsberghe scored his first of the season 18 seconds after the Saugeen goal. Things were looking up until Saugeen scored four more goals. Kane Johnson from his identical twin brother Tye Johnson and Kurtis Heggie attempted to have the Thunder get back into it. Saugeen popped another in to take a 6-2 lead after one. Things looked very dark at that time.

The Thunder scored three in the second, and Saugeen one to make it interesting. Thunder goals by Tye Johnson from his brother Kane Johnson, Hunter Monkhouse from Luke Sinclair and Danny Attridge, and Andrew Oosterveld unassisted. Symon Reddin from Tye Johnson and Jaden Vansevanant added one in the third but Saugeen added two to end in a 9-6 Saugeen victory and take the series. Cory Mallet spiced up the game with a scrap just falling an assist short of a Gordie Howe hat trick. Shots were 51 to 47 in favour of the Hawks. Robinson stopped 42 shots for the Thunder despite being sick.

Open tryouts for the Thunder will be in September. There may be some skates in July/August but nothing is confirmed. Keep an eye on the signs by Thunder sponsors Rema and M&J Tire for dates and times. Last year in July, we had 15 goalies and over 30 players try out...in July.

Contact the team via text/email/messenger if you



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Kurtis Heggie fights for control of the puck in the South Saugeen end during Saturday night's game. The Thunder lost the game 9-6 to end their season.

have what it takes. The core has been built...now it is time to add the missing pieces and hang another banner in the rafters.

Go Thunder Go

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## Tillsonburg Skating Club planning for carnival

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Tillsonburg Skating Club's carnival is going to bring Dancing with the Stars on Ice to the local arena.

Following the theme of the show Dancing with the Stars, the carnival will see skaters have challenges and winners in a unique format that is designed to thrill the audience.

The carnival is a showcase of all skaters in the club, from the youngest to the oldest. The club uses a bi-annual format for its carnivals, with every other year being a bigger production. This is the big one.

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Speaking of stars and big in the skating world, local skating sensation Summer Homick and her partner Nicholas Buelow will be showcasing their skills that have taken them to international competition. Rising stars Jazmine Desrochers and Kieran Thrasher will also be part of the show.

And then there's the mystery of which locals will be part of the alumni number, and seeing the parents take to the ice with their young skaters in the annual tradition.

Shows are April 17 at 7 p.m., and April 18 with shows at both 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased online at [skating@live.ca](mailto:skating@live.ca) or at the door.

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# Tillsonburg, you've changed: A night With Spookey Ruben



## MUSIC CORNER

**BEN ADDRESS**

*Tillsonburg Post Columnist*

There are few artists in Canada's Indie music landscape quite as singular and legendary as Spookey Ruben, and next week Tillsonburg will get a rare chance to experience his genre-bending artistry up close.

Spokey Ruben, born Alan F. Deil in Ottawa, makes a tour stop in town this Wednesday, April 15, bringing with him a career that spans decades, continents and creative disciplines. This will be one of his only two Canadian concerts this year for the Los Angeles, California-based artist.

Best known for his cult-favourite track "These Days Are Old," Spookey Ruben has built his reputation on an unmistakable sonic palette by blending analogue keyboards, layered vocals, and found sounds with a mix of electric and Spanish guitar. His music often walks a tightrope between polished pop sensibilities and ex-

perimental production earning his 1995 debut album 'Modes of Transportation Vol. 1' comparisons to The Beach Boys' 1966 album Pet Sounds.

His path to that sound has been anything but ordinary. The son of a European Space Agency aerospace engineer, Alan Deil spent his early years moving between Germany, the Netherlands and Washington, D.C. By his teens, he had traded classical guitar lessons for the raw energy of hardcore and metal bands eventually playing in the progressive thrash band Transilience, before relocating to Toronto to study film at York University.

That creative duality combining music and visual storytelling continues to define his work. Beyond releasing seven full-length albums, including his latest 2025 release "Toronto, You've Changed", Ruben has also carved out a niche as a filmmaker, producing the quirky short film series "Spookey Ruben's Dizzy Playground" for Exclaim! And AUX TV, featuring collaborations with artists connected to bands like Broken Social Scene, Feist and The Smashing Pumpkins.

Now, with decades of experience and touring, Spookey Ruben remains as creatively restless as ever.

"I think my M.O. has not changed, which is to just continue expanding my musical horizons," Deil says. "I'm interested and fascinated by so many different types of

music and visual art. I feel like if I did not express that in my own music, I would be lying to the world."

His latest album reflects not just artistic growth, but a deeply personal relationship with the city that shaped him.

"In my heart, Toronto will always symbolize a place of endless fun and creativity. A free-spirited place that allowed me to be Spookey," Deil explains. "Over time, I noticed all the things I love about Toronto started to disappear, and all the things I hated were getting bigger and bolder. The fact that thousands of artists and musicians had to move out of the city because they could not afford the rent anymore. That is so stupid."

That tension between inspiration and displacement is something that was felt first-hand.

"I became quite successful as a composer for TV commercials in Los Angeles, which honestly really messed up my own song-writing ethos. I always return to Canada to get it back," Deil exclaims. "I have been wanting to move back to Canada for a while. I just do not know where exactly or how. Is there room for me in Tillsonburg?"

