

# Exeter Examiner

VOL. 3 • ISSUE 2

Thursday, March 26, 2026

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## Heated rivalries: Charity hockey tournament returns

DAN ROLPH

Editor

The rivalries may already be getting intense, but the experience will all be in good fun as the community comes together in support of a good cause.

The third annual charity hockey tournament will be back in at the South Huron Recreation Centre April 9, bringing together six teams from local businesses to raise funds and collect food donations for the Huron County Food Bank Distribution Centre.

Jenn Case of Huron Tractor, one of the tournament's organizers, spoke to the Examiner about the tournament that already has the community buzzing with excitement.

Case said the idea for the tournament came as there was a decline in donations to the local food bank due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We were just trying to think of something that would bring people together and impact the community at the same time," said Case. "Hockey seemed to be that ice that just worked."

The first tournament featured teams from Huron Tractor and Jayden's Mechanical in 2024, but that roster doubled in size in 2025 to include Huron Motor Products and the McCann Group.

In 2026, Baker Holdings Corporation and Delta Power Equipment are stepping onto the ice, bringing the tournament to a roster of six teams.

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(BARRY JOHNSON PHOTO)

## TUNDRA SWANS RETURN TO THE BEND

Tundra swans have returned to the region, bringing with them the hope of spring. The area acts as a stop as the swans migrate north to their breeding grounds in the Canadian Arctic.

## They're back – Tundra swans arrive to rest on their journey north

JUDY FINKBEINER JOHNSON

Examiner Correspondent

Thousands of snowy-white tundra swans announce their arrival each year around the final weeks of winter, and their presence is heralded as a promise of spring.

The chatty birds communicate with others flying in their group with honking or bugling sounds. If they are closer than one hundred feet above you on their ap-

proach, birdwatchers can listen for the whistling sound the wind makes as it passes through their wings. That sound is the reason tundra swans are also called whistling swans.

Since the centuries that created the now non-existent Lake Smith and two other small lakes that made up the massive 17,000-acre wetlands called the Old Thedford Bog, generations of tundra swans have followed their incredibly precise GPS to the same places. A popular

CONTINUED TO PAGE 7

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# COMMUNITY

## Hospital Auxiliary Rummage Sale returns to Exeter this May

MEG PEARSON

Examiner Reporter

The South Huron Hospital Auxiliary's popular rummage sale is set to return this spring, continuing a long-standing community tradition that supports patient care at South Huron Hospital.

The large annual sale will take place at the South Huron Recreation Centre arena floor on Friday, May 29, from 2 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., and Saturday, May 30, from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Donations are being accepted on Thursday, May 28, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the South Huron Recreation Centre's Zamboni entrance.

While the exact origins of the rummage sale stretch back decades, many local residents remember attending as children, and it has remained a well-supported event in the community ever since.

Bev Anstett, co-ordinator of the rummage sale committee, said the event serves three important purposes.

"First of all, it's a fundraiser to support the hospital," Anstett said. "All the money we raise goes directly into patient care."

Funds raised through the auxiliary support various hospital initiatives and equipment purchases, helping enhance patient care locally.

But Anstett said the sale is about more than fundraising. It has also become a gathering place for the community.

"The second purpose is that it's a social and community event where people can get together and participate," she said. "We hope volunteers enjoy themselves and feel good about being able to help."

The third aspect reflects a commitment to sustainability, something the organizers refer to as the "four Rs" — rummage, recycle, reduce and reuse.

"We hope we can keep things out of the landfill and pass items along to someone who can use them," Anstett said. "It also allows families to purchase items at a very reasonable cost."

The May sale is the larger of the auxiliary's two annual rummage sales, and in addition to household goods, shoppers can expect to find clothing and furniture items available on the arena floor.

Organizers do ask donors to be mindful of what can and cannot be accepted. While a wide range of gently used household goods are welcome, items such as large furniture, mattresses, electronics, computer equipment, car seats, single cups, plates, glasses and other oversized or difficult-to-handle items cannot be accepted.

The event requires significant volunteer support each year. Anstett estimated that about 250 volunteers help organize the large sale, working across different departments and shifts to sort donations, set up the arena floor and assist shoppers.

Preparation for the sale begins months in advance, with a volunteer committee co-ordinating advertising, organizing departments and recruiting helpers.

"We're always happy to welcome new volunteers," Anstett said. "Some people work a couple of hours, while others help throughout the whole event. Any help is appreciated."

Volunteers are especially needed for set-up on Wednesday evening, donation drop-off day on Thursday and clean-up at the end of the sale on Saturday.

Residents interested in volunteering or donating items are encouraged to watch for updates on local community Facebook pages and the South Huron Hospital Gift Shop Facebook page. They can also contact Anstett directly.

Whether donating, volunteering or simply stopping by to shop, Anstett said the goal remains the same.

"We like that it raises money for the hospital, but we also like that it brings people together," she said. "It's really about maintaining that sense of community."

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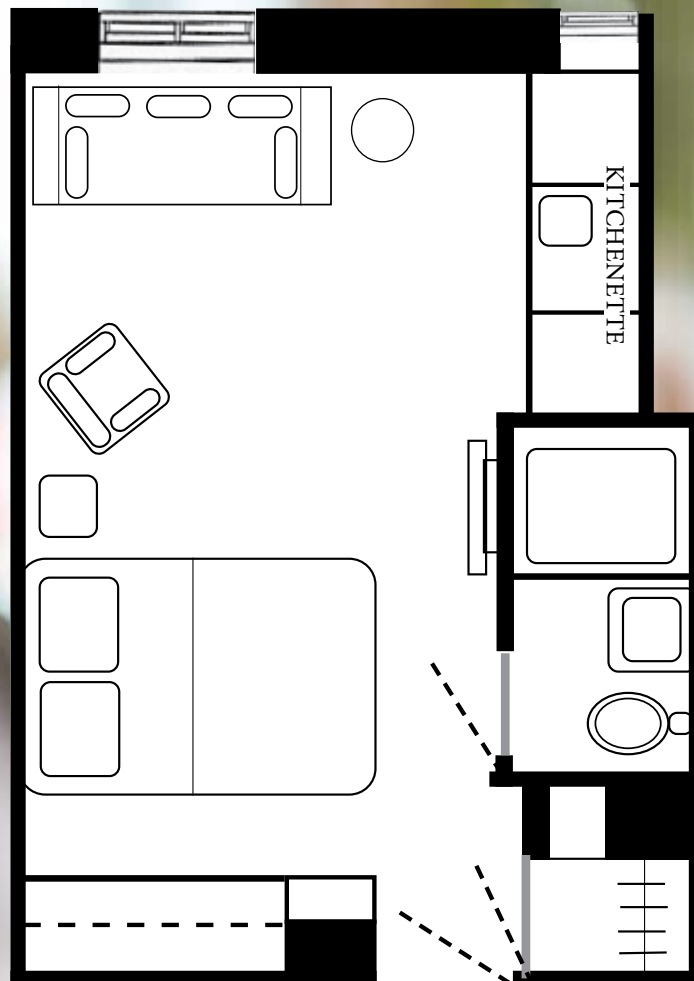


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# EDITORIAL

## In a digital age, community newspapers have a vital part to play



DAN ROLPH

Editor

There's no doubt that there are those who might think starting a new newspaper in 2026 is a strange choice in this modern digital world.

But when I took to social media to announce that the first issue of the Exeter Examiner was available, I received a reminder of why it's more important than ever to have locally owned and staffed newspapers — especially in a small community like ours.

I had spent time drafting a Facebook post that both spread the news about our first issue and conveyed how

thankful we were and continue to be for the support of this community.

When I finally hit that big blue "Post" button on the page, I watched as the announcement immediately disappeared into the ether, never to be seen again.

I thought it might be some sort of technical glitch, so I tried to create that same post once again.

No luck.

That's when my internal alarm bells started to go off and I began investigating. After a little digging, I noticed that several other posts had vanished from our Facebook page without any warning or reason.

It was only then that I realized that Facebook was censoring our content because I had included a link to our website ([exeterexaminer.com](http://exeterexaminer.com)) both in those older posts and the one I was trying to create.

When Canada passed Bill C-18, also known as the Online News Act, in 2023, Face-

book chose what proved to be a unique approach in response. Unlike Google, which eventually negotiated an agreement that sees them paying \$100 million each year to fund the journalism they profit from by sharing news selling and advertisements on it, Facebook instead opted to block all news content on its platform in Canada.

To many observers, that move was made by Facebook in the hopes of avoiding a new precedent being set where social media companies could be forced to pay journalists and media companies for profiting off their content.

Almost three years later, debates continue about whether Facebook or the Canadian government should have handled the Online News Act differently. What hasn't changed in that time, though, is the negative impact it's had on everyday citizens looking to stay informed.

Without real journalism being shared on Facebook, the

void that was left after its removal has been filled by unverified misinformation that users may not always be aware they're viewing.

Sometimes it can be easy to spot the most obvious falsehoods that come across a Facebook feed, but even the most informed people can glance at a post or a comment and internalize it without realizing.

And in an age when it's easier than ever to falsify videos and images with artificial intelligence, misinformation is becoming more difficult to identify with each passing day.

Those brief, unnoticed moments where we view misinformation can accumulate, and in time they can leave us forming opinions not based on facts at all.

That's why it's so important to look for news you can trust in the places you can trust.

A community paper like the Exeter Examiner is the perfect place to look.

We are not faceless entities

or bots who are trolling the comment section of a post.

We are your neighbours, living in the same towns and villages that you do, wanting to know about the important things happening in our communities.

The internet has changed our world by making information accessible to everyone with ease. But in an age where it's becoming increasingly difficult to recognize what's true and what isn't, having the ability to speak about what you're reading with the person who wrote it when you run into them at the grocery store or the arena can go a long way in helping you figure out what's fact and what's fiction.

That's the strength of a community newspaper, and it's a strength that's needed now more than ever. We are accountable for what we publish, and the weight of that responsibility is not something we take lightly.

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**Publisher**

Stewart Grant • [stew@granthaven.com](mailto:stew@granthaven.com)

**Editor**

Dan Rolph • [dan@granthaven.com](mailto:dan@granthaven.com)

**Graphic Design**

Kyrah Smith • [info@exeterexaminer.com](mailto:info@exeterexaminer.com)

**Business Development**

Heather Dunbar • [heather@granthaven.com](mailto:heather@granthaven.com)

**Billing Administrator**

Jen Gaetan • [jen@granthaven.com](mailto:jen@granthaven.com)

**Contributors**

Meg Pearson, John Miner, Samantha Lawson,  
Bob Heywood, Amy Wilhelm, Colin Carmichael,  
Paul Knowles, Judy Finkbeiner Johnson, Barry Johnson

36 Water St. St. Marys, ON, PO Box 2310 N4X 1A2  
[info@exeterexaminer.com](mailto:info@exeterexaminer.com) | 519.284.0041 | [granthaven.com](http://granthaven.com)

Funded by the Government of Canada  
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# Huron County approves budget, omits Airport Line roundabout despite legal concerns

DAN ROLPH

Editor

Huron County council has approved its 2026 budget, omitting the proposed roundabout at County Road 83 and Airport Line despite warnings that the county could be liable if someone is injured at the busy intersection.

The budget that was approved by council at the March 18 meeting will see the county's tax rate increase by 2.78 per cent, resulting in the median residential property adding just over \$34 to its annual tax bill. The median farm property will tack on another \$39 to its taxes.

Despite the budget's approval, it was the continued debate over a proposed roundabout at the intersection just west of Exeter that made up the bulk of the meeting.

The project would have been funded through gas tax funding, which is provided to municipalities throughout Ontario by the provincial government, meaning the project's removal from the budget has little effect on the overall levy since it would not have been funded through property taxes or reserves.

A motion that would have opened the door to rescinding council's move in February that removed the roundabout from this year's budget failed to garner the two-thirds majority it needed in the chambers during that March 18 meeting.

Supporting that motion were councillors George Finch, Jim Dietrich, Glen McNeil, Jamie Heffer, John Becker, Alvin McLellan, Doug Harding and Warden Jamie Heffer. Those opposed were councillors Paul Klopp, Trevor Bazinet, Leah Noel, Bill Vanstone, Bernie MacLellan, Marg Anderson and Jim Ginn.

The deferral of the roundabout marks the second time county council has pushed back the project that could have cost \$3.2 million, having first delayed the project in 2025 with the intent of moving it forward in 2026.

Since a roundabout was identified by consultants B.M. Ross as the preferred solution to the intersection's safety woes, the county has undergone the process of preparing the site for construction, including purchasing surrounding lands and completing the design process that settled on a single-lane roundabout for the site.

According to a report presented during the meeting, there were 10 collisions from 2021 to 2025 at the intersection—a reduction from the 16 collisions

seen from 2017 to 2021. Though there was a drop in total collisions, both periods saw severe crashes and crashes that resulted in injuries.

Collisions seen at the intersection often involve turning movements, angle collisions or drivers failing to stop.

The report states, "These types of collisions are commonly associated with rural two way stop controlled intersections where drivers on the minor road must judge gaps in higher speed traffic on the major road. Further to note is the presence of serious injury collisions in both analysis periods, which is generally a good indication that current measures are not sufficient."

Also included in the report was an analysis from the county's legal counsel. That analysis found that deferring the roundabout project for another year or cancelling it altogether could leave the county legally liable if a serious collision occurs after identifying the intersection as a safety concern.

"If the project were cancelled or significantly delayed and a serious collision occurred, the county could face potential negligence claims on the basis that it was aware of the hazard and had already identified a reasonable improvement," the report reads.

Larry Shapton, a resident who lives near the intersection, spoke to council through a delegation at the meeting about how he and other neighbouring property owners were disappointed in council's initial decision to remove the project from the 2026 budget in February during budget deliberations.

"We just don't understand," he said. "We were very shocked and upset."

"Someone will continue to get hurt or killed at that corner, with the council well aware of the risk. They recognized it as early as 2021, and they're still not going to act on it."

