

Tillsonburg POST

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**JANUARY
CLEARANCE DEALS**

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Summer Homick, ice dance partner Nicholas Buelow qualify for ISU Junior Worlds

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

As Summer Homick looked ahead to the ice dance competition at the 2026 ISU Junior Figure Skating Championships in Tallinn, Estonia, she looked back on the humblest of beginnings in the Langton Arena.

For her first carnival, a three-year-old Homick was dressed as Belle from Beauty and the Beast, wearing both a yellow dress and hockey headgear.

"I don't think it was safe enough to be on the ice without a helmet," she laughed. "I don't know if that little girl could see where I am now if she'd even believe it."

"It kind of feels surreal."

Homick and partner Nicholas Buelow effectively qualified for world juniors with a personal best 157.78-point silver medal performance at Canadian championships, completed Wednesday, Jan. 7 at Centre Slush Puppie in Gatineau, Quebec.

"It's pretty position-based at nationals," said Buelow, pleased with subsequent confirmation they will be joining gold medallists Layla Veillon and Alexander Brandys in Estonia, earning the second of two berths. Charlie Anderson and Cayden Dawson finished with bronze medals and a score of 146.31.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 12



SHRINER EVENT A SUCCESS

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Volunteer Cathy Palmer was serving fish at the Tillsonburg Shrine Club's annual fish fry and elimination draw on Jan. 16. The event raised more than \$25,000, with 227 people enjoying a feed of fish. The elimination draw was sold out, and Terry Willaert was the winner of the \$20,000 prize. Proceeds from the event will be put towards the new Shriners Rare Bone Disease Clinic at London Health Sciences Centre.



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Salvation Army campaign assisted 968 people

ROBIN KRAFFT

Post Correspondent

Generous donations of time and resources in Tillsonburg and surrounding communities contributed to ongoing efforts to support those in need, and enabled the Tillsonburg Salvation Army to provide Christmas cheer to numerous families.

"The Salvation Army would like to express our sincere gratitude for the kind and generous support of the residents of Tillsonburg and surrounding area," Major Denise Walker said. "It's amazing to witness the coming together of neighbours and friends, churches, community organizations and clubs, along with local businesses, to bring the joy of the Christmas season to everyone."

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including 242 families in need.

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Christmas food hampers, toys, and gifts were provided to 968 adults and children, including 242 families in need. The 2025 fundraising campaign generated \$174,999.

Kettle donations at the seven locations in Tillsonburg raised \$65,260 with four additional kettles and events in Port Rowan and Long Point totalling \$5,779. General donations and online contributions are also reflected in the grand total.

"Where do we begin to say thank you" Walker said. "To the volunteers who manned our kettles, sorted food and toys, and helped with distribution – thank you. To the churches, local businesses and service clubs who contributed to the food hampers – thank you. To those who hosted Angel Tree Tags and collected toys – thank you. To everyone who adopted families and seniors and donated toys and winter coats and boots – thank you. To those who helped us spread the word and keep the community informed – thank you. To everyone who cheered us on with their donations at the kettles – thank you."

Funds raised go back into the community, through a myriad of services offered by the Tillsonburg Salvation Army Community and Family Services, which include: assistance and referral to community programs and services, one-time assistance for Tillsonburg hydro arrears, assistance with essential clothing, backpack and school supplies and spiritual and pastoral services for those who are interested.

Many of these services are provided at The Hub, a drop-in center that also offers daily meals and snacks, which is located at the Salvation Army Tillsonburg Community Church at 110 Concession St. W. The hours of operation for The Hub are Monday-Thursday 9:15 a.m. – 12 p.m. / 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. and on Fridays 9:15 a.m. – 12 p.m.. Walker reminds the public that individuals can also connect with Community and Family Services at 519-842-3231 ext. 104.

Two facing multiple charges after arrest in Tillsonburg

Two individuals have been charged following a drug trafficking investigation led by the Haldimand/Norfolk Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Community Street Crime Unit (CSCU). One of the accused is also facing several additional charges related to a firearm-related incident on Kent Street North in Simcoe.

On Friday, Jan. 16, 2026, at approximately 10 p.m., members of the OPP Repeat Offender Parole Enforcement (ROPE) Squad arrested two individuals at a Baldwin Street location in Tillsonburg, in connection with a Norfolk County drug trafficking investigation led by the Haldimand/Norfolk OPP CSCU. One of the individuals was also wanted on an outstanding warrant after being identified as a suspect in an incident involving a firearm at a residence on Kent Street North on Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026.

During a search of the individuals, officers seized suspected fentanyl and methamphetamine, along with Canadian currency and a loaded firearm.

As a result, 25-year-old Jahvon LaSalle of Brantford, has been charged with the following alleged offences:

- Forcible confinement - three counts,
- Robbery using firearm (restricted or prohibited) - two counts,
- Unauthorized possession of a firearm - two counts,
- Possession of weapon for dangerous purpose - two counts,
- Possession of firearm contrary to prohibition order - two counts,
- Fail to comply with Probation Order

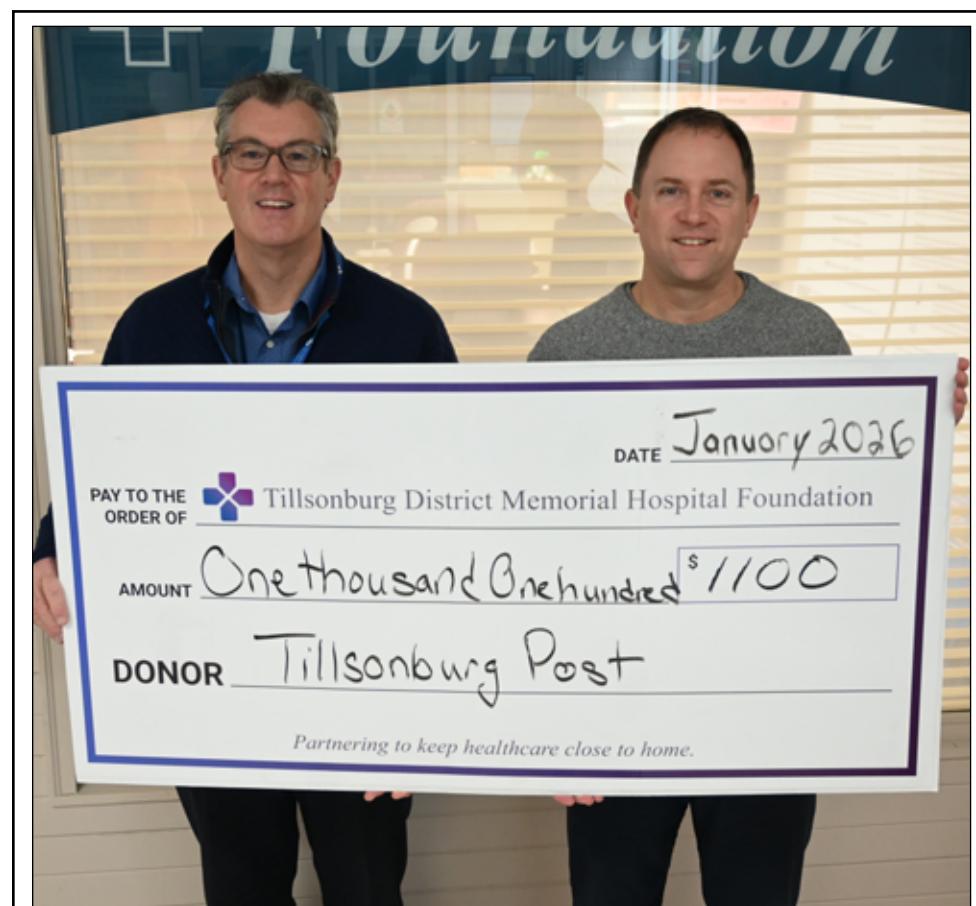
- two counts,
- Disobeying order of court - two counts,
- Failure to comply with release order - other than to attend court,
- Pointing a firearm,
- Possession of a Schedule I substance for the purpose of trafficking - opioid (other than heroin),
- Possession of a Schedule I substance for the purpose of trafficking - methamphetamine,
- Operation while prohibited under the Criminal Code,
- Possession of proceeds of property obtained by crime under \$5,000 - in Canada.

Also charged is 21-year-old Kairos Liddiard-Coull, of no fixed address, with the following alleged offences:

- Unauthorized possession of a firearm,
- Possession of weapon for dangerous purpose,
- Possession of a Schedule I substance for the purpose of trafficking - opioid (other than heroin),
- Possession of a Schedule I substance for the purpose of trafficking - methamphetamine,
- Fail to comply with Probation Order,
- Possession of proceeds of property obtained by crime under \$5,000 - in Canada.

The accused remain in custody and are scheduled to attend a bail hearing at the Ontario Court of Justice in Simcoe on Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2026.

*Have something to say?
Submit your Letter to the Editor here:
info@tillsonburgpost.com*



GIVING BACK

Gerry Dearing, left, executive director of the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital Foundation, accepts a cheque for \$1,100 from Stewart Grant, publisher of the Tillsonburg Post. The amount represents a portion of the Christmas greeting sales that Grant Haven Media allocates to share with the community.

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

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www.tillsonburgpost.com*

EDITORIAL

The dangers of social media and the need to be informed

Looking at many of the comments on social media about the announcement about the renovations to Tillsonburg's Customer Service Centre to turn it into a town hall, you would think our taxes would be skyrocketing.

That is not the case.

The renovations will actually be completed without an increase to taxes – zero – yes please let that sink in - zero. That is a feat for which municipal staff and council should be congratulated for.

The interesting thing is the story about the increase said this, simply and plainly, in the third paragraph. The headline from where the story carried inside also said there wouldn't be a tax increase.

It's not that there isn't a cost for the renovations, but that careful financial planning paid off. When town staff moved out of the mall and into temporary buildings on Brock Street that cost less, the amount of the rent in our taxes stayed the same. There was a savings between the former rent and the temporary rent, which was banked. This banked amount, combined with money from land sales, formed the down payment for the renovations. The monthly payments on the remainder are covered by the constant amount kept in our taxes to cover the

rent, meaning there is no tax increase.

These comments show a dangerous trend in today's society where people are forming their beliefs based on headlines, or not reading the entire story. In this case, three paragraphs is not too far to read, and shows how bad the issue really is.

So why is this dangerous?

Later this year we will all vote in the new council that will oversee Tillsonburg from 2026 to 2030. Judge current council members on their record, not knee-jerk social media posts from people who may not have all the facts, or be presenting them accurately. In this world of AI posts, we don't know all the posts are even from a real person.

The town hall has been a big issue, but there have been many others, and voters should know what a councillor stands for before going to the ballot box. There is no shortage of information on what occurs at Tillsonburg council meetings, and 10 minutes of reading can make a voter much more knowledgeable about what is really going on. Both newspapers in town are free, provide neutral reporting and readily available.

Admittedly, the situation with the federal government and social media companies lim-



(SUE DROTOS PHOTO)

iting news doesn't help the situation.

Other people commented we needed a homeless shelter more than a town hall. Readers of this publication will know it has been reported numerous times that addressing homeless is an Oxford County responsibility, not one of the town. Yet, the town funds clean-up of refuse downtown through the BIA. And, there are empty shelter beds in Tillsonburg, but while a solution is needed, that is a more complex issue.

Social media has made it easy for people to

react quickly without knowing all the facts. Some even believe people making these quick posts has degraded how people interact with each other in society. There is no doubt that people aren't as kind as they used to be, but no one seems to have a handle on the exact cause.

It has been said many times it is a Canadian resident's civic responsibility to vote. Seeing the situation in many countries around the world, we should embrace the right to vote and cast educated votes. Being informed is also a civic responsibility.

The ups and downs of Timmy The Terrible, a class pet



WRITER'S
CORNER

NORMA COLLIS

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

I once shared a large double Kindergarten classroom with another teacher, also named Norma.

This caused great confusion and even some merriment. Our principal would walk into the classroom and say "Oh, Norma" he would then get a stereo "Yes" from opposite ends of the large room.

The other Norma had taught in the classroom before I arrived at the school and the room came equipped with a classroom guinea pig who went by the name of Timmy. Master Tim was an escape artist. It soon became obvious that while our students were finger painting or having story time, Tim was planning yet another escape.