That is a question that may resonate with many in smaller Ontario communities, which are increasingly becoming havens for displaced urban creatives.

Spokey Ruben's music has also found

an enthusiastic audience overseas, particularly in Japan, where his colourful style has struck a chord.

"Japanese audiences react strongly to my colourful and happy melodies and overall fun vibes," Deil grins. "It is congruent with Japanese culture. I had an amazing 12 city tour last year all across Japan from the north island of Hokkaido down to Takamatsu in Kagawa. I love Japan. It is also changed a lot too though. Perhaps my next album will be titled Tokyo, You've Changed"

Spokey Ruben's upcoming show in Tillsonburg is an opportunity to witness an artist who has consistently defied convention, blending sound, story and personality into something entirely his own. With his mix of nostalgic hooks, experimental textures and candid storytelling, Spookey Ruben's return to Southwestern Ontario promises an experience that will linger long after the final note.

Spokey Ruben makes his way to Tillsonburg for his first time ever Wednesday, April 15th playing an all ages/licensed show at Paddy's Underground. He will be joined by opening local support from Trevor Kostyria and rock band The Half Smokes. Tickets are only \$15 and are available at The Mill and online at Eventbrite.ca. You can visit and keep in touch with Alan on his official website at [www.spokeyruben.com](http://www.spokeyruben.com)

## UPCOMING SHOWS

### APRIL 11 - DJ KENNY

Birds Golf Sports Lounge: Free Entry – 9 p.m. – 19-plus

### APRIL 15 - SPOOKEY RUBEN W/ THE HALF SMOOKES AND TREVOR KOSTYRIA

Paddy's Underground: \$15 – 8 p.m. - All Ages/Licensed

### APRIL 16 - FELICIA MCMINN

The Copper Mug: Free Entry – 8 p.m.

### APRIL 17 - MUSIC TRIVIA

The Copper Mug: Free Entry – 8 p.m.

### APRIL 17 - MUDMEN

Tillsonburg Legion Branch #153  
\$30 – 8 p.m. – 19-plus

### APRIL 18 - TILLSONBURG'S ONLY REGGAE DANCE PARTY W/ THE HUMAN RIGHTS

Paddy's Underground  
\$25 – 8 p.m. - All Ages/Licensed

### APRIL 19 - FRED HODGSON

The Copper Mug  
Free Entry – 5 p.m.

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# EASTER EGG HUNT



(STUART BLOWER PHOTO)

No Easter Egg hunt is complete without a visit from the Easter bunny. Billy and Ollie Faulkner got a hug from the Easter Bunny when he made a quick stop.



(STUART BLOWER PHOTO)

Porter was on the prowl for his share of the 500 pounds of chocolate that Kinsmen volunteers hid at Memorial Park.



(STUART BLOWER PHOTO)

As part of the display by local emergency services, Jackson enjoyed the thrill of sitting in the front seat of a police cruiser as constable Tara Oliver supervises.



(STUART BLOWER PHOTO)

Tillsonburg Kinette members continued the tradition of their annual barbecue in connection with the Easter Egg hunt. From the left, Debbie, Wayne and Mike made sure the barbecue was ready.

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# Construction update

Oxford County undertakes projects year-round to improve roads, properties and infrastructure. For construction information, updates and detour maps, follow us on social media or visit us online at [www.oxfordcounty.ca/construction](http://www.oxfordcounty.ca/construction)

## Starting this spring

### Woodstock — Oxford Road 35 (Devonshire Avenue)

April - November 2026

Oxford Road 35 (Devonshire Avenue) will close from just east of Wellington Street to just east of Knightsbridge Road this year as part of a multi-year reconstruction project. Work takes place from April to November 2026. The detour route includes Vansittart Avenue, Dundas Street and Springbank Avenue.

### Woodstock — Oxford Road 2 (Dundas Street)

April - November 2026

Road reconstruction on Oxford Road 2 (Dundas Street) between Oxford Road 30 (11th Line) and Oxford Road 12 (Mill Street) takes place April to November 2026. The main detour route will guide traffic along Oxford Road 30, Oxford Road 17 and Oxford Road 59 (Vansittart Avenue). Additional detours will be in place at different stages.

### Ingersoll — Oxford Road 9 (King Street)

April - December 2026

Oxford Road 9 (Hamilton Road/King Street West), from the intersection of Oxford Road 9/10 west to the town boundary, will close to through traffic from April to December 2026. A detour is in place along Oxford Road 10, Oxford Road 60, Elgin Road and Hamilton Road.

### Norwich Township — Oxford Road 19 (Otterville Road) bridge, Otterville

April - December 2026

Oxford Road 19 between Church Street and Bullock Street in Otterville will be reduced to a single lane with alternating traffic for bridge rehabilitation work from April to December 2026. A detour route will be in place for Church Street along Maple Street and North Street West.