Shapton pointed to a May 15 incident at the intersection where emergency crews responded to a collision involving a pickup truck and another vehicle that resulted in at least one injury as an example of the risks at the intersection.

"The big one, I feel, is going to happen," he said.

Following Shapton's comments, Coun. Jim Ginn labelled the intersection's dangers as an enforcement concern that may not need a roundabout to improve safety, instead pointing to a stronger police presence as a solution.

"We have thousands of intersections in Huron County that are not flat or on hills or on bends," he said. "This inter-



(HARRY TEPPER PHOTO)

Huron County council approved its 2026 budget during the March 18 council meeting, opting to keep a roundabout for the intersection of County Road 83 and Airport Line out of the slated projects for the year. The intersection has been identified as a safety concern by consultants and staff, while the county's legal counsel has advised that delaying or cancelling the project could leave the county liable if a serious collision occurs. Above is the result of a March 15 collision at the intersection that resulted in an injury.

section, in my mind, is no more dangerous. We just need to enforce the laws that are in place."

Coun. George Finch, a former police officer, described viewing the intersection as an enforcement issue as "reactive," agreeing with the county's staff and consultants.

"When I was policing, I used to sit at that intersection and watch them go through, continuously near misses, and then I would go and give them a ticket," he said. "I have given tickets to people who have gone through the stop sign several times."

"This is an engineering problem. We have to get that through our heads. We are not experts."

While speaking to councillors, Huron County public works director Imran Khalid echoed Finch's comments.

"We do think that this is an engineering issue," he said. "There are improvements that you can make to that intersection for improving safety."

"Enforcement will not address the root cause of the collisions."

Coun. Bernie MacLellan disagreed with the county's public works director.

"It's all 90-degree corners," he said. "The sightlines do not appear to be a problem."

"Accidents happen at every corner," he added, noting he also wasn't convinced by the county's legal counsel regarding

liability risks.

Finch said the roadway is one of the busiest in the county, and that traffic volumes will only get worse—particularly as the busy tourism season sees travellers taking the route as they drive toward the lakeshore.

"To take the position of 'well let's wait and see what happens' all while more collisions occur, respectfully, is not a sign of good leadership," said Finch. "I am personally not willing to risk anyone's life and never have been. Kicking it to the next council is also, respectfully, irresponsible and completely unconscionable."

Coun. Trevor Bazinet said he was concerned about the county setting a precedent if they moved forward with a roundabout at the intersection while taking issue with Finch's comments.

"I'm a little tired of having leadership being questioned in this council chambers," he said. "I think we're all good leaders. We're here to make tough decisions, and we don't always agree. That's a good thing. That's democracy."

Meanwhile, Coun. Glen McNeil said the intersection "haunts" him, and that he is concerned about the county being liable after identifying the area as a safety concern.

"To ignore our legal counsel is at our peril," he said.

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## Senior of the Week



Our senior of the week is Shirley Keller. A former writer for the Signal Star and other media. Her blogs on Facebook are wonderful, she puts into words what many are already thinking. They vary from rays of sunshine to takedowns of political personalities. Her writing talent needs to be recognized!

If you would like to nominate someone for Senior of the Week, contact us at [info@exeterexaminer.com](mailto:info@exeterexaminer.com)

## WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

1. What 1994 film features a character describing a Quarter Pounder with Cheese as a "Royale with Cheese" in France?
2. What legendary musician wrote "Purple Haze," "Little Wing," and "Voodoo Child"?
3. The Pyramid of Giza is the only ancient wonder still standing today — what other ancient wonder was also located in Egypt?
4. What is the name of the galaxy closest to our Milky Way?
5. In the Bible, who is the eldest son of David?
6. Which country is known as Suomi?
7. How many lines are in a limerick?
8. Do male or female toads croak?
9. What magical phrase did Ali Baba use to open the cave?
10. In Toy Story, what is the name of the boy who owns Woody and Buzz?

This week's answers are found on pg. 26

# POLICE BRIEFS

### EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

#### Staff Contribution

#### Go-kart driver charged

A 24-year-old Bluewater resident has been charged by police after a complaint about a go-kart being driven on the road led to the driver's arrest.

Huron County OPP said the resident was stopped on Feb. 19 just before 11 p.m. on Queen Street in Hensall after officers received a complaint about a go-kart being driven on the road.

Following the go-kart driver's arrest, they were charged with operation while impaired — alcohol and drugs and operation while prohibited.

They were also charged with two counts of driving while suspended under the Highway Traffic Act.

#### South Huron resident charged with impaired driving

A woman from South Huron has been charged by police following a March 22 traffic stop.

According to Lambton County OPP, an officer stopped the 44-year-old woman around 9 p.m. on Lakeshore Road near Army Camp Road after the vehicle allegedly nearly struck a police vehicle head-on.

After her arrest, the woman was charged with operation while impaired — alcohol and drugs and oper-

ation while impaired — blood alcohol concentration over 80 and dangerous operation.

Alleged impaired driver arrested following traffic stop

A 68-year-old man from Kettle and Stoney Point is facing impaired driving charges following a traffic stop in Lambton Shores.

Police said officers stopped the man on March 22 just before 9 p.m. while on patrol on Lakeshore Road near Jenna Road.

Following the stop, the man was arrested and charged with operation while impaired — alcohol and drugs and operation while impaired — blood alcohol concentration over 80.

#### Traffic stop leads to impaired charges

Police have charged a 32-year-old South Huron man with impaired driving offences following a traffic stop.

According to Huron County OPP, the man was stopped on Feb. 19 around 7 p.m. on Huron Street East in Exeter. Police allege that the driver had consumed alcohol before getting behind the wheel and that breath samples found they were over the legal limit.

As a result, the driver was charged with operation while impaired — alcohol and drugs, operation while impaired — over 80 and dangerous operation.

## Exeter Examiner welcomes two new team members



**Judy Finkbeiner Johnson**  
Sales Rep and Writer

Growing up here on a family farm, Judy's path led from a one-room school, to graduating from SHDHS and Western University to marketing and communications work in Toronto with national trade associations. She has worked as a wedding magazine editor, a travel writer living in Flemish Belgium with her husband, Barry, and decades later, back to her heart's land here in ad sales and writing for the It Starts at the Beach Guide. A curious storyteller, "soul food" is family, friends, nature, and the arts.



**Barry Johnson**  
Sales Rep and Photographer

Born in Niagara Falls, Barry graduated from Toronto's Ryerson Photo Arts. Like the unexpected twists of the Falls' wild mouse ride, which he assembled and test rode as a teenager, life led to his graphic arts career with GAF, Agfa, Xerox and 3M, and four years in St. Niklaas, Belgium, travelling 200 days a year to clients in the U.K., and Europe — a treat for this "born with a camera" man. Moving to Exeter, he was in ad sales for the It Starts at The Beach Guide.

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# They're back – Tundra swans arrive to rest on their journey north



Tundra swans can often be found off Greenway Road near Highway 21, east of the Lambton Heritage Museum, when they arrive in the region.



(BARRY JOHNSON PHOTOS)

Mute swans, with their orange bills, can also be seen by birdwatchers in areas around Grand Bend.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

spot is on Greenway Road near Highway 21, east of the Lambton Heritage Museum.

Tundra swans pause there to rest and feed on the remnants of 2025 crops of corn and soybeans and underwater vegetation. They need a huge amount of energy for the arduous journey north from their overwintering grounds in Chesapeake Bay, Delaware, and the Carolinas to the Canadian Arctic. Their round-trip journey north to breeding grounds and south to overwinter is over 12,000 kilometers long.

Binoculars, a camera with a telephoto lens and a cell phone for researching information or swan calls can help when viewing the swans. The late-winter winds that are unimpeded by structures are often strong and very cold and raw, meaning birdwatchers may wish to dress for the cold temperatures.

For comprehensive information from Lambton Heritage Museum about tundra swan migration routes, Thedford

Bog information, swan numbers during sightings, a quiz and much more, visit [returnoftheswans.com](http://returnoftheswans.com). The museum is also hosting a Tundra Swan exhibit, which is running until April 4 this year.

In other areas, like south of Grand Bend on the way to Sarnia, two other swan species may be seen: the longest and heaviest native North American trumpeter swan and the mute swan. Mute swans often glide along the water with their wings partially raised.

Researching the difference between a tundra swan and a trumpeter swan may be helpful since they look similar.

Tundra, trumpeter and mute swans all have a white body. There can be some staining of the neck feathers from “bottoms up” tipping up in the water to feed on underwater vegetation.

Tundra swans have a black bill, which usually has a yellow patch near the eye. Meanwhile, Trumpeters have a black bill with a black patch that extends from the base of the bill to the eye, and mutes possess an orange bill with a raised black

knob on its upper part near the base.

Tundra, trumpeter and mute swans are all strikingly impressive in terms of size and wingspan.

Tundra swans generally weigh between 14 and 20 pounds, with a body length ranging from 3.5 to 4.5 feet and a wingspan of 5 to 6.5 feet. Trumpeter swans tip the scale at 20 to over 30 pounds, reach lengths of 4.5 to 5.5 feet and boast an expansive wingspan from 6 to 8 feet. Mute swans weigh in at 24 to 32 pounds, measure 4 to 5 feet in length and display impressive wingspans between 6.7 and 7.8 feet. These measurements highlight the grandeur and presence of swans, making them a captivating sight for birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts alike.

Swans usually mate for life and deeply grieve the loss of a partner. After a lengthy period, the survivor might mate again. Both male and female co-parent young.

The vast majority of a tundra swan's more than 25,000 feathers are on its

neck.

The honk of the tundra is higher than the deeper vocalizations of the Trumpeter. The mute swan has a hoarse, muffled call when bothered that can't be heard as far away as other swan species' sounds, and pairs greet with a brief snore.

Tundra Swans are seen in the region only during migration when they gather as staging areas in flocks. At a distance on land, they resemble snowbanks, while on water they can look like floes of snow-covered ice.

Mute swans are exotic swans native to Europe and Asia, imported into North America in the mid-1800s for their beauty. They are the type of swan celebrated in “The Ugly Duckling” by Hans Christian Anderson.

Swans are celebrated in stories, songs, ballets and film. White swans symbolize grace, love, purity, and transformation. Black swans are associated with mystery, uncertainty, and surprise and sometimes become the villains in tales.

## Two dog maximum kept in South Huron

JOHN MINER

Examiner Reporter

Three dogs are still one too many in a South Huron household.

After debating a staff report suggesting South Huron's animal control bylaw be revised to allow three dogs per dwelling, council voted to stick with the current limit.

The existing South Huron bylaw sets the maximum number of cats and dogs per dwelling at four, with a limit of two dogs.

Under the bylaw, residents are allowed the options of four cats and no dogs, two dogs and two cats or one dog and three cats.

Staff were asked to review the bylaw after a resident requested an exemption because they had five cats.

The review looked at animal control bylaws in sur-

rounding municipalities, focusing on the maximum number of animals per residence, kennel licensing, care and control of animals and fines.

A common overall limit of animals per dwelling was five, with a maximum of two or three dogs. Some bylaws allowed an additional dog in rural settings.

Other bylaws set limits on household pets such as hamsters, ferrets, rabbits, fowl, mice and rats.

The review of neighbouring municipal bylaws also found the fines in South Huron's animal control bylaw were low by comparison.

It was proposed that the fine for allowing a dog or cat to run at large be increased from \$100 to \$150, while the fine for allowing a dog to bark, whine or yelp excessively would be increased the same amount.

Another proposed change would have exempted livestock and herding dogs from the number limit provided the owner kept livestock on the same property and was

within a rural zone.

Deputy Mayor Jim Dietrich said he opposed increasing the limits.

“Three dogs to an apartment, or even a house, I'm sorry I don't think that is right,” he said.

On the other side, Coun. Marissa Vaughn said she had no problem with three dogs in a residence.

Coun. Wendy McLeod-Haggitt said some rental agreements for apartments in South Huron specify whether tenants are allowed animals and if so, how many.

“They would never allow an obscene amount of animals in a one bedroom apartment. That would just cause way too much chaos with the other tenants in the building,” she said.

Mayor George Finch said under Ontario's Residential Tenancies Act part of an agreement that states no pets allowed is void.

# Plan to merge Ausable Bayfield conservation authority with Thunder Bay dropped

JOHN MINER

Examiner Reporter

South Huron will lose its representation on the local conservation authority under the Ontario government's latest consolidation plan.

The same goes for other municipal councils such as Bluewater, Huron East and Lucan Biddulph.

In his latest update, Environment Minister Todd McCarthy announced the province plans to shrink the number of conservation authorities from 36 to nine instead of the seven originally planned.

The newly created regional conservation authorities will still be municipally governed by cities, regional municipalities and counties, but lower-tier municipalities such as rural townships and towns will not be participating, he said.

Board chair of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Brian Petrie said the new system means a loss of valuable rural and farm representation.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the rural voice is getting eroded," said Petrie. "We need that perspective and it is going to get lost for sure."

The new consolidation plan, which still needs approval of the Ontario Legislature, drops the proposal to merge the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority and other authorities along Lake Huron with the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority 1,500 kilometres away.

Instead, the plan is to create a Lake Huron Regional Conservation Authority that will merge the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority with Maitland Valley, Saugeen Valley, Grey Sauble, Nottawasaga Valley and Lake Simcoe.

After receiving more than 14,000 comments on its original plan, the province also dropped the idea of creating

a regional conservation authority that stretched from Windsor to the Kitchener-Waterloo area.

The plan now is to split that area into two separate conservation authorities with the Upper Thames part of the Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority along with the Lower Thames Valley, Essex Region and St. Clair Region conservation authorities.

Ray Chartrand, chair of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, said they had advocated for merging with just the Maitland Valley and the Saugeen Valley conservation authorities.

"Those three conservation authorities, their watersheds butt up to each other. Those three made perfect sense," he said.

The suggestion, however, went nowhere.

Chartrand said the local municipalities, which pay the levies for the conservation authority, still want to be involved.