"He's gone again" one of our little charges would announce.

This was the starting signal for a major sized game of hide and go seek. Sixty pairs of little feet would thunder around the room as each activity center was thoroughly searched.

"Not in the block center" would be announced.

"Not at the paint center"

"Not at the water play table"

"Not at the sand table"

"Well, he's been in the optional nap center because he has left his raisins on one of the pillows" and so it went.

Timmy became known as "Timmy the Terrible". He provided some good material for class chart paper stories and some impressive student created paintings. It was not unusual for Tim to disappear for several days at a time. We would place food in his cage, and leave the door of the cage open, hoping to entice him back to his home. He dined fashionably late and we would return to the classroom the next day, to find the food gone and no Tim.

At one point, he was missing for so long that parents began calling the front office to report that their child was having trouble sleeping because they were so worried about Timmy. Our principal stormed into our classroom as we were getting ready for the arrival of students. "Norma and Norma Jean," he announced, "Find that @@@@ guinea pig now."

Timmy must have heard and he took pity on us. During play time, he allowed one of our little girls to capture him. This little girl came from a home where both parents were deaf. She didn't speak, she yelled. We had been patiently working with her to help her to understand that it wasn't necessary for her to yell at her teachers and fellow classmates as we could all hear quite well. In her excite-

ment, she bellowed about her successful trapping abilities. We did not need to alert the principal as he heard the announcement all the way down a long hallway and right through his closed door of his office.

Every school holiday, one of our students, with parental permission, would take Timmy home for the school break time. One March Break, one of our more "troubled" students desperately wanted to have Timmy

at home with him. Some of the other students were very concerned about Timmy's survival chances if he was allowed to go home with a boy who was known for his sometimes "threatening" behaviour.

After a serious discussion with the "other Norma" we decided that it was important to show trust and to allow the student in question to take on this responsibility. When Timmy returned to school after the holiday, he was dragging both of his hind legs. His little care giver was as concerned as the other students.

"We told you not to let him take Timmy home," we were told repeatedly.

I gently placed Timmy into a lined shoe box and off we went to the local vet. I took my place in the waiting room along with other pet owners holding their pedigree dogs and show-worthy cats. They looked at me and my shoebox with great curiosity until one woman demanded, "Is it a kitten you have in there?"

I had to fess up that it was the kindergarten guinea pig and that he was adored by 120 small children. Everyone was most

concerned and wished me well as I was ushered into the examining room. The vet explained that Guinea pigs are part of the rodent family and that often paralysis in the lower extremities work their way up the spine until the little creature dies.

I explained that we couldn't let that happen as my student caregiver was already being ostracised by his classmates. Timmy was given a small margin of hope for his survival, and I was sent home with some meds and an aging Guinea pig in a shoe box.

My husband helped me to nurse Timmy for several days. Little by little the paralysis receded and Timmy, somewhat subdued, recovered. It was a miracle!

It was decided that Timmy should enjoy a well-deserved retirement for his remaining days. After showing our little charges, that Timmy was still with us, one of the Kindergarten moms agreed to take him home and to keep him there.

"We already have a guinea pig, so he will have company," she told us.

About a month later, the same Mom dropped in to see us after class one day.

"It's about your Timmy the Terrible," she announced. "Not only is he still with us, he has obviously gotten his second wind because our female Guinea is now pregnant!"

All we could say in reply was, "Way to go Timmy...long may you remain Tim the Terrible."

Norma Collis is a Tillsonburg author of several books, including "Tales from Holly Cottage".

Charles Dickens second tour cut short by failing health



**THE
STAGE
IS THE
WORLD**

LAUREL A. BEECHEY

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Home from his U.S. trip, Charles Dickens published his American Notes, Travelog. He was being honest about what he experienced, including his opinions of the American people.

In general, he felt the “American ideal of liberty seems to include the freedom to commit violence on any other American.” He also wrote, “The scandal seeking press contributed by undermining private life and destroying confidence in public life.”

Allied to this is the overriding commercialism, with the urge to pull off a smart deal and the idolisation of successful businessmen. Several scholars today note that Dickens found Americans were lacking in humour, and he noted their public health at the time was primitive. He was also disgusted by their habit of spitting in public.

Catherine Hogarth had married Charles in 1836. She bore him 10 children, cared for the household and a famous husband. Many websites noted that he became disenchanted with his wife, and her lack of energy having to support to many children! Catherine’s sister Georgina came to the rescue and moved in to help.

Charles also dabbled in theatre, and it was there that he met a vivacious 18-year-old Ellen Ternan in 1857, and he and Catherine took separate bedrooms. Early in 1858, Charles purchased and engraved a bracelet for Ellen. Alas, it was erroneously delivered to Catherine, and they divorced in June. Catherine received a house. Charlie, their eldest son, went with her. Charles had custody of the

other nine. He worked now to support two households.

In the early 1860s, Charles proposed to return to the U.S. since the Civil War was over. He was advised not to take his mistress with him for fear of ruining his reputation and that of his American publisher Field, Osgood & Co. in Boston. The 55-year-old Charles arrived in Boston Nov. 19, 1867. While there he had Thanksgiving dinner with his friend Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and family. Henry’s daughter Edith noted that “Thanksgiving Day we had a rare treat, and Mr. Dickens came out to dinner!!!”

Times had change in the last two decades, and Charles popularity required the publishing company to employ guards to protect him from his adoring and devious fans imposing or fighting over him! They managed to pluck pieces of his clothing.

Twelve-year-old Kate Wiggin, met Charles traveling on a train, telling him she had read all his books, but occasionally skipped the dull parts. They chatted, and in 1903 Kate was the author of Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm and in 1912 she published A Child’s Journey with Dickens.

Charles was contacted by Dr. Howe of the Perkins’ School for the Blind for permission to print The Old Curiosity Shop in braille. Charles enthusiastically agreed, and paid \$1,700 to have 250 copies of the book printed in braille and distributed to all the blind schools.

Charles gave his all to this tour, managing 17 stops and performing 471, two-hour readings from which he pros-

pered as did the ticket scalpers, especially in New York at the magnificent Steinway Hall.

His health seemed to be failing and unlike his first tour where he played the celebrity, he now was exhausted, had flu-like symptoms, insomnia, and an inflammation of his foot, causing him to use a cane. Charles decided to end his tour, cancelling Chicago, the western states and Canada.

His last performance in Boston reaped persistent applause. Charles departed on April 23rd, 1868, barely escaping a federal tax lien against his earnings on the tour.

Back with Ellen and surrounding family he began his Farewell Tour in England and Scotland, scheduled for 100 performances. He had several fits of paralysis in April 1869. He began writing The Mystery of Edwin Drood which was never finished.

Charles Dickens died a worn-out man of 58, on June 9, 1870. He wished to be buried, quietly in a small cemetery in Rochester, Kent, but the people objected. Charles Dickens was laid in Poet’s Corner, Westminster Abbey, Flowers from thousands of mourners overflowed the open grave. Among the more beautiful bouquets were many simple clusters of wildflowers, wrapped in rags.

From being a twelve-year-old indentured, workhouse boy, Charles championed the poor, the homeless, the suffering, marginalized and the oppressed. Each book mirrored his times, yet also ours.

Not a reader? Get the movie!



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

HICKORY HILLS HELPS

Hickory Hills residents held a food drive recently to assist those in need. The group far exceeded their goal of collecting 300 items by finishing with more than 1,100 items donated. Food bank representative Ted Novakowski accepted the donation and made a presentation on the workings of the food bank and the present needs.

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What's going on with Great Lakes water levels?



SOUTH-WESTERN ONTARIO OUTDOORS

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

What happened to all the water?

That's the big question from anyone who spends much time on the Great Lakes, including boaters, anglers, waterfowl hunters, and kayakers. In short, the Great Lakes have fallen dramatically from record high levels only six years ago.

Lake levels are a combination of local precipitation and water coming from other lakes. In the case of Lake Erie, this means water feeds it from Lakes Superior, Huron, and Michigan. Looking in more detail, Erie's water levels are determined 21 per cent by local precipitation and runoff, and 79 per cent from water fed from the upper lakes. Moving to Lake Ontario, these numbers slide to 15 per cent and 85 per cent, respectively. This means the levels of the lower lakes are influenced by those of the upper lakes.

Frank Seglenieks, a water resources engineer with the National Hydrological Service, reported all five of the Great Lakes are below average when he was interviewed in November. He noted that the upper lakes, Superior and Huron-Michigan, are much lower than Lakes Erie and Ontario. Seglenieks explained that a drought encompassing the American Midwest was hitting the western Great Lakes.

The current levels are the lowest since 2013, and are nothing out of the ordinary.

"When you look back at the history, going back 100 years, it's been lower," he said. "It's not like they are historically low or anything."

Since Seglenieks said that, lake levels continued to decline in December. Predictions, based on ranges that cover extremely wet and extremely dry years, show Lake Huron staying below average across all scenarios. With Lake Erie, extremely wet conditions could raise the lake slightly above the long-term average, but most scenarios for the next few months keep Erie below average.

At Long Point, the lower water is clearly visible. Water levels on the sea walls in the marinas tell a tale of where the water is and has been, and are three feet below the high-water marks from a few years ago. At the Long Point Waterfowl Unit, staff told hunters they would need a mud motor to access many blinds due to low water.

Angie Woodward of Marina Shores said she has never seen the levels this low. This is something marina owners need to keep an eye on as erosion increases when the water levels are low and closer to the bottom of the sea wall.

Although the numbers show the level was lower in the last 20 years, Woodward said that could have happened for a short time, but not for such a long period.

Glen Rohrer of Tillsonburg, who owns Coletta Bay Guides and has hunted Long Point Bay since 1989, also hasn't seen levels this low. He hunts several different places on Long Point Bay and said he couldn't reach two or three of his spots this fall.

"Back in the mid to early 1990s, the water was low, but not as low as it is right now," he said, saying his log showed the low water in the 1990s lasted a couple of years.

Seglenieks said siltation or wind could be impacting shallow bays such as Long Point, beyond the broader lake levels.

With water levels dropping quickly through the fall in many years, many swear there is some control over Lake Erie's water levels, but this is not the case.

"There is no control of the majority of the flow out of Lake Erie, most of it goes over Niagara Falls," Seglenieks said, adding the Welland Canal is emptied each year after Jan. 1 for maintenance. "This has a negligible impact on the water levels of Lake Erie. There is also some flow of the Niagara River that is diverted to be used in hydroelectric plants, but this water is released back to the river a few hours later. So, the overall daily outflow from Lake Erie is not affected by this diversion."

Having written stories about water levels for more than two decades, I can recall the days of lower water levels as well. In the last low-water spell, Lake Erie fared better, and Lake Huron-Michigan (the lakes have the same level as they are joined in the Straits of Mackinac) was the lowest. Looking back in my files, I wrote this in 2015, "Levels in Lake Huron and Michigan have been below average since December 1998. The level was low enough that docks were left high and dry, wetlands dried up, and cottagers were clamoring for an investigation into what caused the levels to dive. The lowest point was in January 2013, when the level was 73 centimeters below average."

I also recall cottager's associations on Lake Huron were calling for measures to slow the water in the St. Clair River, with the hope it would bring the water levels back up. That changed less than five years later as record highs were seen.

What the near future holds is uncertain, but water levels will rise as part of an endless cycle.

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Town council against CA amalgamation proposal

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Tillsonburg council added its name to the list of municipalities asking the province to reconsider a proposal to amalgamate its conservation authorities.

The Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks is proposing to amalgamate the province's 36 conservation authorities into seven, citing the need for consistent regulations and to expedite planning approvals. The proposal would see the Long Point Region Conservation Authority amalgamated with other authorities that stretch from Lake St. Clair, to Windsor, along the Lake Erie shoreline almost to the Niagara River and north to Waterloo.

The motion, which was passed at the Jan. 12 meeting, states Tillsonburg "does not support the proposed consolidation boundaries presented in ERO #025-1257 without evidence-based analysis, transparent consultation, and clear articulation of impacts to municipal budgets, local service delivery, and donor lands." It also encouraged the province to work with municipalities and conservation authorities "to identify opportunities for improved consistency, modernization, and shared-ser-

vice approaches within the existing watershed governance framework."