### Zorra Township — Oxford Road 2 culvert replacements, Thamesford

April - May 2026

Oxford Road 2 between Oxford Road 119 (19th Line) and Oxford Road 6 will close to through traffic for culvert replacements from April to May 2026. Construction will be completed through a combination of lane restrictions and road closures. Detour routes will be in place with applicable signage.

## Upcoming public information meetings

APR 16

### Norwich Township — Oxford Road 59 (Stover Street S) bridge, Norwich

Oxford County will start bridge rehabilitation work on Oxford Road 59 (Stover Street South) bridge, located just south of Tidey Street, beginning spring 2026 to October 2026. This work will close Oxford Road 59 from Front Street to Carman Street to all vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Two detour routes will be in place during construction, including a detour for pedestrians and cyclists. Businesses will remain open during construction. Learn more at the drop-in Public Information Centre on April 16 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., Norwich Community Centre, 2nd Floor (Optimist Hall).

APR 30

### Norwich Township — Oxford Road 59 (Church Street) urbanization, Burgessville

Road reconstruction work on Oxford Road 59 (Church Street) from 150 metres west of Deer Crescent to 150 metres east of Smiths Lane in the Village of Burgessville takes place from May to December 2026. Learn more at the drop-in Public Information Centre on April 30 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Norwich Township municipal building.



Construction schedules may change due to weather, site conditions, contractor availability and other factors.



Help keep our community and workers safe: respect work zones, obey traffic signs, and maintain a safe distance.



Businesses remain open during construction – please show your support!



# Travelling to hunt and fish yields lifetime memories



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**JEFF HELSDON**

Editor

One of the things I enjoy about travelling to hunt and fish is the experiences and seeing sights that will become lifetime memories.

I had my first taste of fishing while travelling in British Columbia, trying to catch rainbow trout and salmon in the inland waters, north of Whistler. That trip wasn't highly successful in the catching category, but the sights and experience whetted my appetite for this type of travel.

Since I have been back to B.C. fishing for chinook salmon on the ocean and turkey hunting in the Rockies. Both trips were more successful in pursuing the quarry I was after, but again, the memories of the experience are what is most valued. Seeing bald eagles and seals on the west coast of Vancouver Island is something I will never forget. The elk I saw while turkey hunting surpassed numbers I had seen in national parks, but it was also different in it was raw nature against awe-inspiring backgrounds. The interaction with the locals while turkey hunting was also a highlight.

Fishing and hunting in Newfoundland was another incredible experience.

Moose hunting in central and western Newfoundland took me into the rugged beauty of our country's most easterly province. I saw caribou on both trips, and had a big bull inside of 50 feet on one occasion. On a previous trip, I visited Gros Morne and its famed Western Brook Pond. That paled, however, into the views of some of the fjords and islands I saw in the wilderness near Cornebroke.

Although the Newfoundland hunting trips were just for that purpose, the fishing has been mixed into family vacations.

I highly recommend cod fishing with Quidi Vidi Charters. Not only did the b'ys guarantee we would catch fish, which has never occurred before – they promised the best fish and chips we would ever eat.

A shark-fishing trip, which was catch-and-release to tag these giants, brought us the closest we have ever been to whales, with a side trip to a remote village that was abandoned as part of the resettlement program.

## To the wilds of Greenland

Tillsonburg resident Randy Hildebrant also has a taste for travel and fishing. His experiences have taken him to the wilds of Labrador, and, more recently, Greenland.

His goal when researching the Greenland trip was, "I was searching out a trip where we could stand in the water and fish, and drink the water we were standing in. That's how pure the area was."

Reaching Greenland was an adventure in itself, requiring flying to Copenhagen, Denmark, and then back to Greenland's capital of Nuuk. From there, it was a smaller plane for an hour to Sisimuit, and then traveling on a larger boat to the mouth of a fjord before taking a Zodiac up to the campsite where the river flows into the fjord.

This is the land of the midnight sun, where the sun doesn't set in the summer. Randy's son Cody, who accompanied him on both trips, woke one night and saw a bull muskox across the river. The father and son anglers also saw reindeer and Arctic fox.

Their real goal was fly fishing for Arctic char fresh from the tide. These were silver fish from the ocean, not the brightly coloured char typically thought of.

"Every 24 hour cycle, a new run of Arctic char will come in on the tide," Randy recounted.

As for the drinking water, he said it tasted incredible.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

The view of Newfoundland's Glover Island are on par with some of the vistas of some of the island's famed landmarks. However, Glover Island is not easily accessible to the public and is true, untouched wilderness.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Having whales swimming by a 20-foot open boat was an added bonus on a shark fishing trip in Newfoundland. The whales were close enough that some of the photos, although not this one, were cell phone images that filled the frame.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Cody Hildebrant holds an Arctic char he caught in Greenland. A highlight of the trip for him was walking up to a muskox.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

When planning his trip to catch ocean-run Arctic char, Randy Hildebrant wanted to be in a spot where the water was so pure he could drink the water he was fishing in. He found that in remote Greenland.

