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Packed house for all-candidates forum

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

More than 300 people packed the Lion's Auditorium at the Tillsonburg Community Centre for the all-candidates night ahead of the upcoming municipal election.

Sponsored by the Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce and Tillsonburg Post, the event was held on Sept. 30 and gave candidates for mayor and councilor positions a chance to speak and answer questions. Candidates received the questions ahead of time, which were selected from public and chamber member submissions, to research their answers.

Incumbent mayor Deb Gilvesy provided her

background, highlighting her employment and business experience, as well as her time as a tobacco board official working with higher levels of government. She was elected to council in 2018, and as mayor in 2022. She has worked on remaining accessible during this time.

"I believe public service is not a part-time commitment, but a full-time job," she said.

Challenger Kelly Spencer, a first-term councillor, is an award-winning business owner, and former registered nurse. She is also a long-time volunteer for several local organizations and started volunteering when she was nine years old. As a nurse, Spencer said she learned to work under pressure, which is important as a council member.

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Giant Tiger opening planned for the spring

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Giant Tiger announced on Oct. 1 that it will open a new location at the Norfolk Mall.

The news that many area residents were waiting for was speculation for most of the summer after the opening of the Winners location this summer.

The hard-discount retailer is expected to open in the Norfolk Mall in spring 2027. A Giant Tiger press release promised low prices on everyday essentials, exciting finds and

convenient shopping.

"From grocery staples and household basics to fashion, home and unexpected finds, the new Tillsonburg store will focus on keeping the products customers need most in stock, at low prices they can trust," the release stated.

"We're excited to bring Giant Tiger to Tillsonburg for the first time as we continue to invest in our store network and grow in communities where we see an opportunity to help Canadians save more," said Gus Kokonas, Executive Vice Presi-

CONTINUED TO PAGE 5



REMEMBRANCE BANNER INSTALLATION

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Tillsonburg Hydro Inc. linesman Ryan Fitch installs one of the last of the 140 Remembrance banners that were hung on Quarterline Road. There were 17 new banners installed this year thanks to the work of the banner committee, which includes representatives of the Tillsonburg Military History Club and the local branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. Installation started in late September and the banners will remain in place until after Nov. 11.

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Authorized by Kelly Spencer.

Mayoral candidates share their positions on town's future

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

"These are transferable skills to get the job done," she said.

The first question the mayoral candidates answered dealt with what they would do to ensure every tax dollar is spent as efficiently as possible.

Spencer said affordability is one of the most important responsibilities of a mayor, but she doesn't believe saying "cut taxes" is the answer. She would like every town department to identify what is essential and what is discretionary, and what can be partnered on. Spencer wants to look at multi-year budgets and look for possible partnerships for procurement and if there are grants out there. She pointed to a motion she presented on a townwide sponsorship policy, which could present revenue opportunities.

As a strong mayor, she committed to working with all council members, and encouraging discussion on the budget. She wants council to ask whether spending is necessary before committing taxpayer dollars.

"My commitment is simple: responsible conservative budgeting, measurable results, competitive procurement and no assumption that because we've always done something one way, we have to keep doing it that way," Spencer concluded.

Gilvesy said she would like an efficiency review across all town departments to identify duplication and modernization opportunities to find savings. She said council also needs to respect staff time, allowing them to focus on the roles of a municipality established under the Municipal Act. She said anytime council moves beyond its defined roles, there is a cost to taxpayers.

At the same time, Gilvesy emphasized fiscal responsibility doesn't mean stopping spending, as the town's infrastructure is aging and it must continue to follow the Asset Management Plan to maintain it.

She also called for controlling spending at county council, which also impacts local property taxes, saying the tax hikes at the upper tier have not been sustainable.

"My commitment is simple: ask the questions, find the efficiencies, repair infrastructure, and make every tax dollar work as hard as possible," she said.

The mayoral candidates then wrestled with a question regarding how they will ensure council stays focused on core municipal issues and protect taxpayer dollars from being spent on issues outside council's control.

Gilvesy said this is one of the most important responsibilities of a mayor and council.

"When a municipality moves outside its mandate, there is a cost of the taxpayer," she said.

Using the example of health care, Gilvesy said council can't control wait times, but its role is advocacy. She said one situation where she thought council needed to step up and show its commitment was funding the unattached patient nurse-practitioner-led clinic for a year, which led to the clinic's permanent establishment. But Gilvesy stressed that most of the credit for the clinic should go to the Ingersoll Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic, the Oxford Health Team, and the Thames Valley Health Team.

Gilvesy believes the mayor's role is to provide guidance and leadership when something is outside of council's mandate and could cost taxpayers money, but not micromanage. She sees council as needing to understand the costs of moving out of its lane.

Spencer believes in council "staying in its lane", but that doesn't mean ignoring problems. She said council should investigate, collaborate and bring potential partners to the table.

She also cited the example of health care, and how the town's temporary funding helped establish a permanent clinic in Tillsonburg. Spencer also mentioned her motion on a traffic study on Highway 19 and homelessness as issues that aren't local, but council can make an impact. Expanding on homelessness, Spencer committed to seeking funding and collaboration from existing organizations while accessing grants.

Spencer said she would expect council to ask three questions: is this our issue, is there a legitimate municipal role, and what outcome are taxpayers receiving for the municipal dollars.

"If something is outside municipal jurisdiction and there's no meaningful municipal role, we shouldn't spend municipal staff time and money pretending otherwise," she said.

Both mayoral candidates answered a quick-fire question about how quickly they should respond to constituent questions in similar but different ways. Spencer said residents deserve acknowledgement of their questions with a day or two, although it may take longer to get a full answer, and believes being an elected official means "being accessible to all." Gilvesy said, "as quickly as humanly possible. Residents deserve timely responses."

The mayoral candidates were also asked about their three strategic priorities in the coming elec-

tion.

Gilvesy said safety is important, and the fire hall needs updating, which is planned for the 2027 budget. Her second priority is moving the VanNorman Industrial Park second phase forward, after a two-year hold-up for archaeological studies. She explained industrial growth provides jobs and provides tax revenue to the town. Her third priority is bringing town-owned land behind the cemetery into town limits.

However, Gilvesy said she would not impose her priorities on council, and would sit down with council to host a think tank where all of council partakes and sets its priorities.

"Strong leadership isn't about one person deciding everything; it is about bringing seven people together, establishing clear priorities, and then working together to get the job done," she said.

Spencer's three priorities are infrastructure and responsible growth, affordability and financial sustainability and a stronger downtown and local economy.

She explained she would encourage commercial zoning around downtown and support the Station District development, which has 40,000 square feet of commercial space. With only one per cent commercial vacancy downtown, Spencer believes there is potential for industrial growth tied to the St. Thomas Volkswagen gigafactory, and will ensure Tillsonburg is part of it. Besides providing jobs, Spencer sees commercial and industrial growth as an opportunity to increase tax revenue beyond residential.

"Someone recently called me Can-do Kelly because I look for ways to find solutions and results," she said, adding that her priority will always be the residents of Tillsonburg.

With homelessness being a hot topic, although it is more a county and provincial responsibility, the candidates were asked how they would collaborate with upper levels of government to find local solutions.

Spencer said homelessness shouldn't stop at the municipal boundary, and neither should the town's response.

She pointed to the United Way's Lighthouse, which has provided seven beds to help get 40 people off the streets over the last three years.

While Spencer acknowledged that homelessness is primarily Oxford County's responsibility, she said what has been done isn't working. She cited the St. Thomas example where transitional housing is provided for 16 individuals. In con-

versations with St. Thomas Mayor Joe Preston, she was told this has reduced the number of calls to first responders.

She plans to hire security or safety ambassadors who have a social service background. They will remind people of bylaws on private property and bring in first responders when necessary. They would ask if those on the streets need food, mental health intervention, addiction services or a place to stay.

"They would help assist businesses, employees, as well as customers to feel better and maybe provide a trusted face for those that are struggling," Spencer said. "When I spoke to businesses downtown about my plan, they said this would be a powerful asset."

She wants to support all affordable housing developments. Spencer said the centre in Woodstock is a couple of years away and action is needed now.

Gilvesy pointed out there is a loophole in the law where it is illegal to be intoxicated by alcohol in public. Still, it is not illegal to be intoxicated by drugs. The local police services board has sent a letter to the province pointing out this loophole and asking for a solution. It also sent a letter to the owners of the Tillsonburg Town Centre with suggestions to enhance security. Gilvesy said the town does not qualify for funding from any level of government to combat the problem, as it is handled by other levels of government.

Saying "behind every statistic is a person", Gilvesy outlined the many initiatives the county has undertaken to tackle the issue, including doubling funding for subsidized housing and creating 50 more spaces in the HART Hub for homeless people in Woodstock. Locally, the police services board has doubled foot and cruiser patrols, has a parks bylaw that has prevented encampments like in other municipalities, and council just passed a nuisance bylaw that should help bylaw officers with enforcement.

Gilvesy spoke against Spencer's concept of hiring a security guard, saying it would create a cost and that any potential security guard would have no authority to lay charges or remove homeless individuals from downtown.