Deputy Mayor Dave Beres, who presented the motion and was chair of LPRCA until his term ended at the recent annual meeting, said, "Thirty-six conservation authorities shrinking down to seven isn't in best interest of the people and municipalities in the watershed."

He provided the example that LPRCA's primary focus has to do with the watersheds associated with Lake Erie.

"Our area would include Lake St. Clair, which really, we have nothing to do with the watershed of Lake St. Clair," he said.

He expanded on the local situation, talking about LPRCA's woodlots, which includes land and cash donations.

"What's going to happen to those," Beres asked. "People have given them in good faith and philanthropists have given a lot."

He also pointed to LPRCA's endowment fund.

"What's going to happen to that money," he questioned. "If it goes to a bigger agency, are they going to build a park in Waterloo?"

Mayor Deb Gilvesy agreed this was an important issue, and she supported the motion at the county.

"Bigger is not always better," she said.

Tillsonburg updates its physician recruitment model

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Tillsonburg council approved modifications to its Shared Physician Recruitment Model to better attract health professionals to the town.

A report from CAO Kyle Pratt at the Jan. 12 meeting outlined the changes, which were suggested to address the ongoing shortage of health-care professionals in Tillsonburg.

Whereas the prior model only had categories for a family physician operating in a practice in Tillsonburg, for a physician with clinic space at Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital (TDMH), and a physician working both in private practice and the hospital, the new model added a fourth category for a nurse practitioner. Nurse practitioners can receive a \$5,000 incentive in exchange for agreeing to work for three years in town.

Financial compensation for physicians

was also adjusted in the new model, with \$30,000 provided for a family physician, \$55,000 for a doctor working in the hospital, and \$65,000 for a doctor working both at the hospital and at a clinic. In addition, another \$5,000 will be provided in each doctor category if the person is moving from outside the province.

Funding for the incentives is from the town coffers for nurse practitioners and family physicians, and is split between the town and TDMH for doctors working in the hospital. There is currently \$70,000 in the 2026 budget to fund these incentives.

Another change is the criteria for where the health care professional lives. Previously, the person receiving the incentive needed to live within 15 km of Tillsonburg. This was expanded to reside within 50 km of Tillsonburg to appeal to more people.

Council approved the changes without any questions.



**This Week
In the 50's**



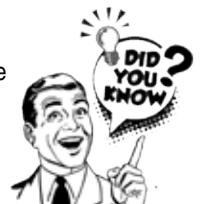
Welcome to **THIS WEEK IN THE 50's**
Sponsored by Hilda's Yard opening
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Tillsonburg. A Hilarious Norm Foster
comedy set in the 50's with messages that
we can all relate to even now. This week's
flashback "**The Atomic Age of the 50's.**"

One of the story lines of Hilda's Yard centers around the dream of travelling abroad which is one of many breakthroughs of the Atomic Age. Enjoy this flashback to help set the stage for our stage play.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Post War World of Hilda's Yard focussed on the concept Modernism a focus on the new, on leisure and on convenience. Commercial air flight became common and the dream of flying to far away places was more possible than ever. Airplanes overtook ocean liners as the preferred means to cross the ocean because it was faster. By the late 50's Economy fares –an affordable way to fly was introduced. However, an average econo fare in 1958 was \$453, \$100 more than the cost of the Fluke's TV in our play.



SCIENCE SHAPED THE TIMES.

- Science ended World War II with the atomic bomb and yet an optimistic focus on science and technology would be front and center.
- Scientists also took us to space as Sputnik, the first artificial satellite, was launched triggering the start of the Space Race.
- Before the end of the 1950s, a dog was launched into space and human technology landed on the moon.
- Another sign of the modern times was the UNIVAC, the first business computer. It was the size of an entire room but powerful enough to predict election winners. It wasn't a laptop or tablet but was the beginning.
- Modern attitudes also saw the beginning of the Civil and Human Rights Movements.
- The first transatlantic Television broadcast connected cultures around the world in a new way.

- The world began to focus on nationalism, starting nation building and ending colonialism.
- Additional breakthroughs in science witnessed a vaccine for Polio as well as the discovery of DNA.
- Long before the internet, the first fibre optic cable was invented in 1956 and the micro chip was invented by Jack Kilby in 1958. The chip had 1 transistor for processing compared to the 125 million in a smart phone of today.
- Transistors started to take the place of tubes in both TV and radios making household items more compact.
- While the specter of atomic war brought us bomb shelters and emergency drills, the excitement over seemingly endless modern inventions made the future a positive and exciting place filled with speculation and wonder over what could be.

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SWOX Mayor David Mayberry not seeking re-election in October 2026

DEBBIE KASMAN

Post Correspondent

At its regular council meeting on Jan. 6, South West Oxford Township (SWOX) Mayor David Mayberry confirmed he will not be seeking re-election in the 2026 Municipal Election.

Mayberry emphasized that the election is fast approaching and the township needs to proactively consider who in the community may be interested in running for municipal office. He stressed that a deliberate effort is required to ensure good governance.

Mayberry began serving as a SWOX Councillor in 1994 and was elected mayor in 2006. He also served as warden for Oxford County between 2015 and 2018. Mayberry is a sixth-generation farmer, born and raised on Sweaburg Road. He graduated from the University of Guelph in 1974 with a degree in agriculture, and later became involved with the Canadian Food Grains program in 1983 as a volunteer and donor, helping to bag corn at a local elevator. Mayberry also job shared the position of Ontario Resource Coordinator of the Canadian Food

Grains program for 17.5 years with his wife Catherine. He was a director of Oxford Mutual Insurance for 12 years and was involved with Scouts as a leader for 20 years in Salford and Sweaburg.

SWOX township approved new ward boundaries last July, which will impact the municipal election. These boundaries changes will take effect on the day the new council is organized after voting day on Oct. 26. The changes were made to ensure that each ward has a proportionate number of residents and so that every resident's vote carries equal weight.

Each councillor will represent a reasonably equal number of constituents as well.

Councillor Pickard echoed Mayor Mayberry's comments and questioned what the 2027 council will look like. He stressed the importance of actively encouraging community members to engage in local government, noting that change is inevitable and strong leadership, particularly from the next mayor, is critical.

Councillor Gillis highlighted the need to better educate the public on municipal roles and responsibilities, including the



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

SWOX Mayor David Mayberry.

distinction between municipal and county governance, and suggested public engagement as a key tool.

In response, council is considering holding two information sessions in the township in March in order to address low interest in previous municipal election cycles and to encourage greater participation in running for municipal office within the township.

These sessions will cover key topics such as eligibility requirements, the nomination process, important dates and deadlines, and the roles and responsibilities of election officials. The sessions will engage local residents early, ahead of the nomination period, which opens on May 1.

More details will follow.

Oxford County Library participating in Forest of Reading

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

Discover a variety of Canadian stories, authors, and illustrators at your local library branch with the largest recreational reading program in Canada.

The Oxford County Library is participating in the Forest of Reading Program, which highlights Canadian authors, illustrators, and stories. The library launched its Forest of Reading activities on Jan. 12, and readers of all ages can participate in reading challenges part of the Forest of

Reading. Each year, more than 270,000 readers across Canada participate through their public or school libraries.

"It's important to highlight Canadian authors, illustrators, stories because we are really promoting the sense of community and reading with our Canadian community and just highlighting different stories from different backgrounds," said Katelyn Bennett, a literacy program specialist.

The Forest of Reading program features a variety of categories depending on grade level and/or age including the Blue

Spruce (kindergarten to grade two), Silver Birch (grades three to six), Yellow Cedar (grades four to eight), Red Maple (grades seven and eight), White Pine (grades nine to 12), and Evergreen for adults.

"I'm really excited. I know that Blue Spruce is usually one of our most popular programs in the past, but I'm excited to highlight books in all of the categories this year and really showcase the nominees that have been chosen," Bennett said.

The Forest of Reading nominated books and feature stories from a variety of cultural backgrounds,

particularly the picture books in the Blue Spruce category.

"It's important to share those different perspectives so people can see different ways of living and sharing different knowledge," she added.

In addition to tracking the read books, which can be done via the Beanstalk app, kids and adults alike can earn badges and vote for their favourite books. Children between the ages of four and 18 can vote in person at their library branch or online, and adults can vote in September.

Readers can participate

in the Forest of Reading Program in their school library, public library, or on their own. Bennet explained that public libraries don't always partici-

ate. "We do often see it in school libraries, but it's so important to just have this program in the public library system as well, just to showcase what amazing stories there are from

Canadian authors, just to share because I find that a lot of books that come in and new things can not necessarily be Canadian authors," she said.

"So, we love to highlight those and just share those with our community."

More information, including reading lists, can be found at <https://www.ocl.net/programs-events/forest-of-reading>.

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Library Lane to see revitalization this year



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Removal of the overhead walkway over Library Lane is among the items approved in the 2026 budget. The pillars supporting the walkway are likely to be integrated into the new design.

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Library Lane will undergo significant changes this year.

In a report to council, which was accepted as information at the Jan. 12 meeting, Adam Kannawin, Manager of Parks and Facilities, outlined the issues surrounding the covered walkway and the planned work to upgrade it, which could save money in the long run.

The issue came forward a year ago following a presentation by an adjacent property owner, pointing out the poor state of repair of the brick walkway, drainage, and safety concerns associated with it. Staff have been looking into the issue since then.

The gardens adjacent to the walkway have been cut back and benches removed in an attempt to deter homeless people from setting up in the area.

Work for Library Lane in the 10-year capital plan would have seen roof replacement, structural repairs, and walkway repairs for \$366,549.

As an alternative, removal of the overhead structure, regrading, and revitalization of the area would cost an estimated \$125,000. It's estimated that removing the roof and immediately proceeding with the work would save about \$240,000 in the long term.

Funds for this were included in the 2026 budget, which council previously approved.

AMBER Alerts help save lives

January 13 marked AMBER Alert Awareness Day, and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is reminding Ontarians that AMBER Alerts are a call for the public's help to find a child in danger.

An AMBER Alert is an emergency broadcast that is issued in the event of a child abduction. It is only issued when the abducted child is believed to be at imminent risk of bodily harm or death.

When the alert is issued, the description of the child (and, if available, the alleged suspect or involved vehicle) is immediately broadcast through television, radio and LTE-connected and compatible wireless devices via Alert Ready, Canada's emergency alerting system.

The issuing of an AMBER Alert is not taken lightly. Before an AMBER Alert is issued, specific guidelines must be met, and all of the following criteria must be satisfied:

1. The law enforcement agency believes a child under 18 years of age has been abducted.
2. The law enforcement agency believes the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
3. There is enough descriptive information about one or more of the following: the child, the abductor, and/or the vehicle, which is sufficient to allow the law enforcement agency to believe that an immediate broadcast alert will help in locating the child.

During an AMBER Alert, time is critical. If you see or hear an alert, you should watch for the child, suspect and/or vehicle described, and report tips or sightings immediately by calling 9-1-1.

Calling 911 to complain about an AMBER Alert is considered public mischief and may result in charges.

Council approves single source for pickleball courts

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

If everything goes as planned, Tillsonburg will have three new pickleball courts by this summer.

Council approved single sourcing three new pickleball courts through Court Surface Specialists, which installed the existing courts. A report from Andrea Greenway, Director of Recreation, Culture and Parks, outlined the rationale, explaining that when the existing courts were installed in 2024, this company was the only one whose primary expertise was building pickleball courts and its bid came in \$100,000 less than the other companies.

Under the town's purchasing policy, single sourcing is allowed in this case due to the cost savings involved. The courts will be funded from development charges.

The new pickleball courts were included in the 2026 budget. Originally, the new courts were slated for 2027 but were moved up because the demand for pickleball courts had reached the point court capacity can't keep up with demand.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy asked how fast the courts would be built, and was told it could be this spring.

Coun. Chris Rosehart pointed out there are some dead spots in the existing courts and erosion at the edges, and asked if this would be repaired. Greenway assured this would be fixed in the spring under warranty.

Deputy Mayor Dave Beres questioned the exact location of the new courts, and if it would be adjacent to the existing ones.

"Is there room between there and the street," he asked.

Greenway said that is the intent, but exact measuring will take place in the spring.

In related news, town resident David Csepei appeared before council as a delegation earlier in the meeting, asking for more information on the pickleball courts.