## Overheard at the Coffee Shop

Brought to you by: *Tim Hortons*

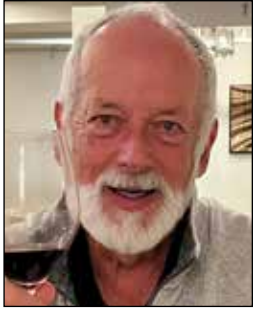
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I'M OVER THE  
MOON ABOUT  
HAVING A  
CANADIAN ON  
ARTEMIS II

HOW COULD A  
COUNTRY SHAPED  
LIKE A BOOT NOT  
QUALIFY FOR THE  
WORLD CUP?

Have you heard something humorous around town that you think might be of interest to others? Either email them to us at [info@tillsonburgpost.com](mailto:info@tillsonburgpost.com) with the title "Overheard at the Coffee Shop" or call 519.655.2341.

# The silly side of travel writing



**OH,  
THE  
PLACES  
WE'LL  
GO!**

PAUL KNOWLES

*Tillsonburg Post Columnist*

I get a lot of comments from people who are a bit jealous of my gig as a travel writer. They're right – it's a great job. I will insist that it does involve work – being on a busy, dusk to dawn travel “familiarization tour” can be exhausting. But still fun.

And sometimes, unexpectedly hilarious.

Often, these silly moments involve food. Like in Hong Kong, where I was taken out to breakfast at a congee restaurant. Congee is rice porridge, usually served with tea, and you add meat to the congee. My host recommended that I add... wait for it... bull's penis. I did not, and opted for chicken. At least, I hope it was chicken.

In Locarno, Switzerland, in the Italian canton of this multi-lingual country, I asked my waiter if he spoke English. “Yes,” he said, with a vigorous nod of the head. So, I ordered. My meal, when delivered, bore no resemblance to what I had asked for. I explained. He nodded, hopefully, but clearly without comprehending my comment. I asked again: “Do you speak English?” “Yes!”

I pondered. And then, knowing that French is one of the four official languages of Switzerland, I asked, “Parlez-vous anglais?” He laughed and shook his head. “Non!” Well, that at least explained that.

And speaking of food, there was the time I punched a pigeon. I was in Ot-

tawa, exploring the Byward Market, and decided to have a beaver tail. Yum. I sat down, and was immediately approached by a herd of rather aggressive pigeons. Foolishly, I thought that if I threw a couple of bits of beaver tail well distant from me, they would leave me alone. Wrong. They got more aggressive, and one flew straight at my face. I reached out to defend myself and... yep, I accidentally punched a pigeon.

In Ponce Inlet, Florida, at a diner, I ordered a salad. “We're all out of salads,” said the waitperson. “Really?” “Yes.” “Okay, I have a question,” I said. “If I order a hamburger, can I get it with lettuce, tomato and onion?” “Sure.”

“That's a salad!” I pointed out with some emphasis. Made no difference, of course. Salads were off.

Occasionally the unreal reality of being a travel writer does lead to amazing things – circumstances you still have to laugh about, because they really are so genuinely unreal.

Like, the time in San Diego when I was supposed to go tandem hang-gliding off the cliffs. This seemed an ill-conceived idea, so I asked if there might be an alternative activity. “Do you want to play golf?” asked my host, “at Torrey Pines?” Did I want to play golf at one of the most famous golf courses in the world? We arrived. I was escorted to my golf cart, complete with a beautiful set of loner clubs, balls, tees, water, the works. I asked “Am I playing with anyone?”

“No sir,” came the answer, “We closed the course for you.”

I looked at my host. He quietly said, “I don't know who they think you are, but go with it.” So, I did. I played well – about which, I have no proof, and no one believes me.

I have been bit on the lip by a sea turtle in the waters off Barbados; I have kissed a stuffed beaver in New Brun-



The Beaver Tail kiosk in Ottawa, where our hero punched a pigeon. (PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

wick; I have marched in two parades in Québec City, once in full, brilliant blue costume as a 16th century seigneur; I have felt my underwear fall off during a walking tour of Lugano; and I have been trussed up like a hippopotamus in bondage gear to go ziplining in the Jamaican rainforest.

But it was in Mexico that two incidents left me laughing and feeling rather humiliated, at the same time.

We went snorkelling; the transportation to the coral reef involved two-person speedboats. Upon arrival at the reefs, they tethered the boats together, and said “Jump in.” Jumping in, I could do, but there was no way I was going to be able to haul myself back up and into the boat. I tried to ask, but our guide spoke as much English as my Locarno waiter. What the heck – I jumped in. The snorkelling was great; eventually, we were called back to the boats, and I was first to return. I went to the back, and started to try to board the beast. No luck, of course.

The guide motioned that I should come to the front, which was even farther out of the water. I obeyed. Whereupon he grabbed me by the life jacket, and landed me unceremoniously on the prow. It's hard to laugh hysterically with the breath knocked out of you, but I managed it.

And also, during that visit to Mexico, I was offered a moment of self-awareness. A small group of media folk went to the amazing attraction called Xcaret, where you can swim in an underground river. You don a life jacket, but it takes some effort to complete the course. When we finished, a much younger member of the group told me, “If I ever live to be as old as you, I hope I am able to do as well as you just did.”