The hope is that will happen through the creation of "Watershed Councils" that the province has promised to set up as part of the overhaul of conservation authorities.

"They made a commitment that watershed protection at the local level with local expertise and local service delivery will still be in place. That is what we are hoping for with the watershed councils," Chartrand said in an interview.

In the transition to the new regional conservation authority, Chartrand said it will be business as usual at the Ausable Bayfield.

"We are still going to go after the same programs and deliver the same services right through this transition and keep doing it the same way as we have always done," he said.



(DAN ROLPH PHOTO)

A plan that would have seen the region's conservation authorities merge to include Thunder Bay has been revised by the province. Under the new proposal, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority would be amalgamated into one of Ontario's nine new authorities.

"There is not much more we can do than make it work the best way we can."

Environment Minister McCarthy has maintained the conservation authority system needed to be overhauled to provide consistent standards, reduce administrative overlap and provide faster permit approvals for housing development. The regional conservation authorities will have stronger capacities for watershed management and flood resilience.

The Opposition NDP has condemned the plan, saying it will undermine local control and the ability to respond to local problems.

"Conservation authorities were created to safeguard Ontarians and their homes from environmental disasters. Doug Ford and Minister McCarthy see them as an unnecessary hurdle for their developer friends looking to make a profit," said NDP environment critic Peter Tabuns.

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# Buckthorn: A prickly problem



JASON RAMSAY-BROWN

Examiner Columnist

In the late nineteenth century, Ontario farmers thought fondly of common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), a small, shrubby tree brought here from its native range in Europe and Asia. It grows quickly, forming dense thickets that make excellent windbreaks and hedgerows. As an added benefit, it was considered medicine for various conditions including constipation and rheumatism. As farming spread throughout Ontario so did buckthorn, framing fields throughout the province.

In the twenty-first century, buckthorn is known as one of the most widespread and troublesome plants on the landscape. Able to thrive in sun or shade and a wide range of soils, it's now found in woodlots, hydro corridors and along roadsides and riverbanks across all of southern Ontario. Whether you're driving a sideroad outside Exeter or wandering the trails at the Pinery, there's likely a buckthorn in sight both ahead and behind you.

The problems with buckthorn are plentiful. Classified as a noxious weed under Ontario's Weed Control Act, our farmers are probably aware of the agricultural issues. Over winter, buckthorns host the soybean aphid (*Aphis glycines matsumura*), an invasive insect that feeds on the crop, reducing

yields. It also hosts the fungi that causes oat crown rust (*Puccinia coronata corda* f. sp. *avenae*) and barley crown rust (*Puccinia coronata* var. *hordei*), which cause serious damage to these grains. For these reasons alone, buckthorn is an often-used example when discussing the economic impacts of invasive species on industry which the Invasive Species Centre recently estimated could be as high as \$3.6 billion each year in Ontario.

Buckthorn's impact on our natural world is more severe. As is the case with many plants introduced from abroad, buckthorn is of little ecological value to local insects and wildlife. Deer, for example, avoid browsing buckthorn in favour of just about anything else. This puts additional pressures on other food sources, reducing opportunities for those species to spread while more and more buckthorn fills the void. On the flip side, many of our most common birds, like American robins (*Turdus migratorius*) and cedar waxwings (*Bombicilla cedrorum*), will feed on buckthorn berries. Unfortunately, these provide them little nutrition and have a notable laxative effect. The birds fly away full but poorly nourished and quickly pass the seeds elsewhere furthering the spread of buckthorn.

Once buckthorn has taken root it's likely to form dense thickets with alarming speed. The shade produced can severely limit nearby plants access to sunlight. For all but their most shade-loving neighbours, this is likely a kiss of death.

Buckthorn's impact on soil is just as vicious. Its leaves are high in nitrogen, and when they decompose they deliver that nitrogen to the soil. This

may sound like a good thing, but it's important to understand that our native plants, species that could have been found here long before settlement, generally prefer much lower levels of nitrogen than those brought here from elsewhere. Buckthorn's impact on the soil makes it less suitable for natives and more friendly to exotic species. Where the spread of buckthorn leads, other species of questionable ecological value follow.

As one might expect, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) routinely works to manage buckthorn on their properties. In 2024, they conducted an important management trial in Hay Swamp supported by a grant from the Invasive Species Action Fund. The trial evaluated three different techniques involving varying degrees of mechanical mulching and herbicide application to assess their success rates and costs per acre. Trial results will be compiled later this year.

Public lands, like those managed by ABCA, benefit from large-scale solutions and the experience of practiced professionals. Private lands are a different beast. Most of us may not even recognize buckthorn to see it, let alone understand how best to battle this scourge.

Buckthorn is a tall understory shrub with multiple stems that can eventually reach the heights of a small tree, some six to eight metres. Its grey-brown bark is often cracked or flaky and dotted with small spots called lenticels. Leaves are egg-shaped with jagged edges and veins that curve towards the tip. You'd think its characteristic thorns would be the tell-tale sign but there's a more distinctive trait: look just beneath the



(JASON RAMSAY-BROWN PHOTO)

**Common buckthorn is known as one of the most troublesome plants in the landscape, causing as much as \$3.6 billion in damage to Ontario's agricultural industry.**

bark for a layer of orange tissue called the cambium. Any of the popular plant identification apps should prove reliable in confirming identification.

Strategies for removal depend on size. The Ontario Invasive Plant Council offers a comprehensive Best Management Practices document on their website, [ontarioinvasiveplants.ca](http://ontarioinvasiveplants.ca), which is full of excellent advice.

Seedlings and small plants are easy to pull by hand. Be sure to get as much of the root as possible and tamp down the disturbed soil after. Saplings will likely require use of a weed-pulling tool as the roots hold soil firmly. Removed materials are best stashed in a sealed bin or contractor bag for a year before disposal. When that's not possible, hang the plant upside-down from a nearby branch with its roots exposed to sunlight.

Significant challenges come when you're dealing with mature buckthorn. The most common approach is to cut it down close to soil level. Girdling can work but is not nearly as effective. With either approach, be prepared to manage resprouts for up to three years. Stumps

can be tarped over to minimize resprouting.

Making the best use of your time is key to long-term success. Removing a dozen trees is a great start, but preventing three dozen from spreading their seeds may be an even greater victory.

Prioritize the removal of females before they start fruiting in July. Lob off all branches in reach while waiting for girdling to do its job.

The next two years are critical. Buckthorn can produce a huge number of seeds, which stay viable for many years after they fall. Expect those to sprout. The best defense is to introduce competition by planting natives. An outstanding choice is black elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*) which has leaf-out and leaf-fall timing similar to buckthorn. Another suitable choice might be northern spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) which is fast-growing and plentiful around these parts. Look for local native plant sales and nurseries to source these and other suitable choices. If planting isn't an option, consider mulching or tarping the exposed soil to help suppress that next generation of buckthorn.

## FCC to support producers as fertilizer market uncertainty grows

FARM CREDIT CANADA

Contribution

As conflict in the Middle East heightens concerns about the rising cost of inputs, Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is expanding its trade disruption customer support program to help agribusinesses, farm operators and food processors affected by rising fertilizer costs and energy prices.

FCC president and CEO Justine Hendricks said rising global tensions can leave producers wondering how it may

affect the inputs they rely on.

"While we cannot control those events, we can ensure producers have the financial flexibility and support they need to navigate uncertainty," said Hendricks. "FCC is ready to help producers keep their operations moving forward."

Originally introduced in response to trade tariffs affecting Canadian agriculture, this FCC program will now also offer support to help producers and agribusinesses manage financial pressures caused by unexpected market shocks.

Global urea prices have already risen

amid concerns about potential supply disruptions from a region that plays a major role in global nitrogen fertilizer exports.

Through the trade disruption customer support program, FCC is offering relief for existing customers and new clients who meet lending criteria. The program offerings include access to an additional credit line of up to \$500,000, new term loans and the option for existing FCC customers to defer principal payments for up to 12 months on existing loans.

FCC said it will continue to work with

industry partners to ensure that Canadian agriculture and food businesses can navigate changing market conditions and keep the industry moving forward despite uncertainty.

Customers and noncustomers who are interested in finding out more may contact their local FCC office or call 1-800-387-3232 to discuss their individual situation. Lending due diligence will be carried out on all applications.

# Lucan craft show aims to make vendor scene welcoming for newcomers

DAN ROLPH

Editor

An annual craft show in Lucan is ramping up for another year of welcoming a diverse slate of artisans to the community, continuing its decade-long tradition of being a space for crafters to find their footing in the sometimes overwhelming realm of shows.

Held on Mother's Day weekend each year, the Not Your Mother's Craft Show is organized by Sheena and Dave Clark, who have lived in Lucan for 21 years.

Sheena, who owns Bearly in Business, where she creates teddy bears, pillows and quilts made from clothing, started the show after participating in other established shows and finding them challenging as a crafter.

"The first one we did cost I think \$800, and we were so stressed," she said. "It was so much money, we didn't know how to set up, we didn't know what to bring. Everything felt so scary, and I didn't want to keep reaching out to the organizer."

Those experiences led to the idea of creating a craft show for newer vendors where they can find their footing to one day take on larger shows elsewhere. That show materialized in the first Not Your Mother's Craft Show in 2016, where as many as 2,500 shoppers visited the Lucan Biddulph Community Memorial Centre to peruse the vendor setups.

Dave said the show often welcomes vendors who have been honing their craft for years, but who may have been nervous about getting into the craft show world.

"We make it as easy and comfortable for them as we can," he said. "Nothing's better than when a stranger comes up and talks about how much they like your product. That's a big thing."

"I love bringing new vendors in," said Sheena. "I love getting people excited about doing it."

Since the first show in 2016, Sheena said she's learned a great deal about what it takes to ensure the Lucan show's success. Work starts in September the year before the event when she begins creating the list of vendors, welcoming back many who have participated before while also reaching out to potential new vendors.

"You need some change," said Sheena.

Change also came to the show several years ago with the addition of a second day, turning it into a weekend-long event.

As a juried craft show, Sheena said she takes a hands-on approach when curating what crafters bring to their booths, aiming to avoid duplication and ensuring a diverse selection of goods for shoppers as they browse through the vendors.

With the show aligning with Mother's Day, Sheena said they hope to be a place where shoppers can spend time with their mothers. This year's show has nearly 150 spots for vendors as well as an eating area, which she said makes the show a place where you can spend the day.

"We really want to be the Mother's Day place to be," said Sheena. "People can relax and have a coffee."

The show also coincides with Lucan's town-wide yard sale, and Dave said the



(DAN ROLPH PHOTO)

Sheena and Dave Clark are the organizers of Lucan's Not Your Mother's Craft Show, which will feature nearly 150 booths with a wide selection of crafts on May 9 and 10.

combination of both events sees the town welcoming visitors from throughout the region and beyond.

"It's really drawn a lot more out-of-town people, and the numbers are reflecting it," he said.

Throughout its decade of welcoming vendors to the community, Sheena said there have also been challenges they've had to overcome. Construction at the arena and the COVID-19 pandemic saw the number of visitors drop substantially.

As well, the craft show community has been left dealing with a growing problem of scammers, and Sheena said the Lucan show is no exception to that

trend. Scammers often reach out to potential vendors who publicly express interest in participating in a craft show, posing as organizers and pressuring those potential vendors to send money.

"It's so frustrating," said Sheena. "It's worse every year."

Despite those challenges, Sheena said the show is on track to not only welcome as many visitors as its most successful year, but that they're expecting to grow for years to come.

"I'm super proud of it," she said.

The Not Your Mother's Craft Show will take place May 9 and 10 at the Lucan Biddulph Community Memorial Centre.

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# Over 180 local students take to Ontario's West Coast Musicfest stage

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

Over 180 local students take to Ontario's West Coast Musicfest stage

Exeter Examiner Staff

The Blyth Festival Theatre resonated with the sounds of talent on March 11 as over 180 student musicians from across the region gathered for the Ontario's West Coast Musicfest.

Hosted in partnership by Central Huron Secondary School and the Blyth Festival, the educational event was made possible through the County of Huron's Supporting Local Youth program.

The festival showcased the musical dedication of students from Central Huron Secondary School, Stratford District Secondary School, St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School and St. Michael Catholic Secondary School.

"We are gracious to the Blyth Festival for their support in offering an exceptional venue for youth musicians from across our Region," said Aaron Neeb, chair of Ontario's West Coast Musicfest. "It is important for our local youth to have spaces and opportunities to perform, improve, and collaborate in Huron County."

As an official affiliate of Musicfest Canada, Ontario's West Coast Musicfest offers local school ensembles the opportunity to perform and be evaluated against a national standard. Ensembles that meet this high standard of performance receive an exclusive invitation to the National Competition, which will be held this year in Niagara Falls. Ensembles are required to perform at least one piece composed by a Canadian composer.



(AARON NEEB PHOTO)

Members of the Central Huron Secondary School Jazz Band performing at the Ontario's West Coast Musicfest in Blyth on March 11th, 2026. From back left to right: Dominic Srigley, Elizabeth Howson, Alexander Roes and Cam Boulton. Front left to right: Aminah Hassan and Anthony Mero.

"I think it was important for schools to have a local option where they could play the music they've been working on and share with their peers," said youth organizer and volunteer Hannah Hewitt. "In many cases, bands would be travelling up to three hours away to attend a Musicfest regional competition. Hosting it locally makes the event more accessible."

Performances were adjudicated by music professionals: Paula Ortelli, a retired music educator from Stratford, and Laura Lee Matthie, a retired music educator from Orillia and former president of the Ontario Music Educators' Association.

Following adjudication, Ontario's West Coast Musicfest announced that the following ensembles performed at an exceptionally high standard and have received official invitations to perform on the National Stage:

- The Stratford District Secondary School B100 Band
- The St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School Concert Band
- The Central Huron Secondary School Jazz Band
- The Central Huron Secondary School Senior Band

## New cab service aims to fill transportation gap in Grand Bend and area

MEG PEARSON

Examiner Reporter

Residents and visitors in Lambton Shores now have a new option for getting around, thanks to a locally built transportation service with a focus on reliability, community and connection.