He wanted a cost breakdown, questioning why it cost \$200,000 for two additional courts.

"We already own the land, I want to see why it costs \$200,000," he said.

He also asked what would occur if membership of the Tillsonburg Pickleball Club rose from the current 150 to 300, and if there would be an ask for more courts.

"You can't continue to cater to this," Csepei said.

Gilvesy said the court costs are similar to what other communities are paying.

"We are not catering to a particular group," she said. "There is a recreation master plan and we are following that."

She corrected that there are three courts, and said the master plan, which covers 10 years, doesn't call for more beyond that.

Coun. Chris Parker also said council was following the master plan.

Coun. Kelly Spencer informed Csepei that the pickleball club is not associated with the town.

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Tillsonburg council briefs

Parkette renaming

The parkette at the intersection of Broadway and Oxford Street will have a new name.

Formally known as the Oxford-Broadway Parkette, its name will be changed to the Tillson Family Parkette. The only cost associated with the name change will be a new sign, which was estimated to cost \$1,200

Easements approved

Council approved the necessary expenditures associated with registering storm water flow easements on property at 1 Clearview Drive and 3,500 Highway 3.

These properties, which are owned by Titan Trailer, were developed when the area was not included within the Tillsonburg boundary. Having the easement is necessary for storm water drainage.

The cost associated with registering the easements is \$3,000 to \$5,000 in surveying and legal costs.

Tax installment dates set

The first two installment of Tillsonburg taxes will be due Feb. 27 and May 29, The initial installments are based on last year's rates. Tax increases for 2026 will be reflected in the third and fourth installments.

Tender for Stoney Creek work approved

A tender for Stoney Creek sanitary sewer work was approved by Tillsonburg council at the Jan. 12 meeting.

The project involves bank stabilization and stream erosion control along Stoney Creek between Quarter Line Road and Concession Street West. The work is expected to take 12 weeks during the summer.

This project is actually a county project that is being administered by the town as per existing agreements. The lowest tender of \$869,900 for the work, and \$66,135 for contract administration and inspection, exceeded the \$850,000 the county budgeted for the work.

Ball diamond accessibility upgrades on hold

Upgrades at the Sam Lamb Ball Diamond that would have provided an accessible path to spectator seating and four accessible parking spaces was put off due to grant funding not coming through.

Town staff had applied to the Enhancing Access to Spaces for Everyone Grant to fund the work. Estimated costs were between \$22,000 and \$27,000. The grant would have covered all associated costs without impacting the tax levy.

Director of Recreation, Culture and Parks Andrea Greenway said staff will continue to seek funding.

Council wrestles with assessment report

Town council was divided on a request for a pavement and sidewalk assessment from Carlos Reyes, Director of Operations and Development.

In 2025, council approved \$70,000 to be spent on a roads assessment report that would rate the condition of the town's streets for use in asset management planning and when to repair or resurface the pavement. In a report to council at the Jan. 12 meeting, Reyes suggested reports were also needed on the condition of the parking lots, sidewalks and the airport pavement.

The price tag for all the assessments, which Reyes suggested be funded from reserves, came in at \$192,815 through the tender process.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy understood the need for a report

on the roads as there are more of them, but questioned the need for the other reports, specifically mentioning the need for repaving parking lots.

"I would rather take the money and spend it to fix than to pay a consultant," she said. "I can see it's in poor condition."

Coun. Chris Parker questioned what a sidewalk condition assessment will bring that can't be seen. Reyes answered it's also an inventory tool for tracking.

Saying the town paid students to walk sidewalks in the last couple of years, Coun. Chris Rosehart questioned the need for the assessment.

Reyes said the assessment would be more detailed. After another question from Rosehart about the timing of sidewalk replacement, Reyes said sidewalk construction is often done in conjunction with road construction.

Council backs resolution to protect pension funds

Tillsonburg council passed a motion asking the province not to change the governance model for the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System Pension Fund.

Deputy Mayor Dave Beres, who presented the motion, explained the provincial government is proposing to change the governance model overseeing the fund and could borrow money against the funds in the pension.

"OMERS is a municipal responsibility, not a provincial responsibility," he said.

Money in the fund was contributed 50-50 by municipalities and their employees who are part of it.

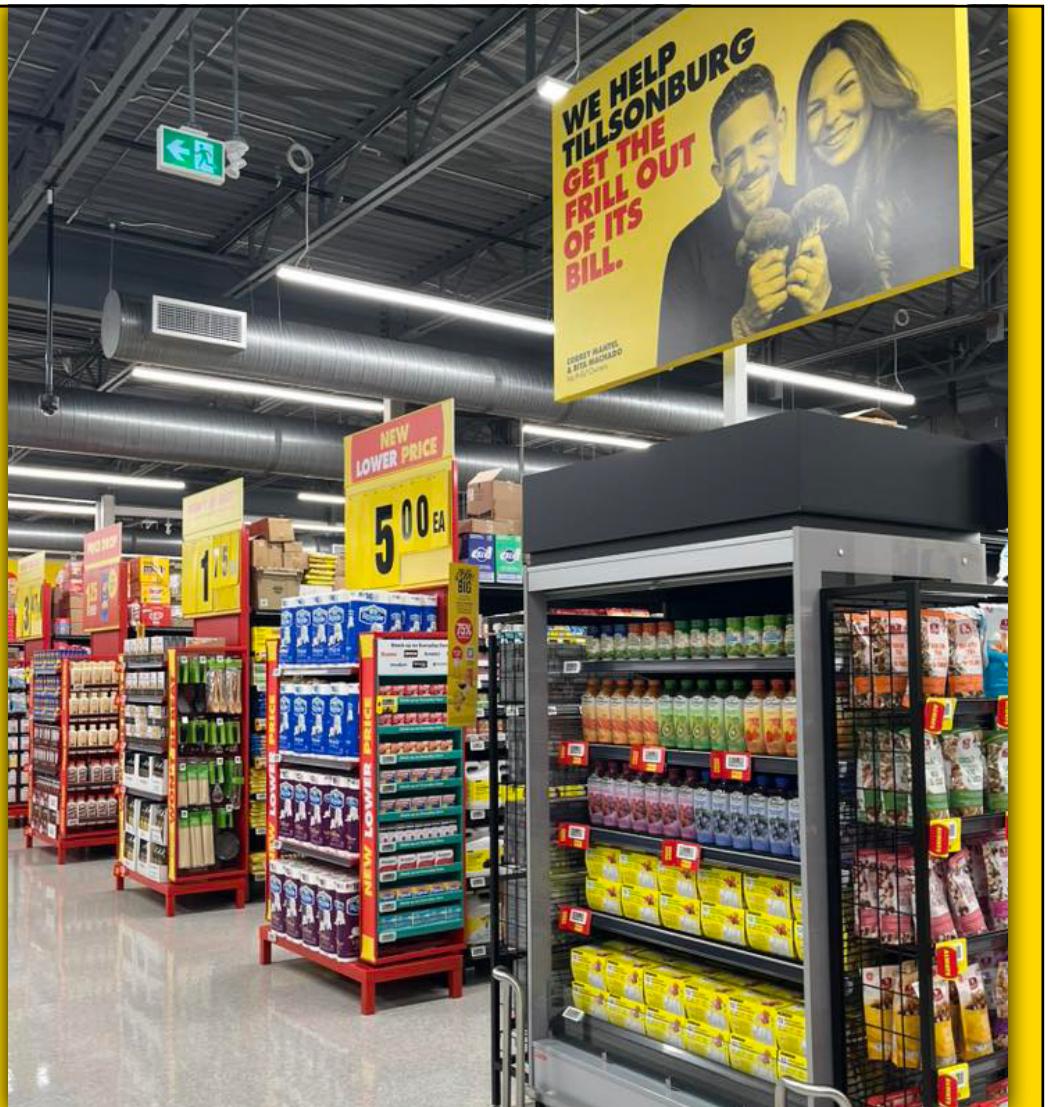
"If something went wrong, the responsibility to make up for it would fall on municipalities," he said.

Jeff Helsdon, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

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AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Post Correspondent

Over the years, I've loved travelling to different parts of the world, especially to places that aren't known for tourism. One of my favourite things about travelling is meeting people and learning about different cultures, which is why trips to Honduras, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka and Zambia remain among my most meaningful experiences. These destinations aren't always the safest or the most picture-perfect, but they draw me in because I genuinely want to understand how other people live.

Most recently, I was heading to Cuba for a resort vacation when I came across a non-profit group called Not Just Tourists (www.njt.net). I learned that I could bring a bag of medical supplies with me and deliver it to a local hospital. Even better, WestJet allows travellers to bring an extra humanitarian-aid suitcase for free. My only job would be to drop off the supplies.

The process was simple. Not Just Tourists, London packed the bags and sent me a link to fill out the paperwork for WestJet. Although I had to complete the forms more than once, it was still straightforward. When we arrived at the airport, my name was already in the system, and the bags were tagged to travel with us to Cuba at no charge.

Not Just Tourists provided a list of local hospitals in need, and we chose Hospital Materno-Infantil José Ramón López in Matanzas, one of the leading maternity hospitals in the country.

Once there, we took a day trip to Matanzas, about 40 minutes away. Our taxi driver kindly connected us with an on-site physician, Dr. Ariel—"like the Disney princess," he joked.

Dr. Ariel told us that the provincial hospital, established in 1872, now operates as a women's hospital with services in gynecology, maternity and general care. It handles roughly 80 to 85 per cent of all births in the region, with a mortality rate of fewer than three per 1,000 births.

As one of the largest and most advanced maternity hospitals in Cuba, it receives pregnant women from across the country who need urgent care, including those with



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

During a visit to Cuba, Amanda Nelson (Modaragamage) stands with Dr. Ariel at Hospital Materno-Infantil José Ramón López in Matanzas after delivering donated medical and personal care supplies to the hospital.

high-risk pregnancies or birthing complications.

Cuba has its challenges. Food insecurity, medical supply shortages, limited access to clean or sterile water and a strained health-care system all contribute to low birth weights and high-risk pregnancies. Yet the country's infant mortality rates remain better than those of many nations in Latin America and the Caribbean, and are closer to those seen in high-income countries, according to the Foundation for Economic Education.

In Cuba, home births are not permitted. All births take place in hospitals to reduce complications and infant deaths, and women are often admitted early if there are signs of trouble. Frequent prenatal checkups and routine monitoring also help support healthy outcomes.

During our visit, Dr. Ariel emphasized that even small items—saline, antiseptics, masks, gloves, dressing kits, wound-care materials—are needed, necessary and deeply appreciated. It's easy to wonder how much of an impact one suitcase can make, but he assured us that in Cuba's tight economic climate, every little bit truly helps.

I'm sharing this experience to encourage others to consider bringing a bag of supplies on their next trip. Not Just Tourists has locations across Canada and the United States, and the process is so easy. A little effort can go a long way.

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Station Arts Centre revitalizes its gallery



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Mayor Deb Gilvesy, left, and Gale Connor, a member of the Station Arts Centre board of directors, cut the ribbon on the newly remodeled gallery.

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

The new year brought a new, more open, revitalized gallery for the Station Arts Centre.

A ribbon cutting on Jan. 16 unveiled the revamped gallery after it had been closed since the holidays. The work was made possible by an \$8,000 donation

from 100 Women Who Care Oxford.

Previously, displays in the Baggage Room and Bridge Street Gallery were displayed with shelving and cabinetry that didn't match. The grant enabled the purchase of new shelving and saw the removal of all the older cabinetry and shelving. Volunteers and staff assembled the shelving

and stained it.

"It's opened up the space and has increased visibility for the artists," said Sarah Senior, chair of the board of directors. "It means there's more opportunity for artists who are displaying their work, and there is more opportunity for it to be purchased. It gives us a bigger space."

"It makes it easier to fo-



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

New shelving, uniform throughout the Station Arts Centre, better displays the arts and crafts for sale. Purchase of the shelving was made possible through a donation from 100 Women Who Care Oxford.

cus on the art," said Briana French, one of the potters who has items for sale in the gallery.

There are currently 40 artists who have items on display. This ranges from woodworking, jewelry, and pottery to prints and paintings in various media.

"The other thing we are hoping with this revital-

ization is people will realize there is an opportunity for people to purchase local gifts," said Cailey Coderre, social media lead for the Station Arts Centre. "It's an opportunity for people to pick up unique, hand-made gifts from Tillsonburg."