Sigh.  
*Paul Knowles is an author and travel writer, and Past-President of the Travel Media Association of Canada. To contact Paul about travel, his books, or speaking engagements, email [pknowles@golden.net](mailto:pknowles@golden.net).*



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

Kissing a stuffed beaver at the Big Fiddle Still in Harvey, New Brunswick.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

A sea turtle, perhaps a relative of the beast that nipped the author on the lip.

# RIDDLES

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What do you call a wizard from outer space that can fly?

*A flying sorcerer!*

How does the moon cut his hair?

*E-clipse it!*

Why is the moon like a dollar?

*Because it has four quarters.*

What kind of music do aliens like?

*Nep-tunes.*

Why did the moon skip diner?

*Because it was full.*

Large as a mountain, small as a pea, Endlessly swimming in a waterless sea. What am I?

*Asteroids.*

Why did all the pecans go to space?

*They were Astro-nuts!*

What sea is in space?

*The galax-sea.*

Riddle: Where do astronauts leave their spaceships?

*At parking meteors.*

# SUDOKU

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Solutions on Page 25

Level: Beginner

# PET OF THE WEEK



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# WORD SEARCH

## ARTEMIS II

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- ARTEMIS
- ORBIT
- NASA
- ASTRONAUT
- LUNAR
- ROCKET
- SPACE
- MISSION
- CREW
- EARTH
- ECLIPSE
- CRATER
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8. Seven
9. Lactic acid
10. Kuwaiti Dinar

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# COMING EVENTS

## APRIL

**APRIL 8 | 12 - 1 PM**

### **TILLSONBURG LEGION LUNCH**

16 Durham St, Tillsonburg, ON  
Homemade soups, sandwiches, desserts for only \$15 per person. Includes HST, coffee and tea.

**APRIL 10 | 1 - 4 PM**

### **TILLSONBURG LEGION DANCE FEATURING KEN LIGHTHEART AND THE NORTHSORE RAMBLERS BAND**

16 Durham St, Tillsonburg, ON  
\$7 cash at the door. Cash bar available. All Welcome!

**APRIL 11 | DOORS OPEN 6:30 PM, SHOW AT 7:30 PM**

### **IN THE MOOD WITH BIG BANDEMIC**

South Gate Centre, 191 Old Wellington St. S., Woodstock, ON

An unforgettable night of toe-tapping, dancing, and singing along! This 17-piece big band PLUS a fabulous 10-piece strings section and two amazing crooners! Dress to impress in formal or semi-formal attire—1940s styles encouraged! Dance floor awaits! 19+ only. \$50. Book online at [www.southgatectr.com/events](http://www.southgatectr.com/events) or call 519-539-9817.

**APRIL 11 | WORKSHOP 1 - 4:30 PM, PERFORMANCE 7 PM**

### **CELEBRATE 65 YEARS WITH THE BRANT MEN OF SONG: A DAY OF CHORAL SINGING**

Hope Christian Reformed Church, 64 Buchanan Crescent, Brantford

The Brant Men of Song are inviting all individuals and groups interested in singing to an afternoon workshop. There is no charge for this workshop. Participants may also sing with the Brant Men of Song in an evening performance starting at 7 pm. Financial contributions will be collected for the Brantford Food Bank. Come sing with us and enjoy the sound of many voices.

**APRIL 13 | 7:30 PM**

### **DELHI & DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY MEETING**

Delhi Senior Centre, 418 Queen St., Delhi, ON

Guest Speaker - Alissa Firth-Eagland. Her specialty - Yoga for Gardening. Will be very interesting & wear loose fitting clothes to do special moves. All welcome. (Enter at rear parking lot off William Street.)

**APRIL 17 | 6:30 FOR 7 PM GAME KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BINGO**  
Saint Mary's Parish Hall (Church basement), 137 Rolph St., Tillsonburg, ON

\$2 for 3 card strip, \$30 prize. Sponsored by Tillsonburg Knights of Columbus. Proceeds to designated charities. Food and cash bar available.

**APRIL 17 | 8 PM**

### **MUDMEN AT THE TILLSONBURG LEGION**

16 Durham St, Tillsonburg, ON

Tickets \$30 each and are going fast! Contact Branch at 519-842-5281 for more information!

**APRIL 25 | 9 AM - 1 PM**

### **TILLSONBURG CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE SPRING RUMMAGE SALE**

St. Mary's Church, Tillsonburg, ON  
Please come join us at our spring rummage sale.

Clothing and footwear for the family. Housewares, glassware, bedding, home decor, toys and trinkets, jewelry, books and much more. Everyone is welcome. Fully Accessible. Admission is free. Please bring a bag (or two) to carry home your treasures.

**APRIL 25 | 2 PM**

### **THE JOURNEY OF HOME CHILDREN: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The Edison, Vienna & area Museum  
6209 Plank Rd, Vienna, ON, N0J 1Z0

Between 1869 and 1948, over 100,000 children were forcibly transported from the United Kingdom to Canada for labor. Labeled as "orphans," only 12 percent were actually without parents. Many faced mistreatment, and countless never reunited with their siblings, parents, or families. Join Lori Oshefski, President of \*Home Children Canada\*, to delve deeper into the lives of these children, the hardships they endured, and the resilience they displayed in overcoming their challenges. Seating is limited- please email [bayhamhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com](mailto:bayhamhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com).