In their closing remarks, the mayoral candidates summarized their positions. Gilvesy said important work remains, and she has listened and learned from the people - who are the mayor's boss. Spencer said she will listen and collaborate with people, while remembering who she works for.



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EDITORIAL

Be thankful for what we have

Many Canadians have puzzled over the years why our Thanksgiving differs from the date of American Thanksgiving.

As we all know, the U.S. tradition was linked to the Pilgrims and a feast after the harvest of 1621. But why is the date north of the 49th parallel different?

Several theories exist, including earlier harvests further north, distancing the holiday from Remembrance Day, and a couple of historical speculations. Some believe it dates back to explorer Martin Frobisher and the fall of 1578, while others hang their hats on Samuel de Champlain's Order of Good Cheer dinners, which started in 1606. These are interesting bits of Canadiana, things that should be common knowledge, but the second Monday in October officially became Thanksgiving Monday through an Act of Parliament in 1957.

What's really important isn't the origins of Thanksgiving, but its purpose. It's a time to be thankful for the local harvest and what we have. It's a time of

humility and reflection, when each of us can look at our lives through the lens of thankfulness and remind ourselves of how important it is to recognize the privileges we may forget through the busyness of everyday life.

For some, that may mean giving thanks for family and friends, a safe place to call home, food on the table, good health, meaningful work or the support of a caring community.

We also need to remember that many aren't so fortunate. Some struggle to put food on the table not only on Thanksgiving, but every day. This isn't just about people experiencing homelessness, but about individuals and families struggling financially. Unfortunately, those numbers are growing.

In Tillsonburg, we are fortunate to have so many organizations that help those in need. The Helping Hand Food Bank is the most obvious, but there is the Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul, and many others.

This Thanksgiving, be thankful for what you have, and help those who are less fortunate if you are able.

tillsonburgpost.com



Spot the luna moth.

(LINDA SYS PHOTO)

Learning to be still and quiet pays off for Tillsonburg photographer



**EVERYONE
HAS A
STORY
TO TELL**

ROBIN KRAFFT

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

If a picture paints a thousand words, imagine 10 000 pictures a month. Darwin Barnard typically takes that many photos, of "anything that moves" and some things that don't.

He has lived in the Tillsonburg area all his life, 46 years of that on his parents' hobby farm just north of town.

"My father worked for Gilvesy Construction for about 30 years," Barnard said. "He built the house from scratch. We had a little barn too. We kept ducks, geese, chickens, almost every kind of pheasant, bobwhite quail and had a permit for Canada geese. There weren't many around here then. I've been around birds and wildlife my whole life."

Darwin worked in tobacco for 25 years, and in the winter, he was a cabinetmaker for Kuhl's Showroom Displays.

"One of the most interesting cabinets we made was in the early 80's for Wolseley Barracks in London,"

Barnard said. "People donated their medals. We made cabinets to perfectly fit a whole room. It had 240 little drawers and bevelled displays at the front. I wish I had a picture of that."

Preferring outdoor work, Darwin also had his own snow removal and lawn maintenance business, clearing sidewalks and caring for lawns throughout Otterville, Springford, Norwich, Burgessville, Beachville, Mt. Elgin and Brownsville. He also worked for the Township of SWOX.

A life-altering accident changed everything. Unable to return to outdoor physical labour, Darwin turned to photography.

"I didn't let it stop me," Barnard said. "I liked being outside, and I still like it. I also liked taking pictures. My first camera was a cheapie, a simple point and shoot. I took pictures of old barns, flowers, bees and at horse shows. I couldn't walk, but I could take my chair and sit, and the birds came to me."

Three years later, Darwin got his first nice camera and now has two Nikons and a good Sony, which he prefers because it's lighter but still has good zoom capability.

"I've worn out quite a few cameras," Barnard said. "I like taking pictures of old barns, but there's not many of them left. I like old buildings, and trains and planes, but wildlife is my favorite."

Darwin has had some extraordinary close encounters over the years.

"Some things come up close when I'm sitting there watching," Barnard said. "I get to see things that nobody gets to see. I sit still and quiet. I don't move fast."

One day he noticed a twitching in the grass near his chair and discovered a young fawn. Another day, snap-

ping turtle hatchlings emerged from their gravelly nest and made their way to the water. Green and great blue herons, egrets, wood ducks, and a doe with a nursing fawn have all appeared within a few feet of him and his camera.

Darwin lived in Port Burwell for a couple of years while waiting for his Lisgar Ave apartment to be repaired after the fire in 2022. It's still his favorite place for wildlife photography.

"I'm out there and nobody's bothering me," Barnard said. "You sit quietly and you never know what will come out. Last year I found some beaver in the park. I couldn't believe it. I showed the warden and she couldn't believe it either."

Darwin's beautiful images have been used in the Port Burwell Provincial Park's guide, including his doe and fawn photo, and this year, a juvenile wood duck.

Among his exceptional bird photos, he included the red-headed woodpecker, the American Avocet and a rare sandpiper. People know he loves to photograph birds, informing him of sightings and inviting him to sit in their yard, but sometimes he's just in the right place at the right time. He never discloses a location.

Darwin is a member of the Otter Valley Naturalist's Club and the Photographers of the Otter Valley. He was the official photographer for the GREAT Saddle Club for 17 years, and he regularly takes photos for the Port Burwell Legion. He has even done a few small weddings.

"I guess it's solitude versus social," Darwin said. "Lots of people know who I am. I only post a small percentage of my photography on Facebook in Tillsonburg and on Burwell Life. I don't enter contests or anything. People say I should, but I don't. It's my hobby."

A kid learns how to build houses in the 1970s



PAST IMPERFECT

WAYNE HUTCHISON

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

After about three years of living at 49 North Street East, and with my brother and I getting bigger all the time, my parents started talking about making the house larger. The house we had lived in up until then was small at just over 750 square-feet with a total of six rooms. It was all we really needed, but it was a little cramped at times.

I had an interest in architecture and house design, building lots of different houses with my Lego set. But I also convinced Mom to buy the odd “home plans” magazine from time to time at the grocery store so I could pore over the various pictures and drawings. I learned quite a lot from those magazines, such as what floor plans looked like, how to show doors, windows, electrical, plumbing, etc., and how to draw elevation (side view) drawings of houses. There were also a lot of houses being built all around us in Rolling Meadows subdivision, and on Lamer’s farm just south of the NY Central tracks, so I had lots of examples to look at and wander around in when nobody was there to stop me...

So, when Mom and Dad started talking about making our house larger, I got out some graph paper and started making some sketches. I then drew up scale drawings of a floor plan and elevations, using an old wooden ruler as my “scale”. The ‘addition’ would add a new bedroom for my parents, a larger family room, a mud room, and a covered patio. Mom and Dad showed my drawings to a friend of their’s, Ted Layman, and he agreed to build the addition.

Layman was the general contractor on the project, and he hired Les Cassino to do a lot of the framing and trim work. Both were

older guys; I’m not sure how old but to me they seemed like wise old sages. The building started in the spring of 1976, when I was in Grade 5, and finished that summer.

I spent all of my free time watching and helping out with the build. I remember the backhoe digging the trench for the new foundation, building of the forms, and the pouring of the concrete. It was amazing to see how it all went together.

Once the foundation was poured, the next step was framing the floor – I was enlisted to nail down all of the plywood sub-flooring after school. Layman and I used a chalk line to mark out where all the floor joists were, and I went to work with my hammer and canvas pouch full of nails. I was out there all evening pounding nails.

I learned how to frame walls lying flat on the subfloor and then tip them up into position, and how to frame door and window openings. And when it came to the wiring, although I didn’t get to actually make any of the final connections, I did learn how it was done, and I did get to drill all the holes in the studs for the wires to pass through.

Framing the roof was left to the pros, but I watched closely how they set the ridge board in place and then cut and installed the rafters and ties. And how they tied it all into the original roof. All very interesting to an 11 year-old.

What I did get to do was help shingle the roof – both the new addition and the original house. The slope was shallow enough

that there was no real risk of sliding off, so up the ladder I went. I was too small to carry the bundles of shingles up the ladder, but I got to do everything else. Layman took the time to show me the little details of the shingles - how they had little slits in them to help you keep them lined up straight and to show you where to cut them with the knife, so everything looked right. I filled up my nail pouch with several handfuls of roofing nails but seemed to keep running out all the time – each shingle took four nails and there are a lot of shingles on a roof.

Once the addition was complete, I moved out of the bedroom I had shared with my brother (that might have been the best part of the whole project) and into my parent’s old bedroom. And with a new family room for watching TV, the old living room area became more of a games room. We put up a dart board, and Dad found a cheap used pool table and ping pong table somewhere. Those gave us hours of enjoyment – especially in the winter time.

I never became an architect (I became an engineer instead), but I did study drafting and architecture with Mr. Marsden at Glen-dale High School every year from Grade 9 to 12. And I have been involved in several major home renovation projects over the years where I’ve used all those skills I learned as an 11-year-old ‘ap-prentice’.