The revitalization also provided an opportunity for the Bridge Street Gal-

lery to be rehung with new work.

"There's a whole host of new work in there," Coderre said.

Although it's not complete yet, Coderre is working on a revamp of the station's online store. It allows people to shop from home, but they still have to pick up the items from the station.

Weekend Quiz

by Jake Grant

1. What is a second full moon in a month called?
2. What was Alaska called before 1867?
3. What King of England had 6 wives?
4. Legendary American frontiersman "Buffalo Bill" died where?
5. Eczema affects which organ of the body?
6. How many individual 1x1 squares are on a chess board?
7. What animal has the largest ears?
8. The Archipelago Sea belongs to what country?
9. What year did actor Heath Ledger die?
10. What company created Clash Royale?

This week's answers are found on pg. 23

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Summer Homick, ice dance partner Nicholas Buelow qualify for ISU Junior Worlds

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

"It was a big goal for us," added Homick. "But we knew we'd have to fight for our spot."

There are two program components to ice dance competitions, rhythm and free, both containing required elements but the former more technically-based, the latter offering increased latitude to individual team strengths. Homick and Buelow's 2.5-minute rhythm program was skated, as per 1990s pop music criteria, to The Back Street Boys Larger Than Life and Everybody.

With a world junior berth on the line, Homick admitted to feeling both pressure and nerves heading into the skate. However, once on the ice, she found her 'centre.'

"We knew we had trust in each other and we'd be fine. We just had to do what we do every day."

In general, said Buelow, they skated strong technically, although he felt they might have 'opened up a bit more' in a couple of sections.

"But other than that, we thought it was a pretty good skate."

The judges agreed, awarding the pair a personal best tally of 62.77, placing them in second, a narrow 1.54 points up on Anderson and Dawson heading into the free dance portion.

"We were in a good place and we just had to get one more program done," said Homick.

Their free program was 'opposite' to their opener said Buelow, in that they skated a lot freer.

"But there were some technical things that needed to be cleaned up."

However, the judges would confirm they not only held onto their position with a score of 95.01, they would finish with their highest overall total to date.

"We left some points on the line but after we saw our score, breathed a huge sigh of relief," said Homick. "And got a personal best too."



(DANIELLE EARL PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO)

Summer Homick and Nicholas Buelow competing at the Canadian junior ice dance championships in Gatineau, Quebec.

Her career began in Langton, shifting to Tillsonburg under coach Penny Jelsma until Homick was 13, before heading to Brantford and ultimately, Barrie. She began ice dancing with Buelow in April, 2024, their rise to competitive excellence rapid in 'skating time.'

"We have the same work ethic, the same goals," said Homick. "Everything just kind of clicked for us."

Their route to Canadians included 2025

junior grand prix circuit bronze medals in Baku, Azerbaijan and Varese, Italy.

"To achieve that was both a confidence boost and an indication we are going somewhere and doing some good things," said Buelow.

They also cleared a crucial hurdle at the 2025-2026 Skate Canada Challenge at the Seven Chiefs Sportsplex in Calgary, Alberta. During competition Saturday, Nov. 29 and Sunday, Nov. 30, Homick,

who was coming off an injury, and Buelow laid down rhythm and free dance program scores of 62.18 and 94.54 respectively, finishing first out of 15 teams. Their overall mark of 156.72 was 3.54 points ahead of Anderson and Dawson.

"I feel that was a confidence booster we could be in the running for junior worlds," said Buelow.

The 2026 ISU World Junior Championships are scheduled for March 3-8. Homick and Buelow are planning on competing in the Bavarian Open in Oberstdorf Germany Jan. 27 to Feb. 1 as a tuneup, in addition to ongoing work on speed and connection.

"The teams at junior worlds are going to be strong," said Homick. "Speed and connection with each other are things that are going to keep us up there with them."

The main goal heading in, says Buelow, is putting down two programs they can be happy with, with an eye to a top-10 finish.

"We think that could be a realistic goal too."

"We did what we needed to do," said Homick. "The pressure is off, now we just have to go to junior worlds and rack up some more points."

Obviously, they want to skate well she added, and their finish is important in that with higher positioning, the two Canadian teams could earn an additional berth for next year's junior worlds.

"We hope we'll be among those three teams as well," Homick laughed.

In closing, she extended a warm thank-you to family, friends, community and coaches Mitchell Islam, David Islam, Kelly Johnson and James Callan who continue to support her competitive skating journey. Homick looks forward to extending the message in person following an invitation for the pair to perform in this year's Tillsonburg Skating Club show.



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Panschow, Cornish make waves, toss opponents before throwing Gemini rocks

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

Keona Cornish warmed up for throwing curling rocks down the ice by tossing wrestling opponents onto the mat.

“A little bit of everything,” smiled the Tillsonburg Gemini multi-sport athlete following a regular season-closing 6-4 Thames Valley Regional Athletics Southeast girls’ curling loss to the visiting St. Thomas Central Elgin Titans Wednesday, Jan. 14 at the Tillsonburg Curling Club.

As well as rocks and wrestling, Cornish also enjoys Gemini rugby and basketball, a varied and busy schedule by any standard.

“Keeps me busy, out of trouble,” said Cornish, a curling vice who pinned both wrestling opponents she faced earlier that day. “It’s fun.”

“Double threats,” added Lucie Panschow, who took over as skip from Cornish part way through the game, due to her own earlier participation with the Gemini swim team. Panschow had competed in the 50 freestyle event and swam the second leg on a four-by-200-metre freestyle relay, leaving for curling before she saw the results from the latter.

“But we got first in our heat, so it’s looking pretty good.”

Although Wednesday’s outing didn’t look as ‘good’ as they would have liked, the Gemini girls’ year has been a productive one. Finishing a solid third at the end of regular season action, the 3-3 Gemini are looking forward to playoffs upon their return from exams.

Panschow and Cornish head up a group including fellow Grade 12 Kylie Thiessen, Grade 10s Emily Howe and Evelyn Beard, the latter three all in their second seasons, and rookie Kate Panschow. When not double-booked, the skip and vice hold their positions with the other four rotating through lead and second.

As a group, they are supportive and analytical credits coach Shelby Colldock.

“They’re always thinking about what’s next, where to go, plan A versus plan B.”

TVRA Southeast playoffs will also feature Ingersoll DCI (5-1 on the season), St. Thomas Parkside (4-1) and either Woodstock St. Mary’s or St. Thomas Central Elgin or St. Joe’s, all tied for fourth with 2-4 records.

“It would be nice if we could get to WOS-SAA (Western Ontario Secondary Schools Athletic Association),” said Colldock. “That would be an accomplishment both Lucie and Keona would like to see since they’ve been playing since Grade 9.”

“Last year, I want to go far,” agreed Cornish.

“You’ve got to make a grand exit,” Panschow concluded. “Grand finale.”

The Gemini boys’ curling team is at the other end of the experience spectrum, a unit featuring five Grade 10 students including Japanese ‘import’ (Rotary exchange student) Sota Hashiura, and Grade 9 Elliott Fletcher.

“Interesting,” commented Hashiura, whose Kanazawa region of Japan includes a rink hosting speed skating and ice hockey, but not curling. As well as developing a taste for poutine and watching football and baseball on TV with host families, he has embraced curling, searching high-level Japanese teams on YouTube to pick up pointers. Enjoying sweeping, when called into action Wednesday, Hashiura put his first rock right on the button, despite claiming to find reading ice tricky.

“Like it curves or straight, whatever.”

He is one of four first-year curlers on the Gemini this season, a roster anchored by skip Aaron Phillips and vice Mason Ellis, both in their second years. They are joined by fellow Grade 10s Travis Virgeo and Tomas Rapai.

“They’re a whole lot of fun,” said Colldock, a positive attitude and outlook coinciding with a trio of victories including a 7-2 decision over the Titans Wednesday.

“It’s all about fun,” agreed Phillips, who says gaining an understanding of curling and meeting new people are important parts of that equation.

The 3-4 Gemini boys finished out of the 2026 playoffs, additional wins over Woodstock St. Mary’s and St. Thomas St. Joe’s leaving them tied for fifth with Aylmer East Elgin, two points back of fourth-placed St. Mary’s.

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BOYS HOCKEY	
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13	
GEMINI	4
ST. MARY'S	1

SENIOR GIRLS VOLLEYBALL	
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13	
GEMINI	25, 25, 25
CENTRAL ELGIN	17, 11, 22

JUNIOR GIRLS VOLLEYBALL	
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13	
GEMINI	25, 25, 25
CENTRAL ELGIN	20, 10, 13

SENIOR BOYS BASKETBALL	
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13	
GEMINI	52
CENTRAL ELGIN	32

JUNIOR BOYS BASKETBALL	
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13	
GEMINI	64
CENTRAL ELGIN	44

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BONSPIEL WINNERS



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The overall winners of the 5th Dale Fanset Memorial Bonspiel were Team Collie from Simcoe, who are shown above proudly displaying the plaque that will bear their names. They went undefeated coming out on top of the 16-team field having played in the early draw. Blue West Equipment Inc. partnered with the Tillsonburg Curling Club as the Premier sponsor. Pictured above are from left to right: Mike Mitchell-vice; Jared Collie-skip; Ian Summers-second; Mac Mitchell-lead and Blue West Equipment Inc. General Manager Wayne Vansevenant. The bonspiel was held at the Tillsonburg Curling Club on Saturday, Jan. 10.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Team Walker and squad from St. Thomas were the winners of the second, draw but were out-pointed by Team Collie from the first draw in the Dale Fanset Memorial Bonspiel sponsored by Blue West Equipment Inc. Team Walker, a previous overall winner in the inaugural event in 2022, is shown holding the hardware and pointing out where their name is on the plaque. They are from left to right: Owen Tester; Kirk Massey; skip - Terry Walker; Jason Larocque and with premier sponsor General Manager-Wayne Vansevenant from Blue West Equipment Inc. looking on.

Panschow, Cornish make waves, toss opponents before throwing Gemini rocks

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

“Most of our games are competitive,” said Fletcher. “We lose one end and that’s where we usually go down.”

There is however, a considerable upside,

given the team’s comparative youth and future potential.

“I think we’re going to do well,” Phillips concluded. “Two more years, hopefully.”

GIRLS CURLING	
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14	
CENTRAL ELGIN	6
GEMINI	4
MONDAY, JANUARY 12	
INGERSOLL DCI	8
GEMINI	2

BOYS CURLING	
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14	
GEMINI	7
CENTRAL ELGIN	2
MONDAY, JANUARY 12	
INGERSOLL DCI	14
GEMINI	2



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Gemini sweepers Sato Hashiura (left) and Elliott Fletcher pick up a teammate’s rock out of the hack.



Gemini second Tomas Rapai prepares to release his stone.

(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

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Collard, Gignac stand tall in 0-0 tie in Club Oxford

JEFF GWYN

Post Contributor

Although hockey is a game that is measured in goals, sometimes the excitement is in games where scoring doesn't take place. Such was the case this week when netminders Mark Gignac and Nathan Collard turned away all scoring attempts in a 0-0 tie between B-Line and Tillsonburg Glass in B Division play.

Jan. 11 A Division Health Hut 3, ReMax 1

Health Hut was able to keep the ReMax high scorers off the sheet tonight. They played a simple game that focused on breaking up plays defensively, while also picking their spots to put on some pressure. ReMax had their chances but couldn't get anything to bounce their way. A frustrating night as their breakouts and pressure attempts were thwarted.

Spencer Meron had three points for Health Hut. Brian Velthove had the goal for ReMax.

Fody's 7, Apple Shack 4

It took half a period, but Fody's found their momentum. Quick shots and fast breakouts made for a high scoring game. They had to buckle down defensively as Apple Shack had some pressure in the second. Apple Shack looked a step behind and had trouble in front of their net. They rebounded in the second to make a game of it, but fell short in the end.

Chris Sanders and Shane Balcomb had five points each for Fody's. Jesse Dunn had two points for Apple Shack.

B Division Carquest 5, Prouse Mortgages 5

Carquest pulled out another late come-

back to salvage a point. They had some chances tonight, especially on breakout attempts. Prouse Mortgages looked to be in control in the second as they came back to take the lead. They had plenty of chances, but couldn't hold off the late Carquest push.