**APRIL 25 | 3 PM**

### **THE WOODSTOCK CHORALAIRES THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC, CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF SINGING.**

Knox Presbyterian Church, Woodstock  
Tickets \$30, children free, available at the door, online at [ticketscene.ca](http://ticketscene.ca). Guest artist, Luciano de Cicco (anthem singer at Blue Jays home games). [Woodstockchoralaires.com](http://Woodstockchoralaires.com)

## MAY

**MAY 3 | 2 - 4 PM**

### **KC AND THE SUNSHINE GIRLS** Mt Elgin Community Centre, 333204 Plank Line, Mount Elgin, ON

Put on your Boogie Shoes for an afternoon of dance hits of the 70's & 80's. This Tribute Show is being hosted by Mt Elgin United Church. Tickets are available by calling Joanne 519-485-1988 or Dawne 519-421-6836.

**MAY 21**

### **PENTECOST SUNDAY SERVICE** St. John's Anglican Church 46 Ridout St. (519) 842-5573

Join us on this day which commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit onto the Apostles. It could be called the 'birthday' of the church. We wear red, enjoy fellowship and cake after the service. Come and see! We are a place where people gather.

## JULY

**JULY 10, 11, & 12**

### **TILLSONBURG BOUNCY CASTLES AT RIBFEST**

16 Durham St, Tillsonburg, ON  
Super Air Bounce Rentals would like you to come out and test out our NEW Mechanical BULL. Bouncy Castles will be available July 10, 11 & 12. Tickets (Ages 2+) \$16 in advance or \$26 at the event. [www.save.event](http://www.save.event) for ticket info and purchase.

**JULY 17 & 18**

### **BRANTFORD UKULELE FESTIVAL**

Tickets for the 2026 Brantford Ukulele Festival, set for July 17th and 18th are going fast! Register before April 17th to get in on the Early Bird special. Get details on performers, workshops and more at [brantfordukulelesociety.org](http://brantfordukulelesociety.org).

## ONGOING CLASSES, CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

**3<sup>RD</sup> TUE. OF MONTH | 6:30 - 8:30 PM**

### **CAREGIVER CONNECTION**

Revel Realty Woodstock, 111 Huron Street (Virtual/hybrid options available)  
Are you worried about your child or youth? Parents and Caregivers for Mental Health (PCMH) is here to listen, support, and walk alongside you on this journey. Our free Caregiver Connection peer support groups offer parents and caregivers a community of support. Can't make it in person? Join one of our virtual or hybrid groups! [Visit family. cmho.org](http://cmho.org) or email [oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca](mailto:oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca) for more information.

### **OXFORD COUNTY DIABETES EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Appointments are available at Alexandra Hospital Ingersoll and Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital and by phone

Are you looking for support with your Diabetes? Our Team of Registered Nurses, Registered Dietitians and a Social Worker is here to support YOUR goals. We can help with medication adjustments, lifestyle and diet changes, stress management, weight reduction strategies and more. **SELF REFERRALS ARE WELCOME.** Please call 519-485-9611 to book an appointment. Let's work together!

**MONDAYS | 9 - 11:30 AM**

### **OTTER VALLEY TAI CHI**

St. John's Anglican Church, 46 Ridout St. W., Tillsonburg

New Monday morning classes have begun. Spots still available: 9:00 – 10:30 am Introduction, 10:30 – 11:30 am Foundations. Enjoy gentle exercise with others as you work to improve flexibility, balance and stamina. Call 519-688-9779, email [ottervalley@canadiantaichiacademy.org](mailto:ottervalley@canadiantaichiacademy.org), visit [canadiantaichiacademy.org](http://canadiantaichiacademy.org).

**MONDAYS | 7 - 9 PM**

### **MODERN SQUARE DANCING IS FOR YOU!**

Thames Valley Dance Club

Looking for something to do in the evening or something new to try? Modern square dancing is a great way to learn something new, have fun, meet new friends, relieve stress, and get

some exercise! All you need is comfortable shoes and casual clothing. No experience or partner is required and anyone over the age of 12 is welcome (children from 12-15 with an adult, please). **The 2025-2026 season has started at the Ingersoll Pipe Band Hall, 108 Wonham St. S. Ingersoll.** The first night is free, and after that the cost is \$7.50 per person each Monday, paid monthly at the start of the month. For more information, contact Julie at 519-535-3314.

**2<sup>ND</sup> TUES. OF MONTH (SEPT. TO MAY) | 2 - 4 PM**

**4<sup>TH</sup> TUES. OF MONTH (SEPT. TO MAY) | 7 - 9 PM**

### **OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY** Church of the Epiphany, 560 Dundas Street, Woodstock Ontario N4S 1C7

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

**3<sup>RD</sup> WED. OF MONTH | 10 AM - NOON**  
**LYNN RIVER PROBUS CLUB**

Army, Navy & Air Force Club, Simcoe, ON. Corner of Water St. and Culver St. Simcoe. Enter via Culver St.