Launched in mid-February, Dabs Cabs is a Grand Bend-based taxi and shuttle service founded by Robert Latta and his partner, Yasmine Kennedy, who have called the area home for the past three years.

The name Dabs Cabs also carries a personal story. "Dabs" has been Latta's nickname since he was a teenager—a reference to his habit of greeting people with a fist bump rather than a handshake. The name itself was suggested by a friend, tying the nickname into a fitting acronym for the business, Downtown and Beach Shuttle. The idea for the business came about on a night when transportation was in particularly high demand.

"New Year's Eve, I was scrolling my phone and there were six, seven, eight posts of people looking for rides," said Latta. "And the response was always the same—there were no cabs available. That's when I realized how real the need was."

That same evening, Latta decided to step in, offering himself as a designated driver through a Facebook post. The response was immediate, and it was enough to spark the idea for a full-time service.

"A month and a half later, we were open," he said.

While Grand Bend is known for its busy summer

tourism season, Latta said the goal behind Dabs Cabs is to serve the community year-round, not just when it's convenient.

"Too often, communities like ours are treated as seasonal markets," he said. "Companies show up when it's busy or profitable, but the people who live here year-round are left without reliable service. We wanted to build something that's actually here when people need it."

Since launching, the business has already begun to grow with a steady increase in calls for a wide range of services, from rides to work and medical appointments to airport transfers and special trips.

"It started with late-night rides and dinners, but now we're getting calls all across the board," said Latta. "Doctor's appointments, grocery runs, people picking up vehicles, even airport shuttles. It's really become something the whole community is using."

The company currently operates multiple vehicles, with plans to scale up further as demand increases heading into the busy summer months. Even as seasonal traffic ramps up, Latta said local residents will remain the priority.

"We started early because we wanted to get to know the locals, the people who rely on us every day," he said. "And that's not going to change. We're building this for the community first."

Beyond transportation, both Latta and Kennedy emphasize that the business is rooted in supporting the broader Grand Bend area.

"The whole idea is about community," said Latta. "If we're not highlighting and supporting the businesses that support us, then what are we doing?"

Kennedy added that partnerships with local restaurants and businesses have already begun to take shape, creating a mutually beneficial relationship.

"They want customers, and we want to bring them customers," she said. "We promote each other, and it's been really positive."

The service also plays a role in promoting safer transportation options, particularly during late-night hours and the busy summer season.

"People want a safe way to get home," Latta said. "If there's no reliable option, that's when people make risky decisions. We want to be there so they don't have to."

Dabs Cabs currently operates Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to midnight, Fridays and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 2 a.m. and Sundays from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., with extended hours expected during the summer season.

Rides can be booked by phone, through their website, or via an upcoming mobile app, which is expected to launch soon.

As the business continues to grow, Latta said the mission remains simple.

"Our focus is to show up on time, provide safe and courteous service, and be something people can count on," he said. "We live here. We care about this community. And we're here to stay."

# Gateway brings farmer's safety and well-being program to the Southwestern Ontario Dairy Symposium

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

Gateway Centre of Excellence in Rural Health (CERH) attended the Southwestern Ontario Dairy Symposium in Woodstock in recent weeks.

According to a press release, Gateway participated as an exhibitor and gave a brief presentation, discussing the Farmer's Safety and Well-Being program.

Gateway CERH connected with farmers, dairy producers, industry leaders and agricultural professionals throughout the event while attendees visited the Gateway CERH booth to learn more about the organization's programs and research initiatives.

During the symposium, Gwen Devereaux, president of Gateway CERH, gave a

presentation highlighting several key priorities.

These priorities included promoting the farmer's safety and well-being program and SHED Talks, advancing research that reflects real world agricultural needs as well as collaborating with industry partners to strengthen rural well-being.

By participating in the Dairy Symposium, Gateway said it continues to strengthen relationships within the agriculture sector and advance the program's mission to support the health, safety and well-being of farmers in our rural communities.

For more information about Gateway CERH and its Farmer's Safety and Well-Being program initiatives, please visit [gatewayruralhealth.ca/shed-talks](http://gatewayruralhealth.ca/shed-talks).



(PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY GATEWAY CERH)

From left are Gateway CERH board chair Dan Stringer, Gateway CERH president Gwen Devereaux, Gateway CERH research assistant Nyden Greenfield and Gateway CERH vice-president Pat Redshaw.

# Flexible thinking for better mental health

TANYA MACINTYRE

Examiner Reporter

During my career I hosted a program called "Conflicting Interests," where I interviewed people from opposing sides of an issue.

Those conversations reminded me of how quickly political discussions can divide friends, families and communities.

Intolerance shows up in many forms.

Sometimes it's loud and obvious, other times it's more subtle, appearing in dismissive comments, rolled eyes or avoiding conversations altogether.

Intolerance often stems from rigid thinking – the belief that one's own views are the only right ones. This rigidity is part of human nature.

We all hold our personal beliefs about what matters most to us. These values are subjective and shaped by our culture, upbringing and life experience.

Alongside values are virtues. These are character traits that put those values into practice. Honesty, discipline, courage and compassion are examples of virtues that tend to be respected across cultures.

Values answer the "what and why" of our lives. Virtues reflect the "how."

Problems arise when values harden into demands, and when flexibility gives way to dogma.

When thinking becomes extreme, it can fuel emotional distress. Anger, frustration and anxiety tend to rise when we insist others must share our outlook.

Over time, that emotional load can damage relation-

ships, alienate colleagues and take a toll on our own mental health.

This is where cognitive behavioural therapies (CBT) can help. CBT can be used to successfully treat anxiety and depression, and a host of other illnesses.

It can also be a powerful tool for examining rigid patterns of thought. CBT can teach us the power of the pause. When we take a few seconds to reflect and ask ourselves – is my thinking helping me or hurting me?

Flexible thinking doesn't mean abandoning our values. It means recognizing that others have their own values.

Through reflection, we can shift from an all or nothing mindset to one that allows room for dialogue and compromise.

When we reach a state of enlightened self-interest, we can look after our own needs in ways that also consider the well-being of others.

This balanced perspective opens the door to healthier conversations. Instead of ridiculing or condemning people who disagree with us, we can focus on understanding their viewpoint, even if we ultimately continue to disagree.

This doesn't just preserve relationships. It also lowers the emotional temperature in political discussions.

CBT encourages us to think for ourselves while respecting the right of others to do the same, even when their thinking seems illogical or misguided. We don't need to agree with everyone, but we can choose to stay open, flexible and respectful.

In the end, it's in our collective best interest to hold onto tolerance. Shutting down conversations, name-calling or escalating into hostility and violence helps no one.

What strengthens our communities is the willingness to stay engaged calmly, respectfully and with the humility to know we don't hold all the answers. This kind of mindset not only protects our relationships, but it also protects our mental health.

Tanya MacIntyre is a Certified CBT Specialist, Mental Health Fitness Trainer, and owner/operator of Red Roof Recovery (RRR) and its training division ~ Mental Health Fitness Alliance (MHFA).

DISCLAIMER: This content is not intended to constitute, or be a substitute for, medical diagnosis or treatment. Never disregard medical advice from a doctor, or delay in seeking it, because of something you have watched, read, or heard from anyone at RRR or MHFA.



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# Lambton Shores receives \$1.3 million in provincial infrastructure funding

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

The Municipality of Lambton Shores has received \$1,368,750 in provincial funding.

According to a press release from the municipality, the funding comes through the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program's health and safety water stream.

The funding will help support the building rehabilitation project at the Arkona sewage treatment facility.

The provincial funding program aims to support municipalities in building and upgrading infrastructure that enables housing development and protects existing communities. The stream provides funding to address critical water, wastewater, stormwater and flood or erosion infrastructure needs.

Upgrades supported by the funding include the rehabilitation of the Arkona facility's effluent building, the replacement of aging filtration equipment and related electrical and mechanical upgrades.

"These improvements will help ensure reliable operation of the facility, support future growth in the community and improve the quality of treated water leaving the facility," the municipality stated in a press release.

Lambton Shores Mayor Doug Cook said infrastructure project is a critical one in the community.

"The investment helps ensure the Arkona facility continues to meet the needs of our residents while supporting future growth in our community.

The project has an estimated cost of \$1,875,000. With the province supporting up to 73 per cent of the project costs, the remaining more than \$500,000 is being financed through the municipality's wastewater reserve fund.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Lambton Shores has received a \$1.3 million grant from the province to make improvements at the Arkona sewage treatment facility. Pictured are Lambton-Kent-Middlesex MPP Steve Pinsonneault, left, and Lambton Shores Mayor Doug Cook attend a March 19 cheque presentation.

## Local writer hosting 10th Soulful Writer's Retreat on Lake Huron

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

Local writer and mentor Susan Regier will host the 10th Soulful Writer's Retreat for Women this summer at her lakeside home, welcoming participants from across Canada for four days of writing, reflection and creative exploration.

The retreats, which began in 2017, have become a sought-after writing getaway for women who want to deepen their craft while stepping away from the distractions of everyday life, according to a press release.

Two retreats will be held in 2026: the ninth, from June 15 to 18, and the milestone 10th, from Aug. 24 to 27. Each gathering brings together a small group of writers for guided sessions, quiet writing time and thoughtful conversation.

The retreats are open to women at any stage of their writing journey — whether they're working on a novel, memoir, personal essays, or writing for their business. Regier will share techniques drawn from her years of teaching creative writing at Fanshawe College, along with insights gained from more than 25 years running her own copywriting business.

Participants are also introduced to the conscious writing process, a reflective approach that helps them write with deeper purpose and presence.

Regier said the retreat is intentionally small and personal to create a "deeply connected" space for growth.

"Women come here to reconnect with their creativity, step away from their busy lives, and discover the stories that are waiting to be written," she said. "It's especially meaningful to see several participants return more than once."

Guests stay at Regier's private home in St. Joseph. The retreat includes everything they need to feel supported, inspired and free to write, including daily lessons, writing prompts, group discussions, delicious home-cooked meals and daily walks along the beach and through the forest trails.

Petra Remy of Edmonton, Alta., who has attended the retreat twice, said, "It was truly transformative. Susan creates a safe, inspiring space where creativity flows naturally. Her beautiful home, nourishing food, peaceful natural setting and the morning swims all added to the magic. I left the retreat with renewed confidence in my voice and a deeper belief in my writing journey."

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# SOUTH HURON COUNCIL BRIEFS

**JOHN MINER**

*Examiner Reporter*

**Council remuneration reported**

The total bill for South Huron councillor pay and expenses in 2025 came to \$213,166, up from \$208,057 in 2024.

The 2025 breakdown reported at the March 16 meeting was:

- Mayor George Finch \$41,045
- Deputy Mayor Jim Dietrich \$32,610
- Wendy McLeod-Haggitt \$29,670
- Ted Oke \$29,314
- Marissa Vaughan \$28,747
- Milt Dietrich \$27,313
- Aaron Neeb \$24,464

The amounts are for the remuneration and expenses paid by South Huron and don't include pay and expenses by the

County of Huron.

**Development charges meeting set**

A special council meeting has been called for April 27 at 4 p.m. to discuss the proposal to triple development charges in the municipality.

A report prepared by consultants Watson and Associates said the charges should be increased from \$6,206 to \$18,641 for a single-detached house.

Developers have said the increase could stifle the economy and put homes out of reach of new buyers.

**Kirkton landfill report**

Monitoring of the closed Kirkton landfill in 2025 found a number of chemical contaminants in the groundwater that exceeded Ontario standards.

The report by Wilson Associates Consulting Hydrogeologists said there are

no users within the leachate plume and no off-site users of groundwater could be conceivably impacted by the landfill.

The Kirkton landfill was closed in September 2006. There is currently no activity taking place at the site other than groundwater monitoring and perpetual care maintenance.

**Taxicab regulation dropped**

South Huron council has voted to get out of the business of regulating taxicabs.

A staff report recommended council repeal its taxicab bylaw, saying that the regulation of taxicabs and other vehicles-for-hire is best managed at a regional level as companies often operate across multiple jurisdictions.

Other ride-sharing platforms such as Uber or Lyft are currently not regulat-



ed by the municipality and this could be seen as treating local taxi companies unfairly as they have to adhere to a by-law while ride-sharing operators do not, the report said.

## Residential recycling fee dropped by South Huron

**JOHN MINER**

*Examiner Reporter*

South Huron residents will get a break on their utility bill — at least for a while.

In a split vote, council approved dropping the residential recycling fee of \$47.68 a year, effective March 1 this year.

But the reduction might not last long and future utility bill charges could end up going higher.

The move to cut the recycling fee portion of the utility bill for residents follows a decision by the Ontario government to require producers of recyclable materials to pay the recycling cost instead of municipalities.

The shift in charges applies to residential materials. Industrial, commercial and institutional properties still have to pay for recycling services.

With the change, it only makes sense to cut the recycling fee for residents, said Coun. Marissa Vaughan who made the motion.

“The reality is we are not being charged anymore for residential recycling so I don't believe we should be passing that on to our residential users,” she said.

A staff report presented to council earlier in March suggested the utility bills be charged at the same level as in the past by shifting the amount charged for recycling to the amount charged for garbage collection. As a result, residents would see virtually no change in their utility bills.

Don Giberson, South Huron's infrastructure and development manager, said curbside garbage collection in the municipality has been subsidized for years by revenue from the landfill. Re-

serve funds from the landfill operation have been basically plundered to fund the curbside program, he said.

That leaves the municipality vulnerable to not having the money required in the future when the landfill has to be expanded or replaced.

“We have a deep hole that has been created and this is an attempt to get out of it,” Giberson said.

Vaughan's motion approved by council calls for a detailed financial review of waste management and landfill tipping fees. The motion noted the user fee rates currently collected do not appear to cover operational costs.

Arguing that utility bill fees should be maintained at their current level and not changed, Coun. Aaron Neeb said cutting the fees now might require a bigger jump in garbage charges in the future to cover costs.