Brad Henderson had three points for Carquest. Nate Boldt had a hat trick for Prouse Mortgages.

Royal LePage 4, RND 1

Royal LePage played a tempered game, where they stuck to the basics and took advantage of their opportunities. A solid defensive effort to keep RND off the scoreboard. RND had some good rushes, but couldn't get any second chances at all in this one. A tough loss against a rival team.

Landon Thibert had two goals for Royal LePage. Cody VanDeCappelle had the goal for RND.

Source 2, Airmount 1

A close game. Source was able to get some chances in close and had some good rushes, but couldn't find the back of the net. They played well to keep Airmount to the sides. Airmount was able to clear the front of the net and not give up the rebounds in front. They had some good pressure in the second, but couldn't get any puck luck.

Craig Robb and Jamie DeSouza had goals for Source. Kris Vannoord had a goal for Airmount.

Glass 0, B-Line 0

This game was tightly checked. B-Line had some speed and got some good chances early. They did well to keep the front of the net clear in their own zone. Glass were able to use the point men to get some shots through, but couldn't get

any rebounds. B-Line's Mark Gignac and Glass' Nolan Collard both played great for the double shutout.

Jan. 14 B Division Royal LePage 3, Glass 1

Royal LePage played a solid game. They used their speed to gain some chances and get some pressure, just couldn't find the back of the net on all of them. Glass couldn't find things offensively in this one. They had a few chances, but couldn't get much going through the neutral zone.

Brendan Briggs had two points for Royal LePage. Brad Schopp had the goal for Glass.

Source 2, Carquest 2

Source was able to generate chances at key times. They were able to keep the

puck in the Carquest zone for some pressure, but couldn't find the back of the net. Carquest had to rely on their rushes to gain the zone, they had to dig in front of the net to get their goals and worked hard for the tie in this one.

Brad Henderson had two points for Carquest. Ryan Kyle had a goal for Source.

Airmount 5, B-Line 3

In a spare-filled game, Airmount relied on some regulars to get the win. They were able to get some quick rushes and had pressure in close all night. B-Line had to call up a couple veterans to fill out the roster tonight. They didn't have a lot of pressure until late, but did make a push at the end of this one to make it close.

Darrick French had two goals for Airmount. Kevin Thrower had three points for B-Line.

CLUB OXFORD A DIVISION	GP	W	L	T	PTS
REMAX REALTY	20	12	5	3	27
FODY'S AUTOMOTIVE	20	13	7	0	24
THE HEALTH HUT	20	5	11	4	14
THE APPLE SHACK	20	6	13	1	13

CLUB OXFORD B DIVISION	GP	W	L	T	PTS
SOURCE FOR SPORTS	21	17	3	1	32
JEFF PROUSE MORTGAGES	20	9	4	7	25
CARQUEST AUTO PARTS	21	8	7	6	22
TILLSONBURG GLASS	21	7	6	8	22
ROYAL LEPAGE REALTY	21	8	8	5	21
B-LINE TRUCKING	21	6	11	3	15
RND CONSTRUCTION	20	4	11	5	13
AIRMOUNT FARMS	21	5	14	2	12

Thunder shut out Delhi as division tightens up

Tillsonburg Thunder shut out Delhi Flames 8-0 in a home game Saturday night.

The win tightens up the standings in the South Conference and means the Thunder could end up playing Seaforth, Petrolia, Erin, Tavistock, or Elora in the first round of the playoffs. Tillsonburg is currently sitting in sixth place with 17 points. Dunnville Aeros are on their heels with 16 points.

In Saturday's game, the Thunder were on the board early, with Robert MacLean netting a power point goal from Kane Johnson and Hunter Monkhouse. Matthew Oosterveld took a pass from Danny Attridge late in the period for a 2-0 lead by the first buzzer.

Oosterveld and Attridge switched roles in the leadoff goal of the second with Oosterveld hitting the mesh. Harlen VanWynsberghe then scored, with assists going to MacLean and Monkhouse. Sebastian Guastadigsegni rounded out second-period scoring off a feed from D'Agostino and Monkhouse.

Tye Johnson beat Delhi netminder Cameron Huff on a short-handed effort with Monkhouse and MacLean taking credit for the assists. Mike Findlay counted a powerplay goal with assistance from Guastadigsegni and Monkhouse at the 12:40 mark. Attridge added another powerplay goal, from Findlay and goaltender Ben Blacker, with 3:45 left in the game.

Blacker was between the pipes the entire

game and was credited with the shutout.

Tillsonburg faces Delhi on the road this Saturday for its last game of the regular season.

PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

#88 - Andrew Oosterveld

Andrew, or Oosty, joined the Tillsonburg Thunder just this year. Born in Waterdown on Nov. 22, 1995, he never played junior hockey, on ice, but played inline hockey with the Halton Coyotes Pro and the Alkali Coyotes Pro. He even played six games with Team Canada World Skate WC (top 8). Andrew has played all 18 games so far for the Thunder and has racked up nine goals, four assists, and two

penalty minutes.

#91 - Robert MacLean

Rob, or Mack, joined the Tillsonburg Thunder just this year also. Born in Palmerston on March 18, 1993, he played with the Ayr Centennials, Elmira Sugar Kings, Thunder Bay North Stars, and the Schreiber Falcons racking up 166 games, 73 goals, 107 assists, and 201 penalty minutes. He played senior hockey with the Mapleton-Mintos and Alvinston Killer Bees. Mack has an undergrad in Kinesiology, thesis in Sport Psychology, and grad school in Advanced Ergonomics. He likes hanging out with family and friends and playing Fortnite. Favorite NHL team is the Colorado Avalanche.

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Curling club to host senior men's provincial qualifier



ON THE BROOM

NORA PETER

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Here we are already well into the new year and we have lots of exciting things happening in the curling world! The club Leagues are all up and going strong with new members coming into the new draws. The club has hosted two successful bonspiels, a curling clinic and is preparing to host a Curling Ontario Senior Men's Provincial Qualifier on Jan. 30-31. There will be eight teams competing and the club will be open to spectators those two days.

The most exciting news for our club, as many of you already know, is that one of our club members will be the Ontario representative at the Canadian Men's Curling Championship Brier to be held

in St. John's NFLD beginning Feb. 27. Team King, with skip Jayden King, vice Dylan Niepage, second Owen Henry and lead Victor Pietrangelo, won the Ontario Men's Curling Championship in an exciting week of very competitive curling at the Men's Tankard held in Elmira.

With three straight wins, Team King advanced to the Page 1-2 game playing against last year's Brier representative Team Mooilbroeck. Losing that game, they had a second chance in the semi-final game where they defeated Team Kean putting them into the finals against Team Mooilbroeck.

This game, as has already been reported, was a tight back-and-forth game with the lead changing several times. The shot-making by both teams was exceptional and demonstrated why they were in the finals. With the teams tied 6-6 after eight ends Team King took two in the 9th end to go up 8-6 and give the hammer back to Team Mooilbroeck for the final end.

With a trip to the Brier on the line, there was high tension with every shot between the two teams. The shot, which I think will become part of a highlight reel for this team and Jayden, came with

Jayden's final shot. Mooilbroeck had the three blue stones counting that he needed to win the game. Jayden, with his last rock, needed to remove a couple of rocks to force an extra end. That final rock was well thrown, well swept and well managed – he removed two blue stones and his shooter rolled behind cover sitting shot against the remaining Mooilbroeck stone – amazing!!

Mooilbroeck still had a chance to count two to tie the game, but when his rock clipped a stone out front of the house, the arena and team King erupted with joy over the win!

Watching from home, Les and I had tears of happiness for them knowing how hard they had worked to reach their goal. Our local club proudly supports this team and are looking forward to cheering them on at the Brier. A future column will give you lots more information about how to see Team King in action. The team is ranked fifth in Canada after their win.

Our Junior curlers will be happy to know that their Future Curlers Camp, that was cancelled last year due to bad weather, has been rescheduled for Sunday, Jan. 25. It features elite curlers from the Matt Dunstone team (current-

ly ranked #1 in Canada) who will work with the kids on ice developing their skills. They will play a 4-end game against a local team, which will be open to viewers after 12:45 at the Aylmer Curling Club.

Jan. 23 sees the start of the Canadian Women's Championship Scott Tournament of Hearts. This takes place at the Paramount Fine Foods Centre in Mississauga – close enough to see some games in person. The games will also be shown on TSN all week.

Last year's winner Team Homan will not participate, choosing instead to prepare for the Olympics which start Feb. 12. Team Einarson, who finished second, will take on the Team Canada role. Team Armstrong, who will represent Ontario, won in Elmira and as Team King did, they defeated last year's champion. Another young team looking forward to doing well at the national level.

A reminder to support the club progressive 50/50, which continues, and will be drawn March 23. If you are planning on the Italian dinner for Feb. 7, orders need to be in by Jan. 30. Check the website for order forms.

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MUSIC CORNER

Soak it up with One Way Streets on Jan. 31



BEN ADDRESS
Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Ingersoll's One Way Streets are hitting a new stride, and the growth this band has seen since dropping their first single 'Self Sabotage' in 2022 is immense.

The band formed in Oxford County and has been

shaped by years of local shows, line-up changes and steady songwriting, evolving into a tight rock band blending high octane energy, melody and modern alternative influences. The current lineup features Hayden Carey on lead vocals and guitar, Finn Toth on lead guitar and backup vocals, Lincoln White on bass and Spencer Calahoun on drums and backup vocals.

The band is riding momentum from their latest single 'Soak It Up', which is a track that captures both the frustration and resilience of coming of age in a constantly shifting world.

"Our newest single 'Soak It Up' was a song written with anger and frustration about getting overrun

by obstacles and trying to push through them. We were using the phrase 'Soak It Up' as a metaphor for dealing with everyday challenges and taking it in stride," Carey explains. "This connects with the overall theme in our new EP. It is all about what it is like becoming an adult in a world that continues to change in really weird ways and facing the consequences of social media and how it affects us."

Musically, the song also signals where the band is heading next.

"It is the third single off our upcoming EP. It is one of the heavier songs we have put together, but still similar to our other tracks," Carey says. "It blends a 1990s rock sound with modern Indie and al-

ternative. Some artists that inspired us include Highly Suspect, Twenty One Pilots and Audioslave."

Social media has played a major role in the band's recent rise over the past year. Calahoun notes that online visibility has been both a blessing and a challenge.

"Social media has been a huge tool for us in the past year. Our TikTok page recently gained over 150 thousand followers after a collection of videos of our lead singer Hayden singing his little heart out in a bathroom accumulated tens of millions of views and millions of likes," Calahoun explains. "However, this came with its frustrations too, as cover songs can only do so much, and our original music has

been more difficult to get out there."

That is where live shows come in and 'Soak It Up' has quickly become a cornerstone of their set along with 2025's singles 'Phase you Out' and 'RAT'.

"We have found 'Soak It Up' to be a great opening song for our sets with high energy and excitement coming from the first note of the song. We find this gets the crowd engaged right away and then try to take them through a musical journey with high and low points in the set," Calahoun says. "We find the older songs like 'Pretty Baby' and 'Please Don't Go' still fit in well with our new material to make an energetic and engaging set."

With a growing fanbase,

a new EP on the way and a reputation for delivering dynamic live performances, One Way Streets' upcoming Tillsonburg show promises a snapshot of a local band hitting a new creative nerve while on their way to being one of Southern Ontario's newest buzz bands.

One Way Streets and Full Throttle will be making their way back to town on January 30th opening for The Penske File. The all ages/licensed concert is taking place at Paddy's Underground. Advanced tickets are \$20 and available online via www.eventbrite.ca, The Mill or night of at the door limited to availability. You can follow the band on social media at www.instagram.com/onewaystreetsofficial

UPCOMING SHOWS

JANUARY 22 - FELICIA MCMINN
The Copper Mug
8 p.m.

JANUARY 24 - HARD CHORDS
The Copper Mug
8:30 p.m.

JANUARY 25 - ROB CROMWELL
The Copper Mug
5 p.m.

JANUARY 30 - THE PENSKE FILE, ONE WAY STREETS & FULL THROTTLE
Paddy's Underground
\$20 - 8 p.m. - All Ages/Licensed

JANUARY 30 - GHOST TOWN CITIZEN
The Copper Mug
8:30 p.m.