Our retired and semi-retired members enjoy diverse interest groups, friendship and fellowship. We have interesting speakers at our monthly meetings as well as time to socialise.

Current and prospective members are welcome to join us at the Army, Navy & Air Force Club, Simcoe, which is on the corner of Water St. and Culver St. Simcoe. Enter via Culver St. For more information, please visit our website at: [lynnriverprobus239.com](http://lynnriverprobus239.com) or email [lynnriverprobus239@gmail.com](mailto:lynnriverprobus239@gmail.com)

**TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS | 7 - 9 PM**

**SATURDAYS | 10 AM - 12 PM**

### **LEARN BRAZILIAN JIU-JITSU (BJJ)**

North Broadway Baptist Church

Thanks to donor support, we've been able to purchase mats and uniforms, and our instructors generously volunteer their time. This isn't a business—any donations go straight back into the program to help buy more uniforms, mats, and equipment. If it's within your means, a \$20 monthly donation helps support the program, but if not, classes are completely free. **Classes are open to anyone 14 and older.** If you'd like to try a class, please arrive about 15 minutes early to sign waivers and get fitted for a uniform. Information can be found at: <https://www.northbroadwaychurch.ca/nbmfa>, <https://www.facebook.com/northbroadwaymfa>, <https://www.instagram.com/northbroadwaymfa/> Inquires can be made at: [nbmfa@northbroadwaychurch.ca](mailto:nbmfa@northbroadwaychurch.ca)

**EVERY OTHER FRIDAY | 1 - 4 PM**

### **SPRING INTO THE INGERSOLL COUNTRY MUSIC JAMBOREE**

Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St. S., Ingersoll

Join us, walk ins welcome. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Perform, listen, dance & enjoy! April 10 & 17, May 1, 15 & 29, June 5 & 19.

# COMING EVENTS

FRIDAYS | 1 PM

**INTERESTED IN BRIDGE?**

**JOIN US AT THE TILLSONBURG DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB**

**Tillsonburg Senior Centre - 45 Hardy Ave, Tillsonburg**

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

1<sup>ST</sup> AND 3<sup>RD</sup> TUES. OF MONTH

**TILLSONBURG LIONS**

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

1<sup>ST</sup> WED. OF MONTH | 7 PM

**WAGNER MEMORIAL TEETERVILLE LEGION BRANCH 526 - MEMBERS GENERAL MEETING**

**The Wagner Memorial Teeterville Legion Branch 526 - 3890 Teeterville Road, Teeterville, ON**

Not a member? Contact us to join. For More Information Call, the Legion 519-443-5588. www.teetervillelegionbranch526.ca

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER TO HELP AT ONE OF OUR EVENTS? WE WELCOME YOU!**

**The Wagner Memorial, Teeterville Legion Branch 526 - 3890 Teeterville Road, Teeterville, ON**

You do not need to be a member to Volunteer, Just contact the legion and leave your name and number and purpose of your call. Someone will get back to you as to where you might be needed. Students and Adults welcome. **Open hours. Wed.-Fri. 3 pm-10 pm, Sat.1 pm-10 pm, Sun.1 pm-6 pm.** For More Information call, the Legion at 519-443-5588 or teetervillelegionbranch526.ca

**VON OXFORD GRIEF CARE:**

**FREE MONTHLY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP**

Register at: oxford.griefsupport@von.ca or 519-539-1231 Ext 6299 or 6296

## LOCAL MATTERS.



Remember that time when **Amazon** sponsored your church fundraiser?



Remember when **Facebook** bought a case of Girl Guide cookies to support your daughter?



Remember when **Google** provided free pizza to your child's soccer team when they won the championship?

**Neither do we!**

Local businesses live here. They play here. They invest here. They need our support, now more than ever.

# CLASSIFIEDS

## TREES

For Sale: Shade Trees; Maples, Oaks, Birch, Beech, Honey Locusts, Elms, Magnolia, Hydrangea Tree, Tulip Tree, Crab apples, Ivory Silk Lilac, Chanticleer Pear, Golden Weeping Willows and more. Apples, Pears, Peaches, Plums, Apricots, Nectarine, Blueberry, Haskap etc. Lots of healthy strong Spruce, Cedars and White Pine for your privacy hedges and windbreaks. Hundred of flowering shrubs.

Reg Hours 7am- 6pm Mon-Sat at Martins Nursery c/o Emanuel Martin. 42661 Orangehill Rd., Wroxeter, ON

## ANNIVERSARY

**Bud & Gwen Becker**  
**60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary**  
**April 30th, 2026**



**Let's Shower them with CARDS and make their day special!**

Share a story, memory, photo or just a friendly hello.  
Mail to: 583 Windham Road 2, RR1 Norwich, ON, N0J 1P0

*Thank you for helping us celebrate Mom & Dad's lifetime of LOVE!*

## Tillsonburg POST

**PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR HOUSE IS**

Keep your dollars in Canada to strengthen communities and support local businesses, including your local newspaper.