So don’t be afraid to let your kids build things – the world needs more people who know how to build.

Letter to the Editor

I’m writing this letter to the Editor in connection with the article on page seven of the Sept. 24th edition of the Tillsonburg Post by Jeff Helsdon.

The headline was “Town recreation survey has some surprises”.

Outdoor Trails topped the list of important facilities in Tillsonburg with a whopping 92 per cent of those who filled out the survey. There was some debate in council about the possibility that some of those who filled out the survey might not have been citizens of Tillsonburg itself.

However, I think we should be proud that visitors from neighbouring centres are using greenspaces and trails, and specifically our Tillsonburg section of the Trans-Canada Trail starting on Quarter Town Line, bisecting Broadway, Tillson Ave, and heading east past Five Points approximately 17 km, ending at Baseline Rd near Hawtrey.

Firstly, in expressing thanks for this gem of natural beauty, kudos to the outgoing town council for initiating this survey to assess the interests of the residents of our town. That high degree of satisfaction is supported by a very unscientific survey I did personally while walking or biking the trail.

How important can the selection of a par-

ticular candidate on one’s ballot be? The answer is critically important.

Going back into our civic history to the early 2000s, the acceptance of an offer of over \$500,000 for the trail from the Trans-Canada Trail Association was not a slam dunk! There was a small group of adjacent land owners, and a few on the town council of the day, who had concerns about proceeding with the trail. At that time the route was an abandoned railway line. As the railway ties were removed, a base of sharp chunks of limestone, rectangular blocks was left. These chunks made for a challenging walking experience with high risk of an ankle injury.

One councillor, Brian Stephenson, a colleague of mine in teaching at St. Joe’s, and I often stumbled down short sections of the trail. He suggested that we could do something to make it user friendly. A short time later, he and I drove to county council meetings in Woodstock and discussions there sparked his enthusiasm for the trail. A long battle ensued at both county and Tillsonburg council levels but Brian’s spirit never wavered.

Brian lived to see the fulfillment of his dream and we enjoyed a few years of hiking

and biking together before his untimely passing in 2018. His efforts in the development of this outstanding resource were commended by his fellow council members by these words posted on a plaque on a bench just east of the Broadway entry point near Burger King and Tim Hortons:

In memory of Brian Stephenson, Councillor 2003-2018 For creating a legacy of inclusion through his vision, passion and love for Tillsonburg...the community he served.

Fast forwarding to this year’s election and the realization that one candidate can make a huge difference, my decision has been to support Lindsey Ambrus Mejaski. Lindsay was a student of mine in my Grade 4 class at St Joseph’s School. Today she has a wide ranging involvement in a host of civic endeavours including treasurer of St Joseph’s Parent Council, a treasurer and convenor of the Tillsonburg Minor Soccer Club. She’s also connected with the Tillsonburg Chamber of Commerce and is a small business owner.

I encourage other citizens to get out and support the candidate of their choice in the upcoming town council election, knowing your vote can make a difference.let.

*Sincerely,
Dan Mahony*

Tillsonburg POST

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Giant Tiger coming to Norfolk Mall, Shoes Liquidation opens

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

dent, Chief Franchise Operations Officer, Giant Tiger Stores Limited. “Our customers work hard for their money, and we know we have to earn their business every time they shop with us. That means staying focused on what matters most: low prices on the everyday essentials they rely on, keeping those products in stock, being there for the communities we serve, and giving customers more reasons to shop Giant Tiger first for the things they need every day.”

Oct. 1 was a big day at the Norfolk Mall, with the new Shoes Liquidation location also opening its doors.

For Cassandra Way, Chief Operating Officer for mall owners E & E McLaughlin Ltd., it was a day of excitement as Giant Tiger dropped off a giant chair with the company logo outside the store to build momentum with the announcement. She recounted that when the company purchased the Norfolk Mall in fall 2020, the 50,000-square-foot former Walmart space had been vacant, the roof needed to be replaced, and there was water damage inside.

“Ironically, Giant Tiger was actually our very first lead for the former Walmart space,” she revealed. “We had worked through the deal, agreed to the major terms and were preparing to move forward, but at the time we weren’t able to get the deal across the finish line because of an existing restrictive covenant relating to grocery sales at the property.”

Since they live and work in the community, McLaughlin said they knew the community wanted a Giant Tiger and Winners. A few years later circumstances changed, and Giant Tiger came back to the table.

“It was a lot of fun watching the excite-

ment build before Winners opened this summer,” she said. “There was so much speculation about what was coming next, and Giant Tiger was probably the name we heard more than any other. Seeing the parking lot full again and hearing all of the positive feedback about Winners has been incredibly rewarding.”

With the Shoes Liquidation opening, Way said the new retailers are filling a void in the Tillsonburg market. Shoes Liquidation shares ownership with Shoes Factory in Simcoe and Al’s Shoes in Brantford. And there is more to come. McLaughlin shared that the company is working on an official plan amendment to build a new 40,000 square-foot retail pad on the property.

“Tillsonburg has experienced tremendous growth, and the community is large enough to support more retail options. Our location at the south end of town also benefits from the significant draw Tillsonburg receives from the surrounding rural communities and the lake communities to the south,” she said.

“One thing people don’t always realize is just how long developments like this take. We started discussions with Winners more than two years before they opened their doors. With Giant Tiger, the story goes all the way back to 2020—six years from our first conversations to construction finally getting underway.”

The new Giant Tiger will create employment opportunities, with more details on hiring and the opening date to come. Tillsonburg residents can follow the Giant Tiger Tillsonburg Facebook page for local store updates and sign up for GT VIP™ at GiantTiger.com to receive the latest deals and exclusive offers.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Kassandra Way, Chief Operating Officer for mall owners E & E McLaughlin Ltd., sits in the giant chair Giant Tiger dropped off to signify the company will be coming to the Norfolk Mall.

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Tillsonburg Fire Department urges residents to charge safely

The Tillsonburg Fire Department is teaming up with the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®) to support Fire Prevention Week. This year's FPW theme, "Charge into Fire Safety: Safe Charging Is a Superpower," focuses on the simple steps people can take to recharge safely. Safe charging means making smart choices every time you plug in.

Many devices used in

our daily lives - phones, tablets, laptops, tools, toys, e-bikes, and scooters—run on rechargeable lithium-ion batteries, which store a lot of energy in a small space. If they are damaged or charged the wrong way, they can overheat, start a fire, or even explode.

"The way you charge your lithium-ion battery devices can make a difference in helping prevent home fires," said Sarah

Barclay, Fire Prevention Officer, Tillsonburg Fire Department. "It comes down to using simple habits each time you plug in."

- Use the cord and charger that came with your device or one approved by the manufacturer. Using the wrong charger can damage the battery and increase the risk of fire.
- Charge devices on a table, desk, or other hard, flat surface. Do

not charge them on beds, couches, or under pillows. Devices and chargers produce heat during normal charging. Soft surfaces can trap heat and block airflow, which can cause the battery to overheat.

- Stop using your device if it feels very hot, starts to swell, is smoking, or has a strange smell. These are warning signs that the battery may be damaged or failing.
- Unplug your device when it is fully charged. Do not leave it plugged in longer than needed. Leaving a device plugged in too long can increase heat and stress on the battery.
- Charge larger items like e-bikes, scooters, and power tools outside and away from exits. These batteries are larger and store more energy. If they fail, fires can grow quickly and spread.
- When on a plane, keep your device where you can see it while charging. Do not charge devices in overhead compartments. Do not charge e-cigarettes or vapes on a plane. If a battery overheats or fails, it is important for the flight crew to respond quickly.

The Tillsonburg Fire Department is hosting a Fire Prevention Week Open House On Thursday, Oct. 8 from 6-8pm at The Fire



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Tillsonburg Fire Department's Interim Chief Fred Ten Eyck and Interim Deputy Chief Vanessa Devolin remind the public it's essential to use original or factory specification chargers when charging e-bikes.

Hall at 80 Concession Street East.

To learn more about lithium-ion battery safety, visit fpw.org.

The lowdown on lithium Lithium batteries and safe charging are at the centre of the theme of this year's Fire Safety Week.

Lithium batteries and chargers are the cause of a few fires each year in Tillsonburg.

Acting fire chief Fred Ten Eyck explained with lithium batteries getting

smaller, the energy is condensed in a smaller area, but the heat still need to escape. He gave the example of a 9-volt alkaline battery, saying technology has allowed a comparable power lithium batteries to be the size of a nickel.

"If they're used properly, they're great," said Sarah Barclay, fire prevention officer. "It's the individuals who are not using them properly and overcharging or using the wrong battery of charger."



Charge into Fire Safety with Tillsonburg Fire & Rescue Services

This year's Fire Prevention Week™ (FPW™) campaign, October 5-11, "Charge into Fire Safety™: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home," works to educate everyone about using these batteries safely. The campaign stresses how important it is to **BUY, CHARGE, and RECYCLE** safely when it comes to lithium-ion batteries.

3 STEPS TO HELP YOU STAY SAFE:

Buy only listed products. When buying a product that uses a lithium-ion battery look for a safety certification mark such as UL, ETL, or CSA. This means it meets important safety standards.