JANUARY 31 - BLUR RODEO W/ THE PADDY STONES
The Copper Mug
8 p.m.

FEBRUARY 1 - TRIVIA NIGHT
The Copper Mug
5:30p.m.

FEBRUARY 21 - ERIC JOHNSTON COMEDY SHOW W/ JORDAN ARMENISE
Paddy's Underground
\$25 - 7 p.m. - All Ages/Licensed

FEBRUARY 26 - THE FLATLINERS W/ CHUCK COLES
Paddy's Underground
\$50 - 8 p.m. - All Ages/Licensed



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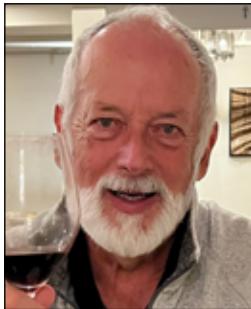
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**OH,
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PLACES
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PAUL KNOWLES

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

As we enter the heart of our beloved Canadian winter, a lot of us are dreaming about visiting tropical destinations. Places like Barbados, Cuba, Costa Rica or ... Winnipeg.

Winnipeg?

Okay, I admit that Manitoba's capital city is better known for what Randy Bachman highlighted in his song, "Prairie Town". "Portage and Main, 50 below," he sang. But a few months ago, I discovered a tropical paradise in the heart of Winnipeg. It's called "The Leaf". And while you might not want to travel to this prairie city in January or February, The Leaf is definitely a must-see in Winnipeg in the warmer months.

The attraction offers one more excellent reason to visit Assiniboine Park, also home to the Assiniboine Park Zoo, and in the wonderful district that includes The Forks shopping and dining area, the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, and the Children's Museum.

In locating all of these attractions in the same area, at the forks of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers, Winnipeg has definitively demonstrated the right way for a city to create public spaces that are compelling destinations, yet also provide opportunities for leisure and relaxation. Visitors to Winnipeg will inevitably find their way here, and they will be mingling with many, many local residents, for whom the area is a perfect getaway. Me, I love it there.

The Leaf is the latest addition to this district – and "latest" may be the oper-

ative word, here. The \$130-million-dollar attraction had a lengthy growth period – it finally opened two years behind schedule, in December, 2022.

And what is The Leaf, exactly? It's best understood as two distinct parts. The heart of the attraction is the soaring, swirling, steel and glass building that houses four distinct "biomes" which are home to plants and trees from around the world.

And outdoors, all around the building, are many hectares of unique gardens, as well.

Let's start indoors – an area that is open all year round.

The unique, individual spaces in The Leaf building include a tropical biome, a Mediterranean biome, a "display house", and a butterfly garden.

The tropical biome – officially, the "Hartley and Heather Richardson Tropical Biome" – is the most dramatic, in part because it features a six-storey indoor waterfall that plays a role in keeping this space at the right level of humidity – "right" meaning "really high".

The "welcome" sign posted near the waterfall says a lot about the multiple aims of The Leaf. "Welcome" is stated in three languages – English, Cree and Ojibwe, reflecting both Manitoba's heritage and the province's current multi-cultural reality. There is an educational note about "the tropics" – "The tropics cover a large part of the world and include a variety of environments such as rainforests, seasonal forests, grasslands, savannas and more." The sign points out everyday products we consume that come from the tropics, like coffee, tea, spices and fruits. And the welcome also makes the point that "Many recent immigrants to Winnipeg come from tropical regions, including Central America, the Caribbean, Africa, parts of the Middle East, and Asia." I quote this information at some length, because I think this "welcome" tells us a lot about the intentions of the people who planned and built "The Leaf". It's more than an educational institution – it's an inclusive, welcoming space.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The \$130-million The Leaf opened in Winnipeg in December, 2022.

We strolled around the tropical biome, marvelling at the beauty of the flowers and foliage, and quite impressed with the size of the plants that soared over our heads. We learned that many of them were full-size when they were transported to The Leaf.

We moved on, into the Mediterranean biome, where eager docents are happy to tell visitors all about the plants, including "Dinosaur Trees" – actually, Wollemi Pines from Australia, prehistoric conifers which were thought to be extinct until they were discovered in Australia in 1994. Today, offspring of those rare, ancient trees are growing right here in Winnipeg.

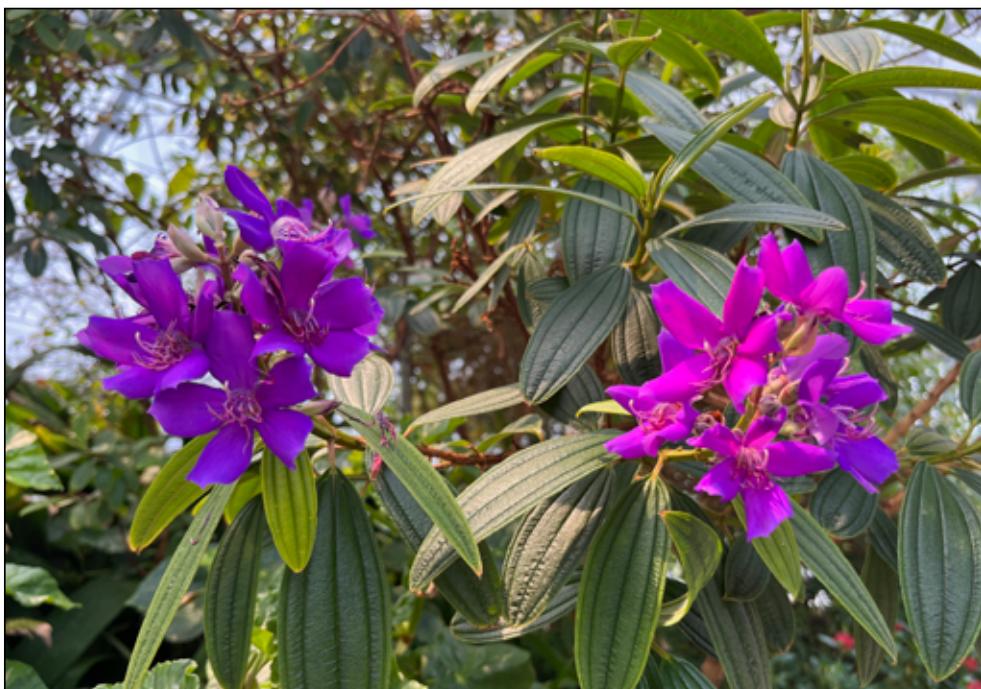
Everyone loves an enclosed butterfly garden, and the "Shirley Richardson Butterfly Garden" at The Leaf is no exception. Children and adults alike enjoy watching the many tropical butterflies, and everyone, of course, hopes that one flying friend would come to rest on their shoulder.

The Leaf does not end at the exit from the impressive building, Outdoors, there are six gardens to explore, including the

Indigenous Peoples Garden, a Kitchen Garden, a Sensory Garden, the Performance Garden, the Seasonal Garden, and "The Grove". Some of the outdoor gardens are open 24-7, others from 9 a.m. to dusk, and all the outdoor spaces are of charge. Admission to the biomes is \$17.20 for adults, \$9.40 for kids 3-17, and \$14.90 for seniors (although you can save a buck or two in each category by buying in advance, on line. And there is another advantage to buying on line, because admission to The Leaf is by timed tickets, so having tickets in advance guarantees prompt entry).

Do you want to visit Winnipeg when it's 50 below at Portage and Main? Maybe not – although, if you do, the biomes will feel like paradise. But in the warmer months, The Leaf and all of its neighbours in Assiniboine Park and The Forks will make for a day full of delight.

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.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The biomes are replete with tropical blooms.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

Prehistoric "dinosaur trees", once thought extinct, are now carefully tended at The Leaf.

TOWNSHIP OF NORWICH NEWS



Norwich changes permitting rules for pool fences

LUKE EDWARDS
Post Contributor

It's getting a little easier to install a backyard pool in Norwich.

Township councillors at the Jan. 13 council meeting approved a staff recommendation to remove certain permitting requirements for privately-owned swimming pools not regulated by the Building Code Act. The changes fo-

cus on fencing for private pools, and while the rules will remain the same, homeowners will no longer require a swimming pool fence permit.

Jason Simpson, the township's chief building official and director of building services, said the move will make it simpler for those looking to install a pool, while also reducing the administrative burden on township staff.

"They can go ahead with the project without having to wait for the township staff to issue them a permit," he said.

Fences will still be required for pools that have a depth of two feet or more. Those fences must be at least four-feet tall. There are possible exemptions for above-ground pools where the sides of the pool extend at least four feet above the ground.

The changes only affect pools not governed by the Ontario Building Code, which dictates regulations for pools that serve six or more dwelling units, such as a communal pool in an apartment complex.

Year closes with a busy month for Norwich volunteer firefighters

LUKE EDWARDS
Post Contributor

Wintry weather, and one particularly bad day, led Norwich Fire and Protective Services to respond to 44 calls last month, which is significantly higher than either of the previous two years.

Of those 44 calls that volunteer firefighters responded to, 14 were for motor vehicle collisions as winter storms made driving more treacherous. Other weather-related calls included things like responding to downed power lines.

"At one point I think we had nine fire calls in one day, so that's pretty significant for us," said Derek Van Pagee, director of fire and protective services.

Despite the busy end to the year, the overall volume for 2025 appears likely to end up in line with the previous year's numbers, which remains down from 2023. Final hour totals for December 2025 hadn't been calculated when Van Pagee presented to Norwich councillors on Jan. 13, but firefighters had logged approximately 2,353 hours last year, according to the director's report. In 2024 firefighters logged 2,285 hours, and nearly 3,916 in 2023.

Van Pagee did note another increase, though in this case it was fully welcomed. The department applied for a \$65,000 provincial grant to help with a Diesel exhaust project, but ended up receiving roughly \$69,000.

Coun. Shaw Gear also thanked the firefighters for their support during the recent holiday season and Christmas parades.

"It was greatly appreciated the hard work done by the volunteer firefighter teams at the parades with their collection of non-perishable food goods. It looked like they were taking in quite a bit," he said.

COMING SOON

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2025 Award Winners

 David Bennett Broker <i>National Top 2% Award & Award of Excellence</i>  Realty Team ONE	 Dane Willson Broker <i>Director's Platinum Award & Award of Excellence</i> 	 Linda Coldham Broker <i>Master Sales Award & Lifetime Award of Excellence</i> 	 Crystal Ketchabaw Sales Rep. <i>Master Sales Award</i> 	
 David Bennett Broker (Team Lead) <i>Executive Circle Award</i> 	 Bob Arppe Sales Rep. <i>Executive Circle Award</i> 	 Taylor Thoonen Sales Rep. <i>Executive Circle Award</i> 	 Derrek de Jonge Sales Rep. <i>Diamond Award & National Top 10% Award</i> 	 Samuel Koppert Sales Rep. <i>Master Sales Award</i> 

Rob Koppert, Broker/Owner of Royal LePage R. E. Wood Realty, congratulates the 2025 Award Winners on their achievements. Our associates are dedicated to delivering exceptional service, and as a 100% Canadian company with nearly 20,000 Realtors® nationwide, Royal LePage is proud to serve communities across the country.





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RIDDLES

What word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?

Short

What has a lot of eyes but can't see?

Potato

What gets bigger the more you take away from it?

Pit

What kind of cup doesn't hold water?

Cupcake

What has a spine, but no bones, and can't walk?

Booklet

What comes at the end of a rainbow?

W

What has an eye, but can't wink?

Hurricane

What has a tail, but no arms or legs, and isn't a coin?

Comet

What can you catch but not throw?

Cold

What has a neck but no head?

Bottle

SUDOKU

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				3	7	2	1	
	6			1			4	3

Level: Beginner

Solutions on Page 22

PET OF THE WEEK



RAMBO

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N4G 4W4**

519-688-2672

HOURS:

**Sun: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Mon - Fri: 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Sat: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.**

Nominate your pet to be Pet of the Week by emailing info@tillsonburgpost.com

WORD SEARCH EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES

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

- WALKING
- READING
- COOKING
- SHOPPING
- CLEANING
- LISTENING
- WRITING
- DRAWING
- RELAXING
- STRETCHING
- LAUNDRY
- GARDENING
- EXERCISING
- ORGANIZING
- RESTING

COMING EVENTS

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FREE SENIOR DIGITAL LITERACY CLASSES ENCOMPASSING FACEBOOK, ZOOM, GOOGLE MAPS, YOUTUBE, AND MICROSOFT SUITE.