“If we reduce the costs, that money still needs to be recouped and it is going to be recouped with more interest down the road,” he said.

“We could see rates changing drastically over the next six months to a year.” Staying with the current charges provides ratepayers with consistency, he said.

Coun. Ted Oke suggested going halfway — cutting the charges to residents by 50 per cent and putting 50 per cent into reserves for the landfill.

“Someday we are going to have to replace or expand our landfill and we need to start building up our reserves for that purpose as well,” he said.

The motion approved by council sets the annual recycling fee for industrial, commercial and institutional users at \$71.40 per bin.

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# BACK IN TIME

**30 Years Ago**  
 March 27, 1996 — Hensall fire chief Jim Hyde recently presented a certificate for 20 years of service on the Hensall department to Pete Zwaan. Ken Gascho and his wife Della of the Zurich area are of the new residents in Hay township who grow sunflowers and sell the seeds as bird food. Seip's Valumart of Exeter has been named the independent store winner of the Foodland Ontario Retailer Award for the best creative display.

**40 Years Ago**  
 April 2, 1986 — The 67th birthday candle was lit by president Fern Dougall of the Hu-

rondale Women's Institute as she presented a rose to Ila Moir, who has been a member for all of the 67 years and a leader of many, many 4H Homemaking clubs.

**55 Years Ago**  
 April 8, 1971 — Exeter council Monday night unanimously approved in "principle" a mobile home park, but indications were clear that it will be some time before such a development takes place in the community. Local businessman Len Veri has proposed a 19-acre development in the area of Riverside Drive in the vicinity of the local curling club and a Kitchener firm has apparently

optioned land east of the local fairgrounds for a proposed mobile home park.

**65 Years Ago**  
 April 3, 1961 — Bob Hayward, who drove Miss Supertest III to two straight wins in the Harmsworth trophy race, spoke to the Lucan Lions Club recently and received an honorary membership in the club.

South Huron District High School is advertising for four teachers for the 1961-62 term.

George Glendinning of RR8, Parkhill has won about \$1,200 in the recent running of the Irish Grand National Sweepstakes.

**75 Years Ago**  
 April 4, 1951 — Martha Cochrane was named winner in a public speaking contest for Grade 8 students at the Exeter Home and School Association meeting Tuesday night.

Alice Carter, who recently earned her Gold Cord as a girl guide, accompanied by Mrs. Robert Luxton travelled to Toronto to attend the Gold Certificate presentation at the U of T.

April 6, 1951 — Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Lindenfield have moved into their new brick residence on Main Street.

Pte. Ray Snell, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Snell arrived in London after serving two

years overseas in a tank corps of the Governor General's Footguards. He saw heavy fighting in the hills of Italy and with the Canaaras in France, Holland, Belgium and Germany.

Mrs. Elmer Bell and her mother Mrs. Hedley, who have been living in Wingham have arrived to make their home in Exeter where Mr. Bell has taken over the law practice of Mr. J.W. Morley.

Mr. Russell Balkwill has purchased a lot from J.A. Stewart, east of his residence and is excavating a foundation for a new house.

## Lucan Guide Scout Hall ramping up to event-filled spring

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

The Lucan Guide Scout Hall is gearing up for a busy spring, with three community-focused events set to take place in the coming weeks.

The hall at Lucan's Market Street Park will play host to a pop-up market on March 28 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., with admissions by food donation in support of

the Ailsa Craig foodbank.

Shoppers will be able to browse an array of local vendors offering everything from fresh foods and clothing to hand-crafted jewellery, home décor and toys. Adding a sweet touch, a bake sale will offer visitors Girl Guide cookies, Scout seeds and birdhouses, perfect for supporting local youth initiatives and welcoming spring.

The culinary calendar continues with the annual spaghetti dinner on April 16 from 5 to 7 p.m. Entry is by donation, with all proceeds benefiting the Lucan Guide Scout Hall. The classic meal includes a hearty helping of spaghetti, a drink and a homemade dessert, with the option to add a hot dog for those with extra appetite.

Rounding out the spring slate, the Lu-

can Scout Guide Hall committee will host an electronic waste collection at Market Street Park on April 25 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Residents are encouraged to bring items such as computers, cell phones, cameras, televisions, DVD players and more for responsible recycling, helping keep the community green and clutter-free.



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## SPORTS

# Irish Six ends PJHL run as league plans new Lucan organization

EXETER EXAMINER STAFF

Staff Contribution

Lucan's junior hockey team is set to undergo a major transition as it heads into the 2026-27 season.

After the Lucan Irish Six board of directors announced that it would not renew the team's Provincial Junior Hockey League (PJHL) membership, the league has confirmed that junior hockey will continue in the community.

In a statement released by the organization, the Lucan Irish Six cited a thorough review of the team's current circumstances and long-term direction as the reason behind the decision.

The decision came off the heels of a

challenging season for the team that saw game attendance remain low. The Irish trailed the PJHL's West Yeck division in the regular season with 10 points, well behind the seventh-placed Aylmer Spitfires at 39.

As well, the Irish failed to find success in the playoffs when they faced the Exeter Hawks in the first round, who swept them in a best-of-seven series.

"After exhausting available options, we believe that stepping away at this time is the most responsible course of action for the organization and its long-term future," the Lucan Irish Six board said in a statement shared through Instagram.

Though the move marks the end of the

Irish Six in its current form, PJHL commissioner Terry Whiteside confirmed a new ownership and governance group will be established in Lucan, ensuring the community remains home to PJHL hockey next season.

As part of that process, individuals interested in becoming part of the new board of directors are encouraged to submit their resume and a brief biography to commissioner@thepj.ca. The league will review all applicants and determine the composition of the new leadership group.

In addition to board positions, the PJHL is also seeking community members interested in supporting the team through an auxiliary group. These vol-

unteers will play a key role in organizing fundraisers and assisting with game day operations, helping to ensure a strong foundation for the franchise moving forward.

The league has also confirmed that all players who were part of the Lucan Irish Six at the conclusion of the season will have their playing rights retained by the new organization.

The PJHL emphasized that it will work as quickly as possible to finalize the new group, giving the incoming organization the best opportunity to prepare for the 2026-27 season both on and off the ice.

# Heated rivalries: Charity hockey tournament returning in Exeter

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

"We actually had so many people reach out wanting to get involved," said Case.

As part of the tournament, each team that participates donates \$1,677 to the food bank, meaning this year's event will have raised over \$10,000 before skates have even touched the ice "It's putting your money where your mouth is," said Case. "If we're asking for donations, just to know that we're donating at the same time is heartwarming for everyone."

With the tournament building up to its third event, the rivalries between the teams have become one of the defining traits of the fundraiser and food drive. The teams take to social media, sharing videos that feed into the rivalries with creative pranks and harsh words, spreading the word about the tournament.

"It's rivalries meeting generosity," said Case. "People enjoy the back-and-forth banter between who's playing, and they come out to cheer on their favourite team."

This year's matchups will begin with



(PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY THE MCCANN GROUP)

The third annual charity hockey tournament is returning to Exeter April 9 for an evening of intense hockey action in support of the Huron County Food Bank Distribution Centre. Pictured are the participants in last year's tournament. Photo contributed by the McCann Group

Jayden's Mechanical taking on the McCann Group. Huron Motor Products and Baker Holdings Corporation will take to the ice next, while Huron Tractor and Delta Power Equipment will cap off the evening with their faceoff.

With Huron Tractor having been topped by McCann Group 8-5 last year,

the team is looking for a win this time around. Meanwhile, Delta Power Equipment will be looking to impress the crowds with their debut in the tournament.

"I don't think either side wants to lose very bad," said Case. "I'm sure it will be very entertaining."

Though Case said organizers hadn't set a specific fundraising goal, she noted that they hope to see this year's fundraiser and food drive garner more support than last year's already successful event.

"Last year, the support of the community was incredible," said Case. "With the amount of people who showed up, we raised more than \$6,000 in donations and two truckloads of food."

"People who don't normally watch hockey were coming through the doors with canned goods."

While speaking about the importance of supporting the Huron County Food Bank Distribution Centre, Case said it's become a staple in the community.

"You need the food bank," she said. "There's people struggling. There's farmers struggling. Everybody's struggling. It's just a way to help out."

"All of businesses involved are community driven. They want to help out, and the food bank feels like a no brainer in this situation. They are great for the community."

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# MINOR SPORTS

# SCRAPBOOK

(DAN ROLPH PHOTOS)



It was two days filled with hockey action on March 19 and 20 as the March Melt 4-on-4 tournament was in full swing. The independent tournament at the Lucan Biddulph Community Memorial Centre was organized with support from Lucan Minor Hockey, opening the ice to nearly 150 U9, U11 and U13 players from local teams and surrounding associations. Pictured is Hudson Grace as she takes a shot on goal while playing in the tournament.



Emmett Loft scores a goal in style, guiding the puck behind his back.



Taking a shot on net is Gracie Bebbington, who was on the ice March 19 with other U9 players.



Alden Kerslake and Jackson Allan go for the puck as they play during a March 19 matchup.



Holly Mayer scans the ice for an opening as she controls the puck during the tournament.



Payton Corby was one of the nearly 150 players who participated in the tournament in Lucan.

# Exeter Hawks fall in second round of playoffs



(DAN ROLPH PHOTO)

The Exeter Hawks have been eliminated in the second round of the PJHL West Yeck division playoffs by the Mount Brydges Bulldogs. Pictured are Ty Wheeler of the Exeter Hawks and Ben Funston of the Mount Brydges Bulldogs during their March 14 game in Exeter.

## DAN ROLPH

Editor

The Exeter Hawks' playoff run came to an end in round two as they were eliminated by the Mount Brydges Bulldogs, closing the book on their season.

The Hawks skated into round two of the Provincial Junior Hockey League's West Yeck division playoffs on a high note after sweeping the Lucan Irish in a best-of-seven series. But the Bulldogs proved to be a more challenging matchup, with half of the round's games being decided in overtime.

Exeter started the series strong in a neck-and-neck March 6 game at the South Huron Recreation Centre. The teams went scoreless through the first period, but that scoreless streak ended thanks to Exeter's Tanner Thayer, who scored at 12:23 of the second frame on the power play, assisted by Justin Skirten and Harrison Meulenstein.

Thayer's goal remained the sole goal of the evening until Mount Brydges tied the match about halfway through the third period, pushing the game into two periods of overtime before Meulenstein ended the game with a 2-1 win for Exeter. By the end of the game, the teams were completely even with 36 shots apiece.

The series continued March 7 in Mount Brydges, where the Bulldogs and the Hawks racked up a goal each in the first frame. However, a two-goal sec-

ond period for the Bulldogs built a lead that the Hawks couldn't overcome, even with their final third-period goal from Danny Scott.

With Mount Brydges scoring one final goal, the match went to the Bulldogs 4-2.

Though their third matchup on March 10 in Exeter saw the teams once again nearly tied in shots on goal, the scoreboard leaned much further in favour of the Bulldogs by the final buzzer. The teams scored a goal each in the first period, but the rest of the night went to Mount Brydges, who found four more goals and wrapped the game up 5-1.

The Hawks came back with a vengeance for game four of the series on March 13 in Mount Brydges, securing the only shutout of the matchup off of goals by Carter Bowerman, Jack Taylor and Meulenstein, leaving Exeter with a dominant 3-0 victory.

From there, the remainder of the round two was decided by two nights of intense hockey action, each of which wrapped up in an extra frame of sudden death overtime.

The fifth game brought the teams back to Exeter on March 14, where the Hawks delivered a flurry of shots that left them 24 shots ahead of the Bulldogs by the game's end. The teams traded blows throughout all three periods, pushing to the third buzzer with a tied scoreboard.

Despite the strong Hawks offence,



(DAN ROLPH PHOTO)

Exeter Hawk Jack Taylor celebrates scoring during the March 14 game against the Mount Brydges Bulldogs.

Bulldogs goalie Parker Barnard held on until Tim Jozsa of Mount Brydges ended the extra period at 18:22, making the match a 6-5 win for the Bulldogs.

The sixth and final meeting of the Hawks and the Bulldogs on March 16 proved to be an exhilarating game fit to cap off the best-of-seven series.

Mount Brydges started by building a two-goal lead in the first period, but Meulenstein put Exeter on the board in the final seconds of the frame.

From there, the Hawks found their stride and overcame that deficit, secur-

ing four more goals and building a sizable three-goal lead about six minutes into the third period.

When the Bulldogs erased the deficit with three quick goals in the span of about a minute, the teams were forced to decide the outcome in overtime. Dominic DiFrancesco scored the winner for Mount Brydges, eliminating the Hawks and bringing their season to an end.

Following their victory against the Exeter Hawks, the Mount Brydges Bulldogs are set to face the North Middlesex Stars in the West Yeck division finals.

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# March Break Funday returns in Hensall



It was a day filled with ringette action, as well as arts and crafts, on Tuesday, March 17, when March Break Funday returned to Hensall. Hosted by First Stride Skating, the event welcomed 90 ringette players from Forest, St. Marys, Mitchell and Goderich to a day of fun.

(PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED BY FIRST STRIDE SKATING)



Organized by independent ringette coaches Alana and Michele Hodgert, the Funday continued a decades-long tradition in the community.



90 ringette players from throughout the region took to the ice to play ringette, while also participating in fun crafts.



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# COLUMNS

## Chamber Connect: temporary foreign workers and rural realities



COLIN CARMICHAEL

Examiner Columnist

One of the realities of doing business in Huron County is that our labour market does not look like that of many other parts of Ontario. We are part of a region that consistently records the lowest unemployment rate in the province.

On the surface, that sounds positive. Low unemployment usually suggests that most people who want to work are working, that businesses are active, and that families have income to spend in their communities.

Those are good things.

But low unemployment has another side, especially in a rural economy. For employers, it often means there are not enough available workers to fill open positions.

In February, the unemployment rate in the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula economic region was 5.1 per cent, compared with 7.3 per cent for Ontario as a whole. That gap helps explain why labour shortages in Huron County are not occasional or temporary. They are a chronic challenge.