Charge devices safely. Always use the cords that came with the product to charge. Follow the instructions from the manufacturer. Buy new chargers from the manufacturer or one that the manufacturer has approved. Charge your device on a hard surface. Don't overcharge your device. Unplug it or remove the battery when it's fully charged.

Recycle batteries responsibly. Don't throw lithium-ion batteries in the trash or regular recycling bins because they could start a fire. Recycle your device or battery at a safe battery recycling location. Visit call2recycle.org to find a recycling spot near you.

tillsonburgpost.com



Beepa celebrating its third birthday

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Beepa, the province's fire safety mascot, is celebrating its third birthday.

If Beepa had a birth certificate, it would list Tillsonburg as its place of birth. Modeled after a smoke and carbon monoxide detector outfitted in firefighter bunker gear, Beepa is more than just a feel-good fuzzy mascot – pushing its nose sets off warnings similar to a detector going off.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Sarah Barclay proudly displays a stuffed version of Beepa, the province's new fire safety mascot. She had the idea for the mascot to replace Sparky, the American mascot for fire safety.

The concept for Beepa came from Sarah Barclay, Tillsonburg's fire prevention officer and fire educator. She envisioned an interactive mascot to help teach children about fire safety.

Beepa's roots are all Tillsonburg. While at a conference, her colleagues recognized Tillsonburg native Jamie Kovacs, executive director of the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council, and convinced her to share her vision.

The result was a smoke and carbon monoxide detector in firefighter bunker gear with a removable nose that reveals a push button that emits warnings similar to a detector going off.

Barclay never imagined Beepa would catch on as it did. "Not in my wildest dream," she commented.

Plush Beepa toys have been distributed to fire departments across Ontario, as have colouring sheets and other educational material.

"The fact that it is out there and departments are using it, or even seeing something on Facebook, or hearing

something from a friend about Beepa, it warms my heart because Beepa is doing what I hoped it would do," Barclay said.

Kovacs said he wanted something to raise awareness that could sit on a table in front of a child, and they could press a button to make a smoke alarm sound.

"It actually brings it to life for them; it's not just an item on the ceiling," he said of Beepa.

He has been working with Autism Canada and found Beepa has been a tremendous asset. Kovacs said people on the spectrum can go into sensory overload if a smoke alarm goes off, and there is a possibility they will freeze instead of vacating the premises. With Beepa, the concept of a smoke alarm can be explained, and the button can be pushed repeatedly.

"They get used to it over time as opposed to being scared of it," Kovacs said.

Beepa has also appeared on a colouring sheet with the Toronto Blue Jays, which was distributed across the province.

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FIRE PREVENTION WEEK: OCTOBER 4-10, 2026

Safe Charging Is a SUPERPOWER

Charge into Fire Safety™

Fire Prevention Week Open House on Oct. 8

The Tillsonburg Fire Department is opening its doors to the community on Thursday, Oct. 8, from 6 to 8 p.m. for an evening of family fun, fire safety education and demonstrations.

The annual open house is being held as part of Fire Prevention Week, with this year's theme, "Charge into Fire Safety™: Safe Charging Is a Superpower." The campaign highlights the importance of safe charging practices, and the

steps residents can take to reduce the risk of fires involving lithium-ion batteries.

Visitors will have the opportunity to meet Tillsonburg firefighter and telecommunicators, explore fire trucks and emergency equipment, and take part in hands-on activities. The evening will also feature live auto-extrication and specialized operations demonstrations, providing a closer look at the work our

team does to protect the community.

Families can also enjoy face painting, food and refreshments, with food provided by the Rapid Relief Team and Tim Hortons while quantities last.

The open house is a chance for resi-

dents to connect with their local fire department, learn more about fire safety and enjoy an evening together as a community.

The event is free and open to everyone.

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DIESEL SPILL

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Tillsonburg firefighters, public works crews and a commercial spill company all assisted with clean up of a diesel spill on Sept. 29 at the intersection of Broadway and North Street. The fuel entered a storm drain due to the natural topography in the area. It's estimated 500 to 600 liters of fuel was spilled. The leakage was due to a mechanical failure in a transport truck.

A SAFE THANKSGIVING IS SOMETHING TO BE THANKFUL FOR

Remember to check your
smoke alarms and carbon
monoxide detectors.



ERNIE HARDEMAN
MPP - Oxford



See green lights, pull over

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Tillsonburg Fire Department wants to remind people if they see the green flashing lights of a volunteer firefighter answering a call, they need to pull over if safe to do so.

Sarah Barclay, fire prevention officer, said time is precious when firefighters are answering a call.

If we're able to go to the firehall quicker and safer, the quicker we'll get to the emergency," she said.

Firefighters have been noticing some motorists haven't been pulling over, and imagine it's because they moved to Tillsonburg from somewhere that didn't have volunteer firefighters.

"The way Tillsonburg has grown, there are so many people who moved here from somewhere else and don't what the flashing green light is," she said.

For instance, Toronto has a full-time department, and drivers there may not be aware of the green flashing lights volunteer firefighters put in their vehicles.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Flashing green lights are used by volunteer firefighters to get to the firehall quickly when a call goes out. Motorists are asked to pull over, if safe, when they see a flashing green light behind them.

FSP

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

DID YOU KNOW?

Cooking is the leading cause of home fires, and unattended cooking is the number one culprit. Always stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling, or broiling food—and if you have to step away, even for a moment, turn off the stove.

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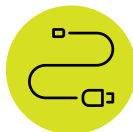
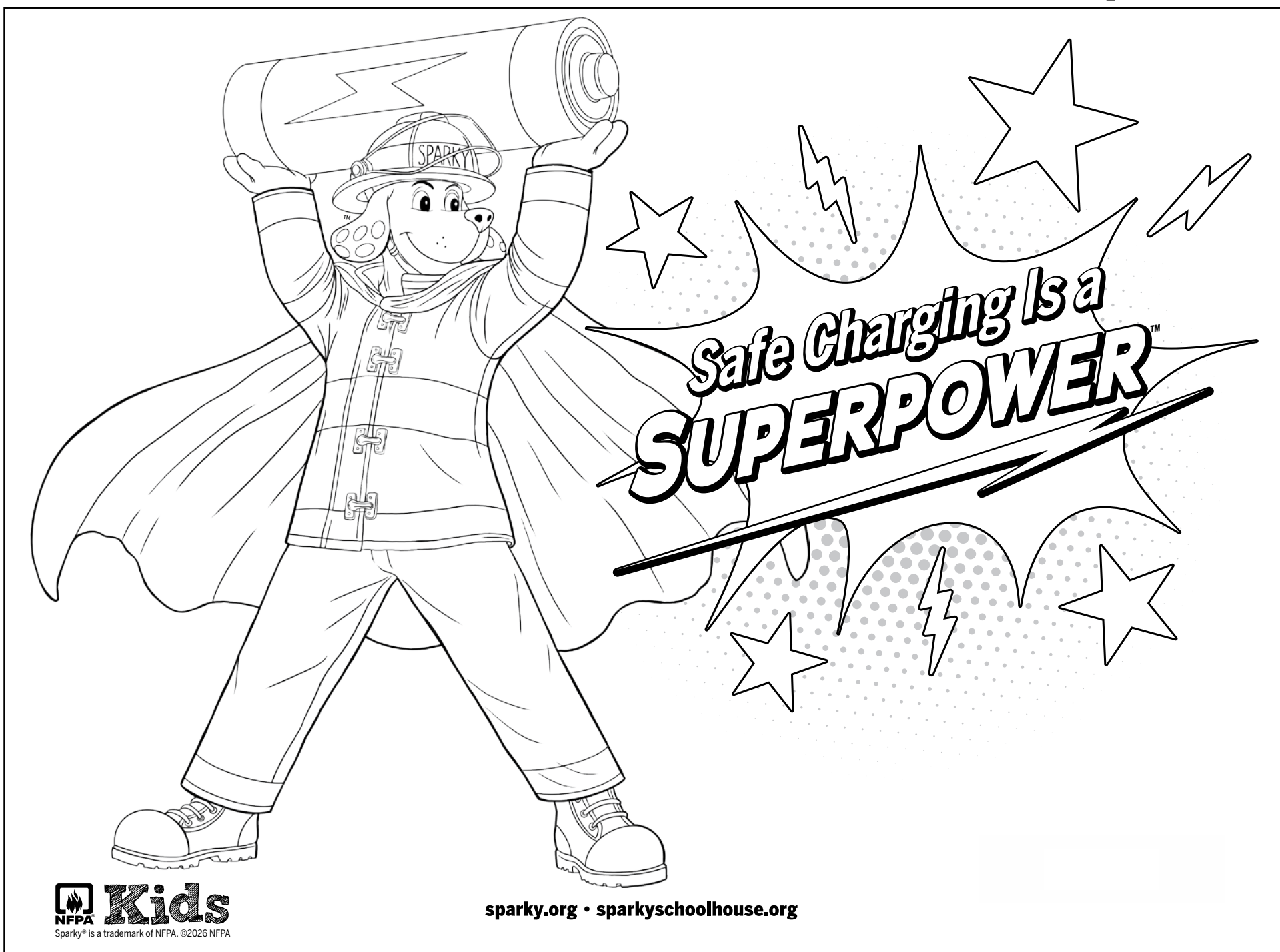
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Fire Prevention Week™ October 4–10, 2026



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Little Ones Marketplace provides a venue for families to shop, save and sell

ROBIN KRAFFT

Post Correspondent

Get ready to buy or sell gently used infant and children's items at the Little Ones Marketplace!