## OBITUARY

# ROGER CHARLES VANHOUCKE

**JANUARY 23, 1941 – APRIL 1, 2026**



Our much-loved Dad and Papa, Roger Charles Vanhoucke, passed away unexpectedly at home on Wednesday, April 1st, 2026, at the age of 85. Roger was born in Ostende, W.F., Belgium, son of the late Edward and Leonie (nee Titeca) Vanhoucke. Roger is predeceased by his much-loved wife and best friend of 43 wonderful years,

Anne Vanhoucke (Dec. 22, 2017). What a wonderful gift was to bear witness to their love story. Roger and Anne were proud of their family business Vanhoucke Country Garden Nursery. Together they raised a beautiful family, instilling upon them an appreciation for nature, the value of hard work, and a sense of humour. You often could find Roger outside in the gardens or in his sunroom where he found much joy. Our dad was the very definition of resilience and hard work. From a young age, he understood the value of rolling up his sleeves and doing whatever needed to be done. Whether in manufacturing or tending to sheep and cattle on the farm, he never shied away from long days or tough conditions. He carried a quiet strength, showing us through his actions what dedication and perseverance truly look like. His work was never just a job- it was a reflection of his character: steady, dependable, and deeply committed. The lessons he taught us through his example will stay with us always.

Lovingly remembered by his children and their families: Paul Vanhoucke (Tanya), and their daughter Lauren; Vicki Vanhoucke (Jamie Jones), and their daughter Ava; Julie Hodgson (Terry), and their children: Logan and Abbie; Marci Brady (Allan), and their sons: Ethan and Noah. Much loved brother to Andre Vanhoucke (Marie), Maurice Vanhoucke (Jackie), Raymond Vanhoucke (Margaret), Godelieve Poppe (Fred), and Monique Wood (Malcom). Caring brother-in-law to Donna Vanhoucke, Cheryl Huyge, Patricia Ruppert, Pauline Loncke, Karl Huyge (Rose), and Jim Huyge (Rosemary). Also survived by several nieces, nephews and cousins. Predeceased by his brothers Cyril Vanhoucke and Gerard Vanhoucke (late Lillian). Also predeceased by his in-laws Peter Huyge, Steve Ruppert, Ed Loncke, and Sheila Huyge (late Michael).

Friends, relatives and neighbours are invited to attend public visitation on Wednesday, April 8th, 2026, between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. in the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes Chapel, 262 Broadway, Tillsonburg. A Funeral Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Thursday, April 9th, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. in St. Mary's R.C. Church, 51 Venison St. W., Tillsonburg, officiated by Father Seejo John. Interment follows in Tillsonburg Cemetery. All are invited following the interment to join the family in St. Mary's Church basement hall for a reception. Everyone who knew Rogers is invited to share favourite memories, photos, to send personal condolences or contribute memorial donations to the "Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario" or to "Catfish Creek Conservation Authority" via Roger's online tribute page at www.verhoevefuneralhomes.com or by contacting the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes-Burial and Cremation Services Inc. (519) 842-4238, which has been entrusted with all funeral arrangements, with confidence.

*Tillsonburg Post is available for free in print and online:*  
**tillsonburgpost.com**

**NOFRILLS**

**PRICE CUT  
EVENT**



**WHILE QUANTITIES LAST**  
**SAVE 50%**  
**3<sup>99</sup> LB**  
**PORK BACK RIBS**



**SAVE 30%**  
**6<sup>99</sup>**  
**SCHNEIDERS CHICKEN WINGS**



**PREPARED IN CANADA**  
**SAVE 20%**  
**\$1**  
**NEILSON CHOCOLATE MILK**



**PREPARED IN CANADA**  
**ONLY**  
**1<sup>75</sup>**  
**HOLIDAY LUNCHEON MEAT OR MAPLE LEAF FLAKES**



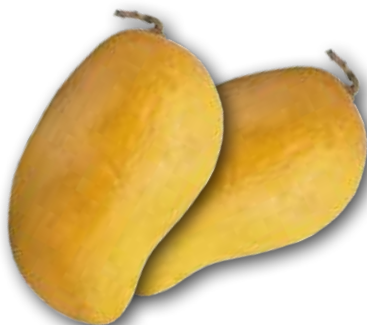
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**SAVE UP TO 29%**  
**5<sup>99</sup>**  
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**SAVE 50%**  
**1<sup>97</sup>**  
**6 OZ CLAMSHELL RASPBERRIES**



**ONLY**  
**2<sup>88</sup>**  
**PKG OF 5 AVOCADOS**



**APPROX. 5 LB CASE**  
**ONLY**  
**6<sup>97</sup>**  
**ATULFO MANGOES**



**ONLY**  
**\$1**  
**PC ORGANICS BABY FOOD POUCH**



**SAVE 20%**  
**\$2**  
**WONDER BREAD OR BUNS**



**SAVE UP TO 25%**  
**\$3**  
**POST CEREAL**

**FLYER PRICES EFFECTIVE THURSDAY, APRIL 9<sup>TH</sup> TO WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2026**

**SEE OUR FULL FLYER FOR MORE ITEMS AT LOW PRICES!**

**CORREY & RITA'S**

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**671 BROADWAY ST,  
TILLSONBURG, ON  
(519) 688-0709**

**OPEN DAILY FROM 7AM TO 9PM**