Employers may be able to find some applicants, but not always in the right numbers, with the right skills or in the right locations. Often, vacancies go unfilled for months.

That is why a recent announcement from the federal government regarding the Temporary Foreign Worker Program matters.

The new measures create a limited rural exemption that would allow local employers to maintain current numbers of low-wage temporary foreign workers and temporarily raise the cap from 10 per cent to 15 per cent of the workforce through next March. More importantly, the announcement recognizes something rural communities have been saying for years — that labour market conditions in places like Huron County are fundamentally different from those in urban centres.

This is a positive step for Huron County employers — not because temporary foreign workers are anyone's first choice, but because they are often the only practical option when local recruitment has been exhausted and businesses still cannot fill essential jobs. In Huron County, this affects agriculture, manufacturing,

hospitality, food processing, health care and other sectors that communities depend on.

This is an issue on which I have been directly involved. Through the Huron Chamber's advocacy, I have worked to ensure that rural Ontario's voice is heard in conversations with local, provincial and federal policymakers about immigration and workforce pressures. That has included my participation in the Reimagining Immigration Task Force, a national coalition of chambers of

commerce and employer associations that continues to meet regularly and advocate for practical reforms. Among its proposals is the Canadian International Workforce Program, a model that we have argued should replace the Temporary Foreign Worker Program with a more realistic and responsive approach to chronic labour shortages.

This federal announcement is, at least in part, a direct result of advocacy efforts that included the Huron Chamber's role in helping bring rural Ontario's perspective to that national table. That matters, because too often policies are shaped around urban assumptions and then applied broadly, even where they do not fit local realities.

The larger point is that public policy has to start with reality. In Huron County, employers are often not deciding between a local worker and a foreign worker. They are trying to keep businesses operating when the local labour pool is already stretched thin. Recognizing that reality is not about lowering expectations. It is about making sure rural communities have workable tools that reflect the actual labour market conditions on the ground.

## GREY MATTERS: Safety without sacrificing freedom a new look at independence this spring



ANNETTE GERDES

Examiner Contributor

March always feels like a reset. The days are getting longer, the sun feels warmer, and even if winter hasn't completely let go; we know spring is coming. It's the time of year when many of us start thinking about fresh starts, cleaning out cupboards, getting back outside, and shaking off those winter habits. It's also a good time to think about something we don't always talk about openly: independence.

Lately, there's been a lot of

discussion in the media including pieces in The Wall Street Journal about senior safety and what it really means to live independently. The stories all circle around the same question: how do we stay safe without feeling like we're giving something up?

For most older adults, independence isn't just about where you live, it's about choice. It's about deciding what your day looks like, when you get up, what you eat, who you see, and how you spend your time. No one wants to feel like that's being taken away. But here's the part that's changing independence doesn't have to mean doing everything alone. Having a little backup can actually protect your freedom and independence. That backup might be as simple as:

· Regular check-ins:

A phone call, a neighbour dropping by, or a family member popping in even a quick

“how are you today?” can make a big difference.

· Emergency plans: Knowing exactly what to do if something unexpected happens can prevent panic and confusion.

· Help with meals: Whether it's occasional meal delivery, a friend bringing over a dish, or a prepared meal service, this support keeps nutrition on track without extra stress.

· Home maintenance support: Snow removal, minor repairs, and heavy chores can be a burden. Getting a little help frees energy for things that matter most.

· Living arrangements with support nearby: Retirement communities or homes with on site support gives peace of mind without taking away choice. None of this takes away independence. In fact, it often strengthens it. When seniors feel secure, they can go out more, participate more, and simply enjoy life. Confidence

replaces worry, and that's freedom in action.

March is actually a great time for what I like to call a “safety reset.” Not because something is wrong, but because being proactive is always easier than reacting during a crisis. Ask yourself:

· If I fell tomorrow, how quickly would someone know?

· Is my home set up to prevent accidents?

· Am I getting enough social interaction?

· Do I feel supported, or do I feel stretched thin?

Sometimes the answer is, “Everything's working just fine.” And that's wonderful. Other times, it might open your eyes to small adjustments that could make life easier and help you feel more confident in your independence. Retirement living has changed a lot over the years. It's not what it used to be. Many communities today offer private spaces, social ac-

tivities, meals, and support all while keeping independence front and centre. For some people, moving isn't about losing freedom. It's about gaining simplicity, connection, and reassurance.

Safety and freedom don't have to compete with each other. It isn't safety versus independence it's safety supporting independence.

As we head into spring, maybe the goal isn't holding tighter to doing everything alone. Maybe it's choosing the kind of support that lets you live confidently, sleep a little easier, and enjoy your days without worry.

Because real freedom isn't about proving you don't need anyone. It's about knowing help is there and still living life your way.

Annette Gerdes is the General Manager at the Goderich Place Retirement Residence

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.GRANTHAVEN.COM](http://WWW.GRANTHAVEN.COM)

# OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: A bridge to nowhere and a palace bereft of Popes



PAUL KNOWLES

Examiner Columnist

Any of us who got anywhere near a French class in school remembers the song, “Sur le pont d’Avignon l’on y danse, l’on y danse.” (“On the bridge of Avignon, they are dancing”). We probably learned it right after “Frère Jacques”.

Turns out, we were badly misled. As we learned during a fascinating tour of the southern French city of Avignon.

Oh, there is a bridge, all right. Or part of one. While it once spanned the Rhône River, most of it is gone. It was built in the 1100’s, with 22 spans connecting the west and east banks. But most of it was destroyed by floods in the 17th century, and today, only four spans remain.

But that’s not the problem with the song. The problem is, they didn’t dance on (“sur”) the bridge – they danced “sous” (under), and the prepositions got switched in the centuries since the song was first sung. So if you go to Avignon, and want to be historically accurate, dance under the remaining bits of the bridge, not on top.

Although, frankly, the broken bridge is not close to being the most interesting thing about

Avignon. This ancient city can date its founding to the Neolithic period (the “New Stone Age”, from 10,000 to 2,000 BC). Artifacts from those dates have been found in Avignon, and there are a lot of archaeological ruins from the Greek and Roman period of the city.

But two features stand out above all others: the 14th century city walls, which still completely enclose the old city; and the Pope’s Palace.

These two outstanding examples of architectural heritage are related, since the walls were built by order of Pope Innocent VI.

The walls run for 4.3 kilometers. They enclose 151 hectares – the entire old city, including the Pope’s Palace. And therein lies a story.

For although we think of Rome – or more properly, the independent city-state of the Vatican – as the historic seat of the Papacy, this was not always the case. In 1309, Rome was a hotbed of political intrigue, and Pope Clement V moved the Papal Court to Avignon, in France, where it remained until 1376. By then, the Avignon Papal Palace had housed seven Popes. The last of those, Gregory XI, returned to Rome in 1376.

But it didn’t end there. Even while Popes reigned in Rome, several other papal wanna-bes were elected Pope in France; they’re now referred to as “antipopes”. Two of them also were based in Avignon. The second of these, Benedict XII, was eventually kicked out of Avignon.

And by the way, in 1409, in an effort was made to solve the

dispute, a third Pope was elected at a council in Pisa, intended to replace the two other claimants. This didn’t work, so now there were three “Popes”.

It wasn’t until 1417 that the “schism” ended and only one Pope was again recognized by the entire Roman church. And you thought church history was boring.

All of this comes to life when you visit the sprawling, soaring Pope’s Palace in the heights of historic Avignon. We toured the site as part of our terrific Viking River Cruise on the Rhône River.

The Palais des Papes is one of the largest and most important medieval gothic buildings in Europe. Much of it is open for tours – including the rooftop, which provides amazing views of the city of Avignon.

Construction of the Palace began in 1252, half a century before it became the sole residence of a Pope. But when the Papal Court was moved to Avignon, successive Popes devised increasingly grand additions and alterations, including several extra towers, a grand chapel, and adjoining buildings. Eventually, the size grew to encompass 16,500 square meters. The medieval Popes were determined to build monuments, perhaps to God, but more likely to their own memories.

After the Pope moved back to Rome, and the messy business of competing Popes was resolved, the Palace remained as property of the church, but was largely ignored for about 350 years. Things got worse during the French Revolution, when it was



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Unusual modern art installations are on display throughout the ancient Palace.

seized by revolutionary forces. In 1790, it was the site of a massacre of counter-revolutionaries, and then became a prison.

Finally, in 1906, it was named a national museum. Our tour guide pointed out that “there is no link with the church anymore.” Restoration work started on building, and that has continued ever since. Tour leaders guide you carefully around scaffolding and across temporary bridges.

Most of the rooms continue to be unfurnished, so the architecture is the star of the show. Although during our visit, several of the rooms were adorned with incongruously modern art installations by sculptor Jean-Michel Othoniel.

We did see a few rooms where the walls still carry original mu-

ral from the 13th and 14th centuries, an intriguing juxtaposition the with ultra-modern art in neighbouring halls.

Perhaps the most impressive sight on the tour comes as you stand on the rooftop and peer through the castellations; at that moment, you are looking at 12,000 or so years of human history. And later, if you wish, you can dance under (or on) a bridge.

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).



The Pope’s Palace.



The Pope’s viewing window in the Avignon Palace.

# All Aboard: The London Huron and Bruce Railway



**BOB HEYWOOD**

*Examiner Columnist*

In 2026 we have to really stretch our imagination to conjure in our minds the extreme isolation experienced by the early settlers to Huron County.

There was no road leading north of London to Exeter in 1832 when James Willis first made the trek through the Queen's Bush. In fact, there was no Exeter at all when he arrived. It is probable that he would not have encountered many other immigrants of European origin, especially after he got north of Elginfield.

The trip would have included staggered sightings of shanties and primitive log structures where other European immigrants had staked their claim, but for the most part in those early years, your nearest neighbour may have been a few miles away.

When Willis, or James Handford or John Balkwill, some of the earliest arrivals, needed to buy a tool or supplies, they walked to London. As settlement increased and more farm lots were purchased from the Canada Company, stump strewn roadways began to emerge, eventually allowing oxen to maneuver a primitive cart and its contents to a destination.

Horses were nonexistent until a few prudent businessmen realized the immense need and the vast market that was presenting itself. The Handfords, Bawdens and a Mr. Berry from Hensall all began to import horseflesh from Europe to meet the local demand.

As the roadways were improved by both statute labour and hired crews, eventually the stagecoach became the preferred conveyance for passengers on a long journey. Local stage operators began to spring up including the Hawkshaws and the Guenthers in the Exeter area and of course the Donnellys and the Flannigans from Lucan. Stiff competition for the traveller's fares soon arose between the stage owners. Some "not so sub-

tle" espionage ensued even leading to injury and death.

Fortunately, the golden age of the railway would soon render the horse drawn stagecoach obsolete. The long-distance traveller and the delivery of the Royal Mail and other freight would soon be destined to be transported by a steam powered locomotive.

In 1845 the London and Gore Railroad Company, which had been incorporated in 1834, re-incorporated as The Great Western Railway (GWR). At its peak the GWR stretched 852 miles, earning a substantial part of its revenue by serving as a bridge line between New York Central and Michigan Central Railroads. Ontario towns and villages soon became eyewitnesses to the economic boom that would usually come to the communities that were fortunate enough to have the railway pass through. Local entrepreneurs and businessmen such as Isaac Carling,

James Pickard and W.H. Verity from Exeter and the Petty Brothers from Hensall were elated to hear rumours of a planned rail line from London to Wingham. The Pettys quickly purchased most of the land on which the town of Hensall would eventually be built.

However, much of the lobbying with the railway companies was done by Blyth's Irish and tenacious first reeve, Patrick Kelly. He arrived in 1866 and eventually owned a lumber mill, a flour and grist mill, a sash and door company, along with several hundred acres of timberland. Kelly understood that Blyth and himself would profit greatly if he could attract the railway to their village.

Blyth's closest rail shipping point was 11.5 miles south at Clinton where the Grand Trunk (GTR) travelled east to west from Stratford to Goderich. What Blyth needed was its own north/south track route.

First, he approached the GTR but the company was not interested. Then Kelly headed to Hamilton to plead his case with the GWR. They were impressed with the Blyth reeve's presentation, presenting figures and showing the value of goods like flour, lumber, livestock and more, already being shipped from Huron to the Buffalo market.

The GWR began to envision

the profits to be made with an extended London to Wingham rail line. John Carling, owner of Carlings Brewery in London was also very interested in seeing the proposed route come to fruition. His brother Isaac, Exeter's first reeve and first merchant, also stood to profit greatly in the building of the line through our town.

The directors of the GWR sent the message back to Huron County through Blyth Reeve Kelly that the company was very interested, but their decision to go forward would depend on whether each municipality would subsidize the building of the line. The City of London promised \$100,000 while the province offered \$178,000, Exeter kicked in \$10,000 while Stephen and Osborne gave \$17,500 and \$25,000 respectively. Every municipality along the proposed line committed to their grants wisely and generously.

However, Lucan and Biddulph decided they would reap the benefits without contributing. They both relished the results of the project, but they already had the east to west Grand Trunk Line since 1860. Biddulph refused to pay while Lucan finally voted to pay the \$7,000 subsidy. The GWR became impatient and were enraged by the "skinflint" antics of Biddulph. The company ordered the surveyors to move the stakes two miles west of Lucan into McGillivray Township, completely bypassing both village and township, much to their everlasting regret.

The London, Huron and Bruce Railway Company was incorporated in 1871 to construct a line from London to Blyth, later deciding to extend the infrastructure to Wingham. Some five years later in the spring of 1875, construction began on the project.

The route for the tracks was surveyed, affecting hundreds of land owners for 74 miles, usually cutting farms in two. Much of the land, especially north of Clinton, was still thick bush lot, making the task more onerous and expensive. The adherents of the new railway had conducted dozens of meetings in small rural communities. There were not many objections.