The Tillsonburg Kinetite Club is putting on the event on Saturday, October 24 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Tillsonburg Minor Soccer Clubhouse at 275 Quarter Town Line.

It's a great opportunity for parents, grandparents and guardians to purge outgrown toys, books, clothing, sporting goods, games, puzzles, and large baby items. Sellers set their own prices. Shoppers will benefit from a sustainable and economical way to find items they need while supporting local families.

"This is a new event for the Kinettes," treasurer and event Chair Theresa MacDougall said. "My daughter was the inspiration. She attended a similar event and thought it would be a great idea to host one here in Tillsonburg. When I suggested it to the Kinettes, several members immediately came on board to help out by forming a committee."

For those who would like to sell, space is limited, but it's easy to secure your

table. The cost is \$25 per table, and you can message the Kinettes for more information or use the link on their Facebook page to fill out a Google form to reserve your table. There are also posters around town with a QR code or you can email tillsonburgkinettesevents@gmail.com.

For shoppers, it might be a good idea to bring your own reusable shopping bags.

"Bringing your own bags will help but we will encourage vendors to perhaps have a few on hand," MacDougall said. "If we generate enough interest, and if the attendance is good, perhaps this will become an annual event. With it being a new event, we really need people to spread the word, buy a table and attend."

The Little Ones Marketplace will be a great benefit to families at a time when every proverbial penny counts.

"The marketplace will hopefully provide an excellent opportunity for young families to purchase good quality, necessary items at a fair price, while giving vendors a chance to repurpose items they no longer need," MacDougall said. "Perhaps the marketplace will generate a cycle where the same families will buy and/or sell items, depending on current circumstances."

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Authorized by John Gilvesy.



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Friday, Oct. 23rd: 5pm - 9:30pm
Saturday, Oct. 24th:
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Moon Market
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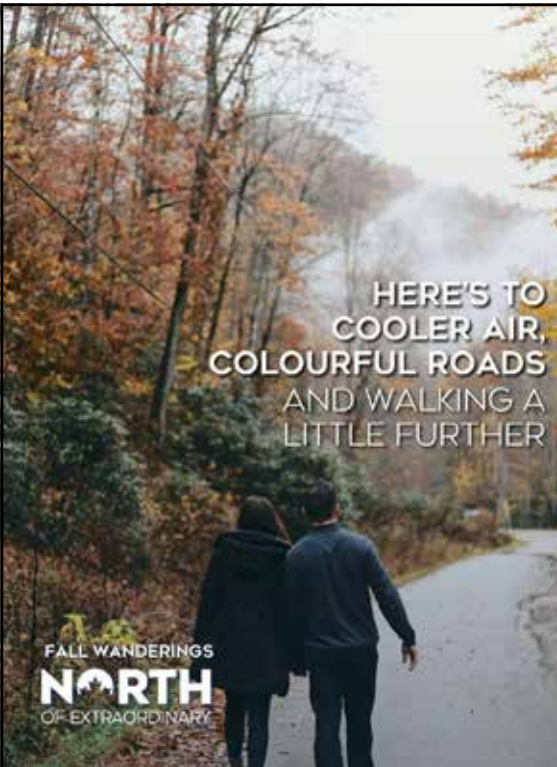
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(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTOS)



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ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AWARD
Sponsored by Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce

Recipient: EnviroHaul Ltd.
Award accepted by Matt Jones

CHAMBER AWARDS

(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTOS)



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Award accepted by Pat Buyse



POSITIVE CHANGE AWARD (A TILLSONBURG STORY) Recipient: Roulston's Pharmacy
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Councillor candidates share their thoughts during forum

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Red tape, their top priorities and homelessness were amongst the topics the 12 vying for one of six councillor positions wrestled with at the all-candidates night held on Sept. 30.

The event was sponsored by the Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce and Tillsonburg Post. Candidates for councillor and mayor positions answered questions about the questions ahead of time, which were selected from public and chamber member submissions, to research their answers.

Question 1: *Navigating local bylaws can sometimes feel rigid or unclear for residents and business owners. What concrete steps will you take to ensure municipal policies are written in clear, accessible language, and how will you guarantee they are enforced with common sense, transparency, and strong accountability?*

Clayton Curtis - Bylaws should be easy to understand and if a person needs a lawyer to understand a bylaw, it's more complicated than it needs to be. Enforcement should be consistent, but there is a difference between ignoring a bylaw and misunderstanding it.

Dave Beres – On red tape, Beres used the example of the archeological study that has been delaying the town's industrial park for two years. He suggests a blanket study should be done. With bylaws, Beres said all are on the town's web site and suggesting phoning the customer service centre or staff if there are questions.

Dee Tosto – Bylaws need to be understood and written in plain language. She said council should be asking questions if a resident has to fill out multiple similar forms or waiting a long time for an answer. Tosto said enforcement should be consistent and there is a difference between ignoring a bylaw and misunderstanding.

Felix Nzemeka – Bylaws should protect the public interest without creating unnecessary barriers for residents, citizens and industries. He would focus on a regular review of bylaws to identify outdated bylaws or duplications, advocate for plain language, support consistent and transparent enforcement and said council must hold the system accountable.

John Gilvesy – One of Gilvesy's six core priorities is economic vitality and fostering conditions that attract industries, developers, retailers and citizens. He believes bylaws should be written in plain language and examples provided, if necessary. Gilvesy is an advocate of the KIS principle, and he doesn't believe policies should erode confidence to innovate, plan, build, and operate.

Katherine Englander – With a background in writing policies, Englander understands that clarity is important in rules. She would push for published service standards with turnaround times for common municipal applications like building permits, and business licenses. She would also want to see a review of the bylaws to ensure the bylaw is in proportion to the risk.

Kim Sage – Sage agrees bylaws can be confusing at times, but sees the need for rules to provide consistency and fairness. She would like to see enhanced communication and easy-to-understand language with bylaws. Sage doesn't want to see all bylaws reviewed, but those that cause repeated issues for residents, or are outdated, should be.

Lindsay Ambrus-Mejaski – Ambrus-Mejaski is a fan of the town's bylaw briefs because these explain bylaws in simple language, but believes more education would be better. She would like to see bylaws reviewed regular-

ly for clarity and purpose. While she wants to see consistency in enforcement, she is also a believer in common sense.

Ron Gasparetto – He agreed bylaws should be in plain language and simple to understand. While he realizes the town has to follow the Municipal Act, guidelines, he is all for red tape reduction. Gasparetto wants to see checks and balances in the system. He also wants to see accountability in enforcement.

Stephen Molnar – While Molnar believes bylaws written in clear language is important, he said a transparent and flexible approach by those in enforcement is more important. He wants regulations designed to assist opportunity, not restrict or punish creativity or investment. Common sense and communication should be used for enforcement he believes.

Chris Rosehart – Rosehart is an advocate of municipal bylaws that everyone can understand and should be able to understand without legal assistance. She would like to see better communication before enforcement takes place, and common sense in the system. Rosehart doesn't want residents to feel they have to fight the system.

Chris Parker – Wants to see the town's bylaws easy to understand and ensure residents are consulted when bylaws are updated or reviewed. Parker likes to see education first on enforcement, and ensuring people understand the rules before ticketing. On red tape, he likes a balance between removing unnecessary roadblocks to success and the right controls for consistency and fairness.

Question 2 - *Looking ahead to the upcoming term, what are the top three major projects council must prioritize, what is your proposed timeline for delivering them, and why are they essential for Tillsonburg?*

Dee Tosto – Infrastructure, transportation and connectivity, and workforce, skills and opportunity are Tosto's three priorities. Expanding on these, she said infrastructure needs to keep up with growth; traffic flow and safety was mentioned, as well as transit and inter-community transit; and mentioning her own son, she said she would like to see more educational opportunities provided in Tillsonburg and closer to home.

Felix Nzemeka – His priorities are affordability and fiscal discipline with an eye to target a the lowest responsible tax increase possible, with a zero target; economic development that expands our tax base while supporting community stability through actively marketing the town's employment lands; and making transportation and infrastructure improvements that increase safety and mobility for drivers, cyclists, seniors and people with mobility challenges.

John Gilvesy – One of his first priorities would be readying for budget deliberations, calling for finding efficiencies and eliminating duplication; he would push for experienced representation on the ERTB board to hold it to its promises; and reconsider priorities before spending \$6 million on a renovated town hall when the town has a shortfall in its asset management plan.