Wednesday, January 28: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

At the MSC

Call 519-842-9000 x.266 to register.

"THE SUITCASE"

Saturday January 24: 2 p.m.

The Edison, Vienna & Area Museum
6209 Plank Rd. Vienna

Don't miss this fascinating true tale! "The Suitcase" & its captivating contents!

Presented by Frank Moore & Ben Mayville.

Discover the journey of how it entered Frank's home, its

future destination & its connection to World War I | ~ Ten

Boer, Holland. Jason Pankratz, EdD - author of

"Six Graves in the Village" Will also be at the presentation!

Bayhamhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com

FREE CLASS/OPEN HOUSE AT OTTER VALLEY TAI CHI

Monday, January 26: 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

St. John's Anglican Church,

46 Ridout St. W., Tillsonburg

Email: ottervalley@canadiantaichiacademy.org. Phone:

519-688-9779

"A TICKET A BASKET"

MESSY CHURCH

February 7: 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

St.Pauls United Church,

88 Bidwell St. Tillsonburg

Join us for crafts, music, snacks, crafts and a hot meal!

Children must be accompanied by an adult.

FLAG RAISINGS FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2026

Join us this February to celebrate Black History Month in Oxford County. Commemorate the history of our Black communities and learn how diverse the community has grown. Pan-African Flag raisings and receptions including local historical displays by the Oxford County Archives and various museums and spoken word presentation by Duane Kumala-Thomas will be held in the following communities throughout the month:

Norwich

Tuesday Feb. 17th at 10:00 am

Norwich Community Centre, 53 Stover Street South

Reception to follow inside the Community Centre's

Auditorium.

Tillsonburg

Tuesday Feb. 24th at 10:00 am

South Broadway Parkette at Oxford St

Reception to follow at Tillsonburg Public Library (2 Library Lane).

Everyone is welcome. For more information visit [instagram: @oxfordroots](https://www.instagram.com/oxfordroots) or <http://revelateddotme.wixstudio.com/oxfordroots>

OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY OXPEX & OTEX 2026 STAMP SHOW

March 21: 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

St. Mary's Catholic High School,
431 Juliana Drive, Woodstock, ON

Free admission and parking. Framed and Judged exhibits, Stamp dealers, youth gift bags, Sales Circuit, draw prizes.

Contact: dhfe@silomail.com. Web: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>

INTRODUCTION TO TAI CHI

Winter session starts Wednesday, February 4th and runs for four months thru to May 27th, 6 - 7 pm.

We include a tai chi practice every Friday morning 10 - 11 am. A free Demo Class will be offered Wednesday,

January 28th, 6 - 7 pm at St Paul's United Church,

Tillsonburg (Fox Alley South Entrance). Email

tillsonburg@canadiantaichiacademy.org or call Deb 519-

688-2877 or Pat 519-983-3381 to learn more. Continuing

CTCA classes for experienced participants occur

Wednesdays 7 - 8:30 pm

North Broadway Baptist Church is excited to offer a low-cost way for men and women in the community to LEARN BRAZILIAN JIU-JITSU (BJJ) without breaking the bank.

Thanks to donor support, we've been able to purchase mats and uniforms, and our instructors generously volunteer their time. This isn't a business—any donations go straight

back into the program to help buy more uniforms, mats,

and equipment. If it's within your means, a \$20 monthly

donation helps support the program, but if not, classes are

completely free. **Classes are open to anyone 14 and older**

and run Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7-9 p.m., and

Saturdays from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. If you'd like to try a

class, please arrive about 15 minutes early to sign waivers

and get fitted for a uniform. Information can be found at:

<https://www.northbroadwaychurch.ca/nbmfa>, <https://www.facebook.com/northbroadwaymfa>, <https://www.instagram.com/northbroadwaymfa/> Inquires can be made at: nbmfa@northbroadwaychurch.ca

MODERN SQUARE DANCING IS FOR YOU!

Looking for something to do in the evening or something

new to try? Modern square dancing is a great way to learn

something new, have fun, meet new friends, relieve stress,

and get some exercise! **At Thames Valley Dance Club,**

we dance on Monday nights from 7 - 9 p.m. All you need

is comfortable shoes and casual clothing. No experience

or partner is required and anyone over the age of 12 is

welcome (children from 12-15 with an adult, please).

The 2025-2026 season has started at the Ingersoll Pipe

Band Hall, 108 Wonham St. S. Ingersoll. The first night

is free, and after that the cost is \$7.50 per person each

Monday, paid monthly at the start of the month. For more

information, contact Julie at 519-535-3314.

INTERESTED IN BRIDGE?

Join us every Friday at the Tillsonburg Duplicate

Bridge Club at 1 p.m. at The Senior Centre. Don't have

a partner? Come anyway and we will match you up with

someone. For more information, visit their Facebook page:

[TburgBridge](https://www.facebook.com/TburgBridge).

TILLSONBURG LIONS

The Tillsonburg Lions meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays.

You are invited to their dinner meetings in the Lion's Den

at the Community Centre. If you are interested in giving

back to your Community contact Jim at 519 409 0876 for

more information.....all are welcome.

OXFORD GRIEF CARE:

FREE Monthly Grief Support Group

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

TILLSONBURG

WHEN: 2nd Tuesday of every month

WHERE: VON Oxford Office 24 Brock St. W.,

Tillsonburg

TIME: 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

INGERSOLL

WHEN: 4th Tuesday of every month

WHERE: Ingersoll Public Library 130 Oxford St.,

Ingersoll

TIME: 10:30 a.m. - 12 Noon

WOODSTOCK

WHEN: 3rd Saturday of every month

WHERE: Sakura House Hospice 715180 Oxford Rd.4,

Woodstock

TIME: 10:30 a.m. - 12 Noon

MEMBERS GENERAL MEETING

1st Wednesday of every month

Starting at 7 pm

Not a member contact us to join

The Wagner Memorial Teeterville Legion Branch 526.

3890 Teeterville Road, Teeterville, Ontario. For More

Information Call, the Legion 519-443-5588

<https://www.teetervillelegionbranch526.ca>

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

The Wagner Memorial, Teeterville Legion Branch 526

3890 Teeterville Road, Teeterville, Ontario

You do not need to be a member to Volunteer, Just contact

the legion and leave your name and number and purpose

of your call. Someone will get back to you as to where

you might be needed. Students and Adults welcome. Open

hours. Wed.-Fri. 3 pm-10 pm, Sat.1 pm-10 pm, Sun.1 pm-6

pm. For More Information call, the Legion at 519-443-

5588 or [teetervillelegionbranch526.ca](https://www.teetervillelegionbranch526.ca)

OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Meetings: 2nd Tuesday (2-4 p.m.) and 4th Tuesday (7-9

p.m.)

September to May

Church of the Epiphany, 560 Dundas Street, Woodstock

Ontario N4S 1C7

If you have never belonged to a stamp club, now's the time.

Meet new friends, grow your knowledge and collection.

Contact: Don Eaton dhfe@silomail.com

Website: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>

TILLSONBURG SENIOR CENTRE WEEKLY

PROGRAMS FOR 50+

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month, and many more! Over 35 programs a week! Call

688-2520 for details.

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EVENTS:

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RAMBLERS DANCE

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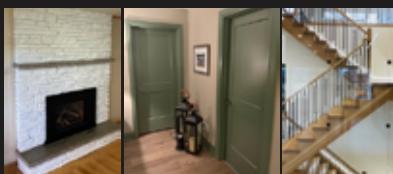
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- Supercell

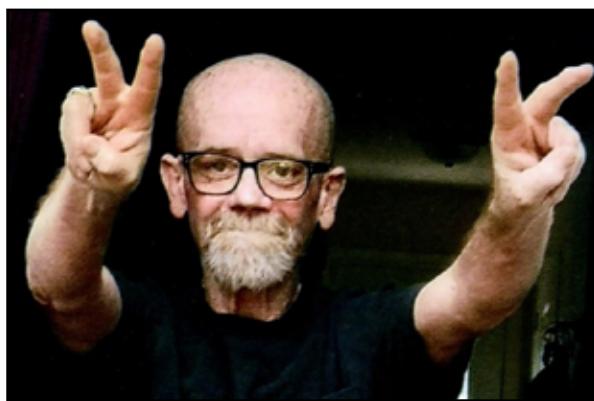
SUDOKU

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CLASSIFIEDS

OBITUARY

DAVID CHARLES WILSON



WILSON, David Charles of Tillsonburg, Ontario in his 64th year, born June 4, 1962, has ended his lengthy cancer battle on Friday January 16, 2026 at home peacefully with his partner Dawn DeBuck by his side. Survived by his sisters Judy Wilson and Diana Wilson, along with many cousins, Aunts, Uncles, and nephews. Predeceased by parents Louise and Doug Wilson, step mom Leny, and brothers Dougie and Dan Wilson. Dave was the 'stepped up' Dad to Jeff (Maggie) Wilson and their daughter Brylee Wilson, Josh (Aliya) Wilson, Amber DeBuck, Chelsea (Tanner) Pollard, and Serena Taylor. Not only did Dave take on this role, he became the next best thing and that was being the coolest GRAMPS to his favourite little humans Wyatt, Sofia, Nora, Rory, and Gregory.

Dave was known as a hard - working steel worker. He took a huge interest in arrowheads and native artifacts, in history, and his most favourite band "The Hip". Now, be at peace and continue WILSIFYING everything...until we meet again.

A special Thank you to Carepartners Team 6 - Johanna, Randy, Kristen, Leanne, Sarah, Terri - for the exceptional care provided over the last 4 years during this lengthy battle. Cremation has taken place. A small family and friend interment will be held at a later date in King Lake Cemetery. Wareing Cremation Services, 161 Broadway St., Tillsonburg has been entrusted with Final Arrangements. Your messages of remembrance and condolence may be shared at wareingcremation.ca

OBITUARY

DOUGLAS BARTLETT



It is with great sadness that we share that our beloved Douglas Bartlett passed peacefully at Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital after a lengthy battle with cancer on Thursday January 15, 2026. He was 87 years old.

Doug was predeceased by his loving wife Katie Bartlett (February 2, 2008). Amazing Dad to Janet Reiser, and Darlene Lounsbury. Much loved Grandpa of Jason Reiser, Michelle Camacho, Adam Lounsbury, and Ashley (Luke) Swanek, and great grandpa of Christian, Olivia, and Charlie. Survived by his sister Olive (Jim) Holmes, and many nieces and nephews. Predeceased by his parents Harry and Selena Bartlett, siblings Maurice Bartlett, Lloyd Bartlett, Muriel Ketchabaw, Marjorie Whitehead, Helen Harris, Irene Chatterson, and by his son-in-law Brian Lounsbury. Doug is also survived by his best friend Diane DeRoo, her children Terry, Marlene, and John, her grandchildren, and her great grandchildren. They all held a special place in Doug's heart.

Dad spent many years as an auto body man. He started his career at Grant Motors, Straffordville, and then built a business of his own, Bartlett's Auto Body in Straffordville. He was well known and respected in the community for doing excellent work. In later years you could find Dad spending his time washing his car, or perhaps on his knees manicuring his lawn. He was a jack-of-all-trades and he loved to take things apart and fix them. Dad loved to visit and his quick wit would bring laughter to anyone who knew him.

We extend a huge thank you to the Verspeeten Family Cancer Centre, Dr. Southcott, Dr. Vincent, Dr. Laba, and nurse Kristen for their excellent care. Thank you to the Woodstock Chemo Wing for their excellent care while Dad was in treatment. Thank you to Dr. Abdella, nursing Staff, and especially nurse Tara at Tillsonburg Hospital.

In keeping with Doug's wishes there will be no formal services. Memorial donations made to the Verspeeten Family Cancer Centre, or to the TDMH Foundation are most appreciated. Wareing Cremation Services, 161 Broadway St., Tillsonburg has been entrusted with Final Arrangements. Your messages of remembrance and condolence may be shared at wareingcremation.ca

tillsonburgpost.com

TREES

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



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