Farmers, manufacturers and businessmen alike desired a swift and convenient route to London. Municipal officials re-

alized the benefits a rail service would bring to their communities and realized they would lose office if they went against the people's wishes. There were jobs for everyone along the route with general construction workers receiving \$1.25 per day while a man with a team received \$3.25 per day.

From the spring of 1875 until December of the same year, deals were signed, trees were cut, land was leveled, trestles were engineered and built and iron rails were laid. Farmers received payment for the lands either sold or expropriated. In Exeter, Isaac Carling owned most of the land west of the Main Street through which tracks would be laid and on which the station would be built. As a merchant the railway would bring his mercantile goods from urban centers, and as a tanner, Carling's hides and leather could be transported to city and on to international markets. According to the January 27, 1876, Exeter Times, Carling cashed in again by being awarded a contract for supplying 1000 cords of wood for the London, Huron and Bruce.

The Stratford Beacon recorded, "The last rail of the London, Huron and Bruce Railway was laid last Saturday, December 11, 1875 and London now has a direct line to the rich and populous country north. The line has been constructed with marvellous celerity and economy in the face of numerous obstacles and great engineering difficulties." Starting in London, the stations included Hyde Park Junction, Ettrick, Ilderton, Denfield, Lucan Crossing (2 miles west of Lucan in McGillivray Township since Biddulph would not grant a subsidy for construction), Clandeboye, Centralia, Exeter, Hensall, Kippen, Brucefield, Clinton, Londesborough, Blyth, Belgrave and Wingham.

The directors of the London, Huron and Bruce Railway decided it was time to have a party to celebrate their outstanding accomplishment. The Clinton Era newspaper of January 13 gave a full report of the festivities.

"The Grand Western Railway Authorities sent thirteen passenger cars on Monday evening, some cars were left at the Clinton station and the remainder taken to Wingham." The next morning dignitaries and businessmen from Kincardine, Lucknow,

Brussels and Wingham crowded on the southbound train, stopping at every station to admit more invited guests. At Exeter, 44 more men climbed aboard including W.H. Verity, I. Carling, T. Coates, D. Johns, T. Fitton, J. and R. Pickard, Dr. Hyndman, three Eacretts and this writer's great-great-grandfather, Samuel Sanders, a councillor in Stephen Township.

Eventually, London was reached in six hours.

John Carling and his fellow directors had planned the party well, which included tours of factories and landmarks, parades, bands, fireman's exhibition and finally a grand banquet at the city hall at 6 p.m. Apparently the Huron County contingent left their "temperance practices" at

home as they partook in over thirty toasts during the evening. MP Thomas Greenway from Centralia and MPP Archibald Bishop from Osborne Township both proposed toasts. Reeve Kelly of Blyth and John Carling both received standing ovations for the great contributions the men had made to the project.

One report stated, "The hall was getting so noisy by this time, that no one was really listening to the toasts, but still more were proposed." Those who were able to remember recall that the Railway was "well christened" during that evening of January 11, 1876.

On the following Monday, January 17, the railway was opened for passenger traffic. The line soon became known as the "Butter and Eggs Special" because of the numerous farm passengers who embarked all down the line with crates of eggs, crocks of butter and bushels of garden produce for their regular customers at Covent Farmer's Market. Other passengers were irate over late arrivals and sitting on hard seats over a rough rail bed. They mused that the LH&BR actually stood for "Let'er Hit and Bounce."

The truth of the matter was that the original wood burning locomotives travelling at 12-15 miles per hour were slow, but they were nearly supersonic compared to the stagecoaches on the rugged roads of that day. Some late arrivals were due to farmers hailing the train at their farm for a personal boarding. Brings back memories of Petticoat Junction.

# About Time and Times: An introduction



**JUDY FINKBEINER JOHNSON**

*Examiner Columnist*

It is with pure delight that I was introduced to the Exeter Examiner, a member of the Grant Haven Media family of community newspapers. Distributed throughout the community in mid-March, this local newspaper burst onto the scene like the daffodils in our flower bed at the front of the house. Appearing with the promise of spring, they send up leaves and buds bravely into our world, facing the uncertainties of climate and conditions.

Sometimes I look at these intrepid flowers-to-be as a metaphor for how the hamlets, villages, towns and rural communities move through their seasons, through centuries and decades into our present with the hope for a brilliant future. And sometimes I simply look at them with gratitude that the ever-busy squirrels investigating everything don't like to eat them!

With my first column in the Exeter Examiner, my focus is on introducing myself, the experiences and environment that shape my perspective and view of the world around me—my “roots and wings.”

**STORIES, ROOTS AND WINGS**

From childhood on, I have often been described as a storyteller, with my “head in the clouds.” Yes, it is true that I tend to see my world as a series of illustrated stories. My roots run deep in the area. As an adult when I travel the roads of my youth, with my mind's eye I have a clear view of the farms of people I knew, their homes and farm buildings, and recall the tales of their lives. In their places now are often fields of corn or soybeans, absent of any trace of them.

And yes, about my wings, also true. I am a dreamer with insatiable curiosity. There is so much to learn about and explore during my life's journey. This special part of the planet that I am so fortunate to call home is a source of endless “soul food.” It is filled with the stories of people, of places here and long forgotten, of past events that shaped the present and of present happenings that enrich our lives. There is an abundance of fertile land and variety of nature to enjoy everywhere.

## DEEPLY ROOTED

Back to roots. On my paternal line, there are now eight generations here in the area. I am in the fifth, sort of a “middle child” position. The pioneer couple in their early 20s arrived here in 1842 from the Black Forest in Germany. They ventured across an ocean neither would have seen before getting on a ship for a weeks-long voyage to the New World. They then travelled inland on roadways, then primitive roads, and eventually on paths through the forest to where they settled northwest of Crediton.

In early days, with their neighbours, they built the corduroy

roads that fronted farm lanes.

When I was a child, if the winters were harsh enough to lead to a major spring thaw, top sections of that road would give way, exposing short sections of the logs that formed the corduroy base of timber to prevent horses, wagons, and people from being mired in mud during wet conditions. Today that same road is paved.

Like the barns that my Finkbeiner farmer ancestors built when they arrived, my appearance is weathered by time and times. The view from my vantage point now has changed over the years as has theirs. The cast of individuals in earlier generations here has moved through the landscape and years with many things in common with those today. Roots and wings. Dreams and deeds. Promise and potential. And the foundation of faith—faith evidenced in the abundance of the nature surrounding them and as underscored by the brick farmhouses, timber barns and area churches that still stand proudly today, faith in the future that they built for.

## BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

The same qualities of those early pioneers are echoed in those who came to this area throughout the decades that followed and those who will come here into the future. They too are building new lives here, bringing with them their experiences and skills to create a new future for themselves and those who will follow them. This area is a celebration of many cultures, backgrounds, experiences, and skills, elements that create strong foundations for vibrant communities.

## WINGS AND WINGING IT

Here's a key thing I have learned over my decades. That like pioneer roads, life journeys do not necessarily follow a clearly defined path. My intention was to live locally always.

It took me from the years graduating from Exeter's South Huron District High School to return to the area after my father passed in 2008. My 90-year-old mother needed assistance to remain on the family farm. It was then that I made my way back here to my heart's forever home.

My parents filled their farmhouse with opportunities to learn. Before smart phones and Google that I cannot imagine a day without now, and even television, there were more chances to learn than ever were taught in school. Arriving in the mailbox was National Geographic magazine, and newspapers including the London Free Press and Exeter Times-Advocate.

Dad talked about geography and history and flying. Mom bought hardcover books at local estate sales and drove to Exeter library to borrow books to read. We learned common sense by example, how to respect nature and the farm animals raised and ways to practice regard for the stewardship of land. We learned appreciation for living in this area that my mother, raised in the dustbowl of the Great Depression in southern Manitoba, called Eden when she first visited it as a young war widow with her three-year-old son.

My wings were tested by moving where job opportunities to earn a living were located: first Kitchener, then Toronto, and a brief stint in Cobourg. Then my

path led back to Toronto, and on to spend four years in Flemish Belgium where my husband worked helping to establish a graphic arts and medical arts film factory. Our plan was to return to Toronto “for a year,” which turned out to be more than two decades, before wending our way home via London and Arva.

Along the way I told a lot of stories in print. There were travel features throughout Europe and others in the U.S., profiles of businesses and people, national wedding magazine editor work and a long career in marketing and communications work for not-for-profit organizations.

So here I am now, doing exactly what that little girl with a bowl haircut, walking on the laneway by the creek back to the family farm bush dreamed about, telling stories. Stories that began well before hydro and indoor plumbing arrived, about personalities, personal history, and places past and present. Another circle of life. I am blessed.

## NEXT COLUMNS

Up next, sharing information on a Lenten and Easter tradition in my family was making authentic soft pretzels. The legacy recipe went back to the Black Forest, using home-made lye to dip the pretzels in before baking. Part religious history in twisted rolls, part spring tonic and cleanser and totally delicious!

Then, want to journey with me back to my public/elementary school days? True stories about events that could never happen today will take us back in time to the one-room country school.

# Mentoring Matters: Spring fundraising season has begun



**AMY WILHELM**

*Examiner Columnist*

This week, I'd like to share with our community why the many events we host through the year matter so much.

You may have noticed that we are frequently organizing fundraisers—and it's fair to ask why there are so many. While we are part of a national orga-

nization, Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Huron (BBSSH) does not receive core funding from our national office. What may also come as a surprise is that only 3 per cent of our annual operating budget comes from program-specific government funding. That means the remaining 97 per cent must be raised through other means.

As a not-for-profit organization, we rely heavily on community support to deliver our mentoring programs. That's where our community makes all the difference.

Through grants, individual and corporate donations, sponsorships, third-party initiatives, service clubs, our social enterprise, The Little Shop and the many fundraisers we host, we're able to bridge that gap and continue

offering services that make a meaningful difference.

We have now entered what I like to refer to as our spring fundraising season—a particularly busy time for our organization. We recently wrapped up a very successful Bowl for Kids' Sake weekend at the Town and Country Bowling Lanes in Zurich. While the main event has concluded, we're looking forward to two upcoming corporate bowling nights scheduled for April. The momentum continues with several more events being planned, including our Spring Quarter Auction and The Little Craft Show. Not long after, we'll tee off for Golf Fore Kids' Sake. It's a full calendar filled with opportunities to share our story, connect with the community and raise the essential funds needed

to keep our doors open and our programs running.

In just a few weeks, we'll be hosting our Spring Quarter Auction on Thursday, April 9, at the South Huron Recreation Centre. While this is a long-standing event in the South Huron community, it will only be our second time hosting. If the fall event was any indication, it's sure to be a great time! Participants are invited to bring their quarters, raise their paddles and bid through three exciting auction rounds, with time to browse vendor booths during intermission. Tickets are available at The Little Shop or by contacting our office.

Our fifth annual Little Craft Show is coming up on Saturday, April 25, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the South Huron Recre-

ation Centre. With more than 60 vendors to explore and a penny sale featuring a variety of generously donated items by vendors, there's something for everyone. It's also perfectly timed for Mother's Day shopping! This event is a great way for our community to

shop local and find those perfect and unique gifts, as well as restock on some third-party favourites

We invite you to join us as a valued supporter and an important part of the Big Brothers Big Sisters community. Consider sponsoring one of our events or attending and taking part.

By supporting, you are helping to make us #BiggerTogether.

# Riddles

What has a thousand needles but can't sew?  
A porcupine.

I sometimes run but I cannot walk. What am I?  
Your nose.

When I'm ripe, I'm green. When you eat me, I'm red. What am I?  
Watermelon.

What can you break without touching it?  
A promise.

Where does today come before yesterday?  
In the dictionary.

What has many teeth but cannot bite?  
A comb.

I am an odd number. Take away a letter and I become even. What number am I?  
Seven.

What has a head and a tail but no body?  
A coin.

What tastes better than it smells?  
Your tongue.

Two fathers and two sons are sitting at the table, yet there are only three people. How is this possible?  
One grandfather, one father, and one son.

What do eggs, a safe, and a whip all have in common?  
They all crack.

# Sudoku

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

Solutions on pg. 26

# Pet of the Week 🐾 🐾 🐾

## MAKE SURE IDENTIFICATION IS UP TO DATE!

Make sure your dog or cat has a microchip for identification and wears a tag with your relevant contact information. Note that you will need to update your contact information with the microchip company if you move or your number changes. With accurate registration associated with the unique microchip number, a lost animal can be traced back to its owner as soon as they are scanned by a veterinarian, animal shelter or pound.



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## MURPHY

Make way for Murphy, the 107-pound golden retriever who runs Eidt's BMR Express with the confidence of a CEO and the charm of a professional cuddler. This oversized ball of sunshine struts into work each day ready to greet customers, collect treats, and parade around with stuffies. In short: Murphy isn't just Pet of the Week—he's Pet of the Century, and he knows it. Murphy is a family member of the Elliot's family from Seaforth.



Nominate your pet to be a Featured Pet by emailing [info@exeterexaminer.com](mailto:info@exeterexaminer.com)

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## GRAND BEND

W L N C H I F S U N B U R N V C E X H N  
D O R Z R W H R J O C O H P P C Z O I E  
J L O D A P F V B E O N U R N Q D Y T A  
O M R O R W P X N A T V I H F Z T V E Z  
D Q P G V G T H Z V T M L X K Z R G S X  
S F H K U G I E E P A N L J Z U T Z N I  
D C G D H L C R S S G P U L C N V T U G  
H P X Z L L B O U K E F G T O M P H S Y  
S P H E E T J H O M B B A V L L U M J H  
Q D M K R W W S H U T J E F H G G P R P  
I E D L A U V E T O J D S Z V B T I H K  
Y B U A B V N K H H Z N Q U R A P N A T  
J R N U D M U A G C M E K M Q S S E N I  
O I E V N U N L I A X B P M M K V R I P  
D X S X A J G K L E A D W A V E S Y R V  
Q O P S S Z P I H B K N M B U B C R A M  
Y B G Q G R H U R O N A Z K Y R P G M W  
Q Y B O N F I R E I I R Q C S T Q I T E  
G I Q M J I Q V Q T N G G B K Q G E D F  
B K A A Z T J O Z J W L W D V N I B G Z

- GRAND BEND
- BEACH
- SUNSET
- HURON
- LIGHTHOUSE
- COTTAGE
- SANDBAR
- WAVES
- PINERY
- MARINA
- DUNES
- LAKESHORE
- SUNBURN
- SEAGULL
- BONFIRE

\*We noticed "Grand Bend" was missing in our last word search, so it felt fitting to make it the focus this time\*

# COMING EVENTS



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**GRAND BEND, ON**

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## MARCH

### Grand Bend Area Community Health Centre

#### Programs and Partnerships

Lambton Heritage Museum. Free Indoor Walking program. Please bring your indoor running shoes. Coffee time follows. For more info contact [cmaxfield@gbchc.com](mailto:cmaxfield@gbchc.com) GBACHC

Boardroom . Every Tuesday and Thursday Please contact Mary at 647-295-8292 or email [mpnorris58@gmail.com](mailto:mpnorris58@gmail.com) to book an appointment. Grand Bend Area CHC , 69 Main St East .