Katherine Englander – As a new councillor, she would gather information and evaluate to determine her top priorities. Community well-being - which includes infrastructure and roads, utilities and waste, emergency services, community spaces and public transit – is a the top of her priorities. One of her first priorities will be seeing the repair of the steps on the north entrance to the community centre repaired.

Kim Sage – Development of the new baseball dia-

monds; ensuring the infrastructure can keep up with the growth, as opposed to growing first and then catching up; and responsible growth that will protect Tillsonburg's identity. Sage didn't want to promise timelines, but she wants to ensure council is making responsible decisions, understands what it's spending and the implications of the decision.

Lindsey Ambrus-Mejaski – Her priorities are a safe, clean and healthy community through keeping roads safe and dealing with homelessness through the county and province; planning ahead for smart growth and affordability to ensure the infrastructure is in place for growth; and ensuring the town remains affordable for residents. She would like to establish a plan in the first year and implement it through the next four years.

Ron Gasparetto – Gasparetto's goals are maintaining infrastructure, responsible growth which will see coordination with the needed infrastructure and financial sustainability that makes it affordable for people to live, retire and enjoy life in Tillsonburg. He wants to establish the priorities of council and start implementation in the first year, and then follow with published updates.

Stephen Molnar – Molnar wants to see a regenerated focus on the community strategic plan incorporated into the 2027 business plan on day one; promotion of an open and accessible council; and responsible infrastructure investment to support balanced growth while controlling utility costs and user fees. Molnar also said his priorities are the priorities he has heard from the people.

Chris Rosehart – Seeing the completion of renovations to the customer service centre, which will save taxpayers money as compared to building a new town hall; ensuring there is enough electricity for businesses and residents, and planning for road and infrastructure updates are Rosehart's top three priorities.

Chris Parker – Completing servicing of the VanNorman Industrial Park, which is key to attract new employers and strengthen the tax base; overall community safety by working with the police services board, county and province to make the streets safer; and expanding recreational opportunities through a feasibility study for a third ice pad and ensuring access to playgrounds and green space are Parker's priorities.

Clayton Curtis – Creating a list for top infrastructure projects early in the first year, fostering responsible growth that will see council be proactive instead of reactive; and increasing municipal efficiency, which includes councillors asking if services are being delivered in the most efficient way possible, are priorities for Curtis.

Dave Beres – He would like to see a boundary adjust to allow for industrial expansion and more commercial opportunities; attract more family doctors by ensuring new graduates are welcome in town; and start planning to build a pipeline from Lake Erie along the railway line Tillsonburg owns a part of to town as the water supply is only certain until 2041.

"What stood out, and contributed to such a successful event, is how deeply invested both the candidates and audience are in our community and this year's election process," said chamber president Lindsay Tribble. "The candidates came very prepared, spoke with clarity and directly to the community issues that matter the most and the audience listened intently, respectfully applauding after each and every response."

Councillor candidates were also asked questions on how quick they would respond to resident requests and on homelessness. See the entire debate on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThRa1g98EUI>



COMMUNITY UPDATE

Notices

Voting Opens Next Week

The voting period for the 2026 Town of Tillsonburg Municipal Election opens on Tuesday, October 13. Eligible voters can cast their ballot online or by telephone at any time during the voting period, making it easy and convenient to participate.

Be sure to check that you have received your Voter Information Letter and review the details before voting begins. Every vote counts and helps shape the future of our community.

Learn more at www.tillsonburg.ca/election.



Fall Water System Maintenance

Our annual Fall Watermain Flushing program is now underway. Each week, a different area of Town will be flushed as part of this routine maintenance. Flushing will take place between 7:30 AM and 4:00 PM daily.

October 5 - 16

All areas West of Participark and South of Concession St West.

Visit www.tillsonburg.ca/news for the full flushing schedule and map.

In the event your water is discoloured, open a cold water tap in your home for 5-10 minutes until the line is clear. If discolouring persists after 24 hours, contact Customer Service at 519-688-3009.



Loose Leaf Collection Begins October 13

The Town's annual Loose Leaf Collection Program begins October 13 and runs through November 27. Leaves will be collected using the Town's leaf vacuum machine, with crews working throughout the community on an ongoing basis. There are no scheduled collection zones, so residents are encouraged to place leaves at the curb and leave them out until they are collected.

As a reminder, leaves, brush and other yard waste can be dropped off at the Transfer Station, 50 Newell Rd.



Road Maintenance Advisory: Crack Sealing

Routine asphalt crack sealing work is scheduled for October 16 and October 19 on Allen, Belmont, Myrtle, Peach, Pine, and William Streets, Lyndale Road, Harvest Avenue, and Brookside Lane. Residents are asked to avoid on-street parking in these areas while work is underway.



Business Services Pop-Up Event

Looking to start, grow, or expand your business? Join us for the Business Services Pop-Up Event and connect with local experts offering support with funding, business planning, marketing, training, and business growth.

Don't miss the featured presentation, "Fund Your Next Hire," with Jane Ramachandran of Resonant Solutions, sharing insights on hiring supports and workforce funding opportunities.



October 22 | 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.
The Spot, Tillsonburg Town Centre (2nd Floor)
Keynote Presentation: 4:30 p.m.
Free to attend.

Culture Corner

Needle Punching with Heather Cork

Get creative and discover the art of needle punching with instructor Heather Cork! This beginner-friendly fibre art workshop will teach participants how to use a specialized needle to create beautiful textured designs using yarn and fabric. You'll leave with your own handmade piece to take home.

Date: October 21

Time: 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Cost: \$75 (taxes included)

Pre-registration is required, and all supplies are included.



Oscar's Puzzles: A Museum Escape Room

Think you have what it takes to escape? Gather your team and step inside Annandale House for an evening of mystery, clues, and brain-teasing fun! Follow the trail, solve challenging puzzles, and race against the clock to unlock your escape. Whether you're a seasoned puzzle solver or just looking for a unique night out, this immersive museum adventure is sure to put your skills to the test.

Date: Friday, October 23

Time: 4:00 to 10:00 p.m. (timed event)

Cost: \$25 per team of 6 people (taxes included)

Pre-registration is required. All supplies are included. Will your team escape in time?



Active Living & Learning Opportunities

A Royal Adventure Awaits!

Calling all princes, princesses, and fairytale adventurers ages 4-9! Step into a world of imagination and creativity at Royal Creations, where children can dress up with colourful accessories and sparkling face gems, create their own royal crown, and enjoy a magical hour of fairytale fun.

Dates: October 17, November 14, and December 12
Time: 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Register today at www.tillsonburg.ca/guide and let the royal adventure begin!

Family Fitness Swim- NEW!

Looking for a fun way to stay active together? Join our new Family Fitness Swim, designed for families who want to enjoy the pool while building confidence and swimming skills. Participants can practice swimming skills, swim laps together, or simply enjoy recreational swimming in a family-friendly environment.

When: Sundays, 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Dates: September 13 to December 20*

Age: 8+ years

Fee: Children \$4.60 | Adults \$7.30 | Family \$15.10

*No swim October 18, October 25, or November 22.



SPORTS



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Fall Christmas Market

Over 25 Vendors.
Sat. Nov. 21, 2026
10:00 AM till 3:00 PM
Free Admission

Chicken & Cabbage Roll Dinner
Fri. Oct. 23rd, 2026 - By Reservation & Payment - Dinner Serving 5 to 6:30 P.M.

- Chicken & Cabbage Rolls
- Mashed Potatoes & Gravy - Coleslaw
- Dinner Roll - Coffee, Tea & Dessert
- Adults \$30.00
- \$15.00 Children 6 to 12
- 5 and under Free

Bulk Orders

Saturday November 7th, 2026
Breaded Chicken - \$30.00 for 10 pcs.
Cabbage Rolls - \$28.00 per. doz.
Breaded Pork Schnitzel - \$6.00
Perogies - \$15.00 per. package
ColeSlaw - \$6.00 per container
Don't wait for the last minute to order



Gradish, Parker competing in World Amateur Match Race Dubai qualifier

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

"Ten teams and one's going to Dubai. Eighteen holes."

Succinct though it may be, Andrew Gradish's summation accurately describes the mixed World Amateur Match Race (WAMR) challenge/opportunity lying before he and partner Chris Parker.

"We're a far cry from where we were two years ago," Gradish added with

a laugh. "Couldn't win a match."

In more depth, the pair have qualified for the WAMR National Final, Tuesday, Oct. 13 at Lionhead Golf Club, Brampton. They and nine other two-member teams will tee off between noon and 12:40 p.m. for 18 holes of best ball stroke play competition. Each player plays their own ball, with the best net score recorded per hole.

"Play your own ball, it's

still golf," said Gradish.

Net score is calculated in conjunction with their personal index or course handicap, a mathematical calculation taking in past scores relative to course difficulty. The winning team qualifies for the WARM World Final, April 2027 in Dubai, qualification that includes three days of championship golf, five nights of hotel accommodation and an official yacht party.

Childhood family friends, Gradish and Parker have enjoyed playing golf together for years, more seriously over the past several, including a links-based trip to Scotland around the 2024 British Open at Troon, Scotland. They first entered WAMR competition two years ago, signing up again this spring.

"It adds a bit of challenge to your regular round and you get to meet a lot of new people," said Parker.

Gradish has played over 50 rounds this year, establishing an impressive

2.4 index. Parker's stands at 26, which does allow more room for favourable score adjustments. Their bracket included competitors from Kincardine, Woodstock, Sarnia and Windsor, under a double-knockout format. They opened with two wins, dropping their third match before rebounding for a rematch against the team they had lost to earlier.

"It rained the entire day," recalled Gradish. "We were absolutely soaked when we were done."

"It was probably the most miserable weather I've ever been out in," Parker agreed.

They were playing against a pair of 'good guys and good players' said Gradish, their opponents leading for the great majority of the match. Parker carded net birdies on the 14th and 15th, with their competitors taking a one-hole lead heading into the 17th. Gradish responded with a birdie on the 17th to tie however, completing the shared come-



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Andrew Gradish (above) is looking forward to a World Amateur Match Race, Dubai qualifier Tuesday, October 13 at Lionhead Golf Club along with partner Chris Parker.

from-behind victory with a birdie putt on the 18th. His third shot was the key, a two-iron from 228 yards he stuck within 15 feet of the flag.

"And made the putt."

A unique life experience will be on the line at Lionhead, irrespective of which, Gradish is looking forward to playing the course.

"That will be a treat in itself."

"Just looking forward to it," agreed Parker. "Look-

ing forward to having some fun."

There is pressure continued Parker, whose goals are to put forth their best effort and card a decent score.

"It's up for grabs, it all depends on who has the best day."

"We'll be there competing against 18 other guys for a chance to play golf on the other side of the world," Gradish concluded. "If you're not excited, you've got a problem."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Chris Parker tees off during a golf-based vacation in Scotland. He and partner Andrew Gradish will be playing in a World Amateur Match Race, Dubai qualifier Tuesday, October 13 at Lionhead Golf Club.

Gemini junior, senior volleyball boys serve up strong TVRA start in their 2026 season

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

Playing the entire game is the plan when Jack Bruder starts for the Provincial Junior Hockey League's Norwich Merchants.

Less so perhaps as a member of the Tillsonburg Gemini senior boys' volley-

ball team.

But when the squad opened its 2026 Thames Valley Regional Athletics season in Woodstock College Avenue Tuesday, Sept. 19, a seven-member lineup meant ample court time for all.

Although 'exhausted', he and his Gemini teammates were not daunted following a tight 3-1 (25-19, 21-25, 23-25, 20-25)

loss to the homecourt Knights.

"It's a fun game with good buddies."

"It's fun to play," agreed teammate Hunter Whittington, also willing to contest every available minute. "That's about it."

The Gemini opened with a first-set win, dropping the second as College Avenue was able to leverage its height advantage

at the net. The Knights' Dawson Riley closed out a tight two-point third set with a centre block at the net. Tillsonburg's early 4-1 lead in set four was interrupted by a CASS time out. The Knights rallied to tie at six, and then pulled ahead 15-10 en route to a five-point victory where arguably, fatigue could have been a factor.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 19

Gemini junior, senior volleyball boys serve up strong TVRA start

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

“A good start,” said coach Krista Ferguson. “I was impressed.”

Bruder and Xander Breddy agreed the team needs to cut down on little mistakes.

“But I don’t think we played bad,” said Breddy.

“It was a good first game,” Whittington added. “Definitely brought the team together a bit. “Hopefully we’re better next week.”

Development will come with practice said coach Ferguson, along with a tournament later in the week. But overall, she was pleased with the team’s inaugural showing.

“They’re not really volleyball players but they’re good athletes and came together and figured it out with not a lot of practice time.”

Junior

Gemini junior boys’ volleyball coach Melisa Jacko was thrilled to put a 3-0 sweep into the books against the junior Knights.

“A great start,” she emphasized following a 26-24, 25-17, 25-19 victory closed out in the third set with a Logan Deleye right side kill and jump service ace. “They looked strong out there, moving on the court really well.

“We can only go up from here.”

Unofficially, the match win equals Gemini victory totals from the entire 2025-26 regular season, that a year of growth for a majority Grade 9 lineup.

“The 9’s are now Grade 10’s,” said Jacko, speaking to increased size, strength and experience.

“And a little more confidence on the court,”



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Gemini golf team qualified for WOSSAA with a fifth-place TVRA Tri-County tournament finish Monday at the St. Thomas Golf & Country Club in Union. Team members, were, left to right: Emerson Hodges, Drew Hunter, Peyton Voth and Clarke Lessif.

she concluded. “We’re a little more experienced this year and ready to play to win.”

TVRA Southeast Golf

Led by Peyton Voth’s fourth-place 78 and Drew Hunter’s 85, which tied him for 16th, the Gemini boys golf team finished fifth overall at the TVRA Tri-County tournament Monday, Sept. 28 at the St. Thomas Golf & Country Club in Union.

Voth, Hunter, Emerson Hodges and Clarke Lessif finished with a 38-over-par cumulative round. With that top-six finish, the Gemini qualified for Western Ontario Secondary Schools Athletic Association (WOSSAA) competition back in Union Monday, October 5.

Cobra Chickens take Division One in slo-pitch



DAVE WEAVER

Post Columnist

We are now down to one championship to decide after Cobra Chickens captured their second consecutive Division One title after sweeping The Mill. The Division Two crown series commenced on Thursday night with Sticky Bandits taking on At My Playground/IQT Logistics. Sticky Bandits won the first two games.

Division One

The Cobra Chickens had their offence clicking scoring 35 runs, and they scored multiple runs in every inning but the first. The Mill themselves put up 26 runs scoring runs in every inning but the second.

Cobra Chickens led from the second inning on,

everyone in their order reached base at least twice and scored at least one run. Nathan Froese, coming off an injury, homered twice, scored five runs and was a triple shy of hitting for the cycle. Jared Froese was also a triple shy of hitting for the cycle and Matthew Reimer was a double shy. Tim Morgan homered three times for The Mill, and Steve Derks hit two homers and two doubles.

Game #3-Final

Cobra Chickens-35, The Mill-26

Cobra-Jared Froese 5-6, HR; Nathan Froese 5-6, 2HR; Matthew Reimer HR; Ethan Froese HR; Brian Dyck HR; Nathan Peters HR; Wyatt Blatz HR.

The Mill-Logan Kloet 5-5, 2HR; Ryan Black 4-5; Steve Derks 2HR; Tim Morgan 3HR; Bryan Deblaire HR.

Division Two

Sticky Bandits completed the upset over the regular season first-place finisher Pelicans, easily winning in the fifth and deciding game. They opened their final series with At My Playground/IQT Logistics on the Thursday, winning by six, they followed that up with a four-run decision the next night.

Game#5, Semi-Final

Sticky Bandits-31, Pelicans-19

CONTINUED TO PAGE 20



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Cobra Chickens were winners of Division One in Tillsonburg men’s slo-pitch, capturing their second consecutive title. Team members, top left to bottom right, are: Avery Peters, Nathan Peters, Marcus Peters, Ethan Froese, Wyatt Blatz, Jared Froese, Nick Blatz, Caleb Reimer, Brian Dyck, Matthew Reimer, Nathan Froese, Dawson Dyck.

GEMINI SCOREBOARD	
SENIOR BOYS VOLLEYBALL	
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1	
INGERSOLL DCI	25, 25, 25, 14, 15
GEMINI	16, 14, 22, 25, 12
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29	
COLLEGE AVENUE	19, 25, 25, 25
GEMINI	25, 21, 23, 20
JUNIOR BOYS	
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1	
GEMINI	25, 24, 19, 25, 15
INGERSOLL DCI	19, 26, 25, 20, 8
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29	
GEMINI	26, 25, 25
COLLEGE AVENUE	24, 18, 19
SENIOR BOYS FOOTBALL	
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1	
GEMINI	26
AYLMER EAST ELGIN	10

GEMINI SCOREBOARD	
JUNIOR BOYS	
GEMINI	14
AYLMER EAST ELGIN	6
SENIOR GIRLS BASKETBALL	
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1	
INGERSOLL DCI	31
GEMINI	30
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29	
COLLEGE AVENUE	32
GEMINI	12
JUNIOR GIRLS	
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1	
INGERSOLL DCI	45
GEMINI	25
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29	
COLLEGE AVENUE	30
GEMINI	29

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Cobra Chickens take Division One in slo-pitch

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

Bandits-Jeff Heide 4-5; Andrew Knelsen 4-5; Nicky Knelsen HR; Connor Friesen HR; Jordan Weibe HR; Kurtis Friesen HR; Bowen Thiessen HR.

Pelicans-Steve Leacock 4-4, HR; Joe Kingsbury 3-3.

Game Synopsis-Bandits made an early statement, plating seven to open up the game, they belted out five round-trippers in the game using their power and speed on the bases in completing the upset. Jordan Weibe homered and scored four runs.