Support group program with trained facilitator Randy Chapman. 1-800-561-5012. Adult Day wing at GBACHC.

, Good Neighbours of Bluewater 28 Goshen St N Zurich. Everyone welcome.

Are you looking after a loved one and need some support? Contact Kate Mason 519-238-2362 x 241 for more information and to register. Grand Bend Area CHC

Hensall Arena. Contact Grace at [gbonnett@gbchc.com](mailto:gbonnett@gbchc.com) Fun social walking program with

coffee and chatting to finish every Wednesday 529-238-2362 x 202

Meet at the Lambton Heritage Museum parking lot 9:00 am Email Lindsey [lindseyashworthducharme@gmail.com](mailto:lindseyashworthducharme@gmail.com)

. Free program for adults with children birth to 6 years. Adult Day Wing, GBACHC , 69 Main St East Grand Bend Contact [earlyon-childcare.ca](mailto:earlyon-childcare.ca) or 519-786-6161 x 9226.

GBACHC . Open to anyone in the community who needs medical attention ( Not an Urgent Care or Emergency Centre) 69 Main St East.

#### March Break at the Library

##### EXETER LIBRARY BRANCH

#### March 25th Easter Basket Program BBBS

We're excited to launch our Easter Basket Program! We're collecting donations of Chocolate, Outdoor activity items, Hygiene products, Craft kits and Supplies, Socks and Gift cards. Drop off your donations at the Little Shop in Exeter to help fill baskets of joy!

Any questions reach out to Meghan at [meghan.hartman@bigbrothersbigsisisters.ca](mailto:meghan.hartman@bigbrothersbigsisisters.ca)

Sun., March 29 - 1 p.m.

**Eggseter Easter Hunt** - Hosted by the South Huron Optimist Club. Morrison Dam Conservation Area, Exeter (Behind the ABCA building). Cost: \$2 per child. \* Open to all children 12 years old and under \* Must be accompanied by an adult \* All children must be Pre-Registered and Pre-paid at the Exeter Library \* Limited to 300 children - register early to avoid disappointment. Draw for three Bikes - must be present to win.

## APRIL

#### April 3 and 4: The Upper Room Easter Production

showing on Good Friday, April 3 at 10am and April 4 at 6pm at Centralia Faith Tabernacle. Visit [centraliafaith.com](http://centraliafaith.com) to book your free seat.

Thurs., April 9th -

#### SPRING QUARTER AUCTION

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Huron.

Doors Open at 6:00pm. Auction Begins at 7:00pm.

TICKETS \$5, EXTRA PADDLES \$2 EACH.

South Huron Rec Centre. 94 Victoria St East - Exeter.

Tickets available at: The Little Shop!

Contact Angie To Order Yours Today!

[Angie.steckle@Bigbrothersbigsisisters.ca](mailto:Angie.steckle@Bigbrothersbigsisisters.ca)



## Ironwood Golf Club

# Easter Breakfast Buffet

**Sunday April 5th • 9-10am & 12 noon**

Menu Includes

- Scrambled Eggs, Pancakes, Sausage, Bacon,
- Cheesy Potatoes, Toast, Fruit
- Assorted Sweets
- Coffee station & Juice

**Adults \$19.95 plus tax • Children (3-9) \$9.95 plus tax**

\*Easter treats for Children\*

Call for reservations • 519-235-1521 or

Email • [Admin.ironwood@golfnorth.ca](mailto:Admin.ironwood@golfnorth.ca)

Space is limited

# Exeter Examiner

**SCAN TO READ THE ONLINE PAPER**

[www.granthaven.com](http://www.granthaven.com)





## TRIVITT Memorial Church

# Holy Week

<b>29</b> MARCH	<b>PALM SUNDAY</b> 10:30 AM
<b>2</b> APRIL	<b>MAUNDY THURSDAY</b> 7 PM
<b>3</b> APRIL	<b>GOOD FRIDAY</b> 11:00 AM
<b>5</b> APRIL	<b>EASTER SUNDAY</b> 10:30 AM (with Brass)

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## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Pulp Fiction
2. Jimi Hendrix
3. The Lighthouse of Alexandria (Pharos)
4. Andromeda Galaxy
5. Amnon
6. Finland
7. Five
8. Both
9. Open sesame
10. Andy

## AUCTIONEER

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 Mobile: (226)-268-4492  
 79 Victoria St. W. Exeter, ON

## SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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# CLASSIFIED

## EXETER

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Short walk to 3 schools & downtown.

**ABSOLUTELY NO PETS OR SMOKING ON ENTIRE PROPERTY!** 1 parking space with guest parking available. 1 year Lease with full 1st & last month in advance. Require 3 strong references (previous Landlord's preferred; NO family or friends)

2 VERY nice 1 bdrm, all inclusive units available.

Must be seen to appreciate! Great for Seniors!

#1 @ \$1,900/month, all inclusive. Available April 1, 2026.

#2 @ \$2,000/month, all inclusive. Available April 15, 2026.

**Call: 519-235-4543**  
& ask for Mark or Leave a Message.

## OBITUARY

### Ross



Please note: Date of Celebration is Saturday, May 16, 2026.

Unexpectedly, as the result of a motor vehicle accident, on Saturday, February 7, 2026, Laura Natsuko (Nakamura) Ross, of Exeter, age 38, leaving behind a legacy of love, laughter, and devotion to her family. Born on August 24, 1987, in Goderich, she was the dearly loved wife of Rob Ross. Proud and adoring mother of Colin and Ethan Ross. Forever loved daughter of the late Brian Nakamura (2013)

and Linda (Haugh) Nakamura of Seaforth. Loved sister of Jason and Sarah Nakamura and their daughters Mya and Carmen of Kitchener and sister-in-law of Scott Ross of London. Lovingly remembered by her father-in-law and mother-in-law Jim and Mary Ann Ross of London. Fondly remembered by her aunts, uncles, cousins and many friends. Predeceased by her grandparents Ross and Irene Haugh, Tomiye and Yujiro Nakamura.

At the request of the family, cremation has taken place and interment in the family plot in CREDITON Cemetery at a later date. An Open House Celebration of Laura's Life, with refreshments, at the Crediton Community Centre, 38 Victoria Avenue East, Crediton, on Saturday, May 16, 2026, from 1 to 4 p.m. T. Harry Hoffman & Sons Funeral Home, Dashwood, entrusted with the arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Cornerstone Montessori School in Clinton or Egmondville United Church.

Go Raptors Go! and Let's Go Blue Jays!



**Active Living through Social, Cultural, Learning and Recreational Program**  
**FB @WestCoastActiveLiving • Email wcal@hay.net**

## BINGO NIGHT

Join us for an evening of fun, excitement, and fantastic prizes at our monthly Bingo Night

**THURSDAY APRIL 16**  
**THURSDAY MAY 21**  
**THURSDAY JUNE 18**

DOORS OPEN 6 PM  
BINGO START 7 PM

**SOUTH HURON REC CENTRE**  
WCAL@HAY.NET

## Dining

WEST COAST

### April Dining Tickets ON SALE NOW!

**DATE:** April 8th, 2026  
**TIME:** 12:30pm Mealtime  
**COST:** \$20 per ticket (adult) \$10 (child)  
**LOCATION:** South Huron Rec Centre  
**MENU:** Ham, Scallop Potato, Veg and Dessert  
Please call or text Pat 519.440.8838 for tickets!

## 50/50 RAFFLE FUNDRAISER

**Draw will take place April 3, 2026**  
Every ticket purchased helps us continue (and grow!) these amazing programs in our community.

**Because of our community, we're able to offer:** Bingo Nights, Euchre Nights, Seniors Fitness Programs, Dining Programs, E-Waste Programs, Tai Chi, Wellness Fairs, Family Day Events, Youth Grub Clubs.  
**AND THAT'S JUST THE BEGINNING.** Now imagine how much more we could offer with your support.

**SCAN QR CODE TO PURCHASE TICKETS**

## White Squirrel Watch

**PHOTO BY GERRY ROEDE**  
SPOTTED ON OAK STREET IN GRAND BEND.

Nominate your White Squirrel sightings by emailing [info@exeterexaminer.com](mailto:info@exeterexaminer.com)

## Overheard At McCafe

Brought to you by McDonald's

Grand Bend, 75 Main Street East • 519-238-6991 Exeter, 261 Main Street North • 519-235-4227

**"Winter bod is out, spring rolls are in!"**

**"Council's been going in circles about this roundabout for years. Maybe that's practice?"**

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



# The Hub

March 25, 2026

## South Huron Recreation Programs

Programs may require pre-registration, contact [communityservices@southhuron.ca](mailto:communityservices@southhuron.ca) or see the Community Calendar at [SouthHuron.ca](http://SouthHuron.ca) for full information.

- Coffee, Cards & Checkmate—Dashwood Community Centre and South Huron Rec Centre
- Shuffleboard—Dashwood Community Centre
- Easter Centrepiece Workshop—South Huron Rec Centre
- Adult Dodgeball—South Huron Rec Centre
- Dashwood Easter Egg Hunt—Dashwood Community Centre
- Youth Badminton—South Huron District High School

## South Huron Votes 2026 – update your calendars with important dates

- Candidate nomination period – May 1 to August 21 (2pm)
- Update school support with MPAC ([mpac.ca/schoolsupport](http://mpac.ca/schoolsupport)) by June 1. Following this date, contact the Municipal Office to update school support
- Check that you're on the voters list - confirm, update or add information to the Register with Elections Ontario ([registertovoteon.ca](http://registertovoteon.ca)) by August 12
- Revision period of the voters list – September 1 to October 26, 2026, reach out to the Municipal Office directly to confirm/add or update information on the voters list
- Voter Information Letters cards are mailed out end of September/early October
- Voting Period: 9:00 am on October 13 to 8:00 pm on October 26, 2026

For more information regarding the 2026 Municipal & School Board Election, check out the Municipal Election page on [southhuron.ca](http://southhuron.ca), contact the Clerk at [vote@southhuron.ca](mailto:vote@southhuron.ca), or drop into the Clerk's Department at town hall (322 Main Street South, Exeter).

## Reduced Load Limits in Effect

The reduced load limit period in the Municipality of South Huron typically runs from March 1 to April 30 of any given year, depending on weather and road conditions. Roads are most vulnerable to heavy vehicle damage in the early spring when frost is leaving the ground and load restrictions help to minimize the damage.

With the exception of Main Street, Exeter from the North limit of the Connecting Link (Walper Street) and the South limit of the Connecting Link (Huron Motor Products), all roads in South Huron are subject to restrictions during the reduced load limit period.

Questions or concerns? Please contact our Transportation Services Department.

## Holiday Hours—Closed for Good Friday and Easter Monday

The municipal office and landfill site will be closed Friday, April 3rd and Monday, April 6th. The landfill site will be open Saturday 9am—4pm. There is no disruption to garbage and recycling collection on Friday, April 3rd.

**For urgent municipal matters outside regular business hours please call 519-235-0310 x7**

**MUNICIPALITY OF SOUTH HURON**  
 322 Main Street South, PO Box 759, Exeter, ON N0M 1S6  
 PHONE: 519-235-0310 • FAX: 519-235-3304 • TOLL FREE: 1-877-204-0747  
 WEBSITE: [www.southhuron.ca](http://www.southhuron.ca)

**Building Services ext. 6**  
**Community Services ext. 222**  
**Transportation, Roads ext. 230**  
**Water & Wastewater, Landfill ext. 230**  
**Afterhours ext. 7**

## Important Dates

**Monday, March 7th**  
 Committee of Adjustment  
 5:00 PM (EST)\*

**Monday, March 7th**  
 Regular Council Meeting  
 6:00 PM (EST)\*

**Tuesday, March 20th**  
 Regular Council Meeting  
 6:00 PM (EST)\*

*\*South Huron Council meetings are open for in-person attendance and continue to be livestreamed. See our website **Agendas, Minutes & Meetings** page or the South Huron Youtube channel at meeting time to access the livestream video link. A recording of the meeting will be available on the municipal Youtube Channel following the meeting.*

## Join our Team

Building and Planning Department is seeking to fill the role of Planning Coordinator for a one-year, full-time contract for the purpose of covering a parental leave. Under the direction of the Director of Building and Planning/Chief Building Official, the Planning Coordinator administers, tracks and coordinates the technical review of applications pertaining to planning, land use & development.

See our Careers & Volunteer Opportunities page at [southhuron.ca](http://southhuron.ca) for details.

## Exeter Cemetery Flowerbeds

In keeping with the provisions of the Cemetery Bylaw, flowerbeds may only be planted by municipal staff. Please note the deadline to purchase a new flowerbed or renew your current flowerbed contract is May 1, 2026.

Please contact the Clerk's Department at 519.235.0310 x232 or [cemetery@southhuron.ca](mailto:cemetery@southhuron.ca) if you require assistance.

Our information is accessible! Contact us if you require alternative formats.