Game#1-Final

Sticky Bandits-18, At My Playground/IQT Logistics-12

Bandits-Tyson Krahn 3-3, GrSlam; Bowen Thiessen 3-4; Connor Friesen HR; Austin Reddekopp HR; Kurtis Friesen HR.

AMP-Riley Balazs 3-4; Landon Partlo 3-4; Duncan McLean HR.

Game Synopsis-A grand slam by Tyson Krahn and a two-run shot from Kurtis Friesen highlighted the Bandits' six-run first. A three-run homer by Austin Reddekopp was key in their six-run third.

AMP trailed by only three after two, Duncan McLean went yard in their four run first. Krahn led the winners with a homer and a pair of doubles, 10 of their 11 batters scored at least one run. McLean was a triple shy of hitting for the cycle for AMP and Landon Partlo chipped in with three singles.

Game #2-Final

Sticky Bandits-14, At My Playground/IQT Logistics-10

Bandits-Andrew Knelsen 2-3; Austin Reddekopp 2-3; Tyson Krahn HR; Kurtis Friesen HR.

AMP-Logan Savoy 3-4; Connor Smith 2-3, HR; Jayden King HR; Brandon Balazs HR; Logan Partlo 2HR.

Game Synopsis-Bandits plated five in the second and fourth innings to move out to a six-run lead, Jeff Heide a run-scoring triple in the second, and Conner Friesen and Jordan Wiebe each hit run scoring doubles in the fourth. They plated four much-needed insurance runs in the sixth when Tyson Krahn and Jordan Wiebe each hit two-run blasts. AMP rallied for five in their last at-bat with Jayden King and Brandon Balazs hitting long homeruns, but it wasn't enough to pull even.

Curling club providing opportunities to try curling



**ON
THE
BROOM**

NORA PETER

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

As I write this, the ice is getting painted and things are moving on schedule for the

club opening next week.

Tuesday, Oct. 13 through Friday, Oct. 16, we're encouraging the community to come and "Try Curling". Tuesday and Thursday from 7-8:30 p.m. Adults are invited to try the basic skills - getting on the ice, delivering the stone, sweeping the rock for free!! All we ask of you is to register at CurlTillsonburg.com so that we have lots of volunteers to work with you. All equipment except your clean pair of shoes will be provided for you.

Don't think you can handle the traditional low slide delivery, we can teach you the upright walking delivery with the 'stick'. This is a great opportunity to give curling

a try. On Wednesday night Tim Horton's Youth Curling will be featured from 6 – 7:30 p.m. for youth 8 – 18 years of age. Kids can get the same introduction to the basic skills.

Parents – are you trying to make sure your kids are active during the winter months? Want them to socialize more? Curling is "the" sport to try. Curling is non-contact but a physically challenging sport, it is a sport for all skill levels, a team sport where each member throws the same number of rocks and each has a specific role in the playing of the game. Curling also emphasizes good sportsmanship, plus friendship and socializing after the game.

The game can be as competitive as you want as well, with schools and local clubs offering competitions to competitions at the provincial, national and world level. Another great thing about curling is that you can get out on the ice with your kids and curl with them. A bonus for Tuesday night is that Team King (our Ontario Provincial Men's Champion) will be there to share their expertise with the Try Curlers. Lots of space still available - Just remember to register at curltillsonburg.com. Curling members can also be out on the ice next week honing your skills getting ready for leagues to start on Oct. 19.

Intro week finishes on a social fun note with "Brooms and Brews" on Friday night. This event is meant to show non-curlers the game plus the social side of the game. No experience needed and emphasis on

fun. Open to anyone (19+), this fun night gets you on the ice for four ends of curling, where things should be rocking, and then a brew tasting off the ice (other beverages available). Members find those friends and family that always say they would like to try curling and bring them out for a fun event. Cost is \$25, and once again please register.

A curling story for you, especially if you are new to the area –we learned to curl when we moved to a Northern Ontario mining town 52 years ago. I was six-months pregnant, didn't know anyone but gave it a try. We have some of our best memories tied to curling and have made so many good friends through curling. Fast forward to our move to this area in 1982 one of the first things we did was join the curling club knowing it would help us meet people and make new friends.

We have been happily involved in this club ever since. Our three kids were some of the first junior curling members. They curled competitively for the club, for their schools and club curlers where they live. Our son, when he moved to Chicago for work, joined a curling club and did the same when he moved to NYC. He has made lifelong friends. His children have now joined youth curling in Norwich, and we're happy to be able to watch their development. Curling has given us many memories and good experiences with both our family and friends.

Curling Rocks!! See you on the ice!

BROOMS & BREWS

Join the Tillsonburg Curling Club for a **FUN** evening of curling and brew tasting.

Friday October 16th

- Sign-up is required.** Experience is NOT.
- Bring your friends, bring your neighbours, bring the guy that sits next to you at work and says that he's 'always wanted to try curling sometime'. This is that time.
- The club has been rocking for over 70-years and will be rocking this night with music on and off the ice.
- \$25 per person for 4-ends of curling, one free brew plus snacks.** Not a beer drinker? Other drinks will be available.
- Open to curlers and non-curlers!
- Pre-registration required.** Register at CurlTillsonburg.com
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- VOTE 2026**

Town to look at bylaw to protect parkland

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Tillsonburg council is looking at ways to stop parkland from being developed.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy left the chair at the Sept. 26 meeting to present a motion to protect parkland in the wake of a suggestion to turn the Annandale ball diamonds into residential – albeit with more green space than normal – to fund the development of new proposed ball diamonds on Mall Road. The suggestion of a bylaw to protect parkland came from resident Michael Bossy, one of the partners of Annandale Heights that donated the land where the Annandale diamonds sit.

Following a preamble about the im-

portance of parkland and the dedication process through the plan of subdivision process, Gilvesy's motion directed staff to prepare "a report outlining options for a parkland protection by law that would safeguard subdivision parkland dedication from future development or disposition," and the report includes best practices, policies of bylaws used in comparable Ontario municipalities.

Speaking to the bylaw after it was read, Gilvesy said, "The bylaw aims to protect all green space because once it's gone, it won't come back. It will make future council pause if they ever consider developing parkland."

Coun. Kelly Spencer agreed it was important for council to protect parkland.

The motion passed unanimously.

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226.261.1837

New lights will bring new effects to Theatre Tillsonburg

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Lights, no camera, action!

A play on this old line from the movies previews one of the major changes underway at Theatre Tillsonburg. With help from an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant, the theatre will replace all its incandescent lighting with LED lighting.

"Theatre Tillsonburg gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Government of Ontario, for our recent infrastructure improvements. With the generous support of a \$125,100.00 Capital grant, we successfully complet-

ed purchased and installed 62 new LEDs upgrading the entire lighting facility of our theatre," said Joe Sheik, a member of the theatre's lighting committee.

Sheik was excited about the possibilities the new lights will bring, and for the effects the lighting crew can create during Theatre Tillsonburg productions. Saying he "doesn't want to give away" what audiences will see this season, Sheik explained more about the new lights' capabilities. The lights can create patterns on the stage and make an entire wall a different colour, such as a sunset.

Sheik also explained that, for example, lighting an eight-by-eight-foot spot on the stage with the old lights would take four lights. If the crew wanted a second

colour, it would take another four with coloured gels on the lights, and if a third colour was desired, it would take another four lights with a different gel.

"You would need 12 lights to light an acting area," he said, adding that the new LEDs can change colours with the push of a button, so only four lights will be needed.

Changing out the old incandescent lights for 60 LED lights will also save on electricity costs, with the old tungsten lights drawing 500 watts and the new ones 23 to 30 watts.

Tungsten presently – majority are 500 watts, LEDs draw 23 to 30 watts

"We've crunched the numbers, and in terms of our longer-term sustainability this is a major step forward," Sheik said.

The updates were necessary because parts are no longer available.

"Our lights as a whole are aging out,"

he said. "The entire world is moving away from traditional lighting to LED."

All the lights have now been replaced, except the follow spot. Sheik said this old light, which isn't used a lot, may be replaced if there is money left over.

"If it's for an intimate moment, it ruins it because it's so loud. If it's a musical, it works well," he said.

Volunteers worked to assemble the lights together, and 3-E Electrical Services, the theatre's new season sponsor, completed the installation.

For Sheik the successful grant was the culmination of his third attempt of trying. He gave credit to the theatre's board of directors, the lighting crew, MPP Ernie Hardeman and Mayor Deb Gilvesy for their support.

The new lighting will debut in Theatre Tillsonburg's The Numbers Game, which premieres next month.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Joe Sheik has been working for the past two years to secure an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant for the new lighting. He succeeded this year, with the foundation granting \$125,100 for the lights.

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Authorized by Katherine Englander.

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3. Responsible growth – keep Tillsonburg as the rural community that we love
4. Fiscal responsibility – respect every taxpayer dollar
5. A strong local economy – a strong economy creates a stronger community

Authorized by Katherine Englander.

FOR TILLSONBURG TOWN COUNCIL

New mural completed at Helping Hand Food Bank



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Tillsonburg Helping Hand Food Bank coordinator Samantha Hamilton, left, and Station Arts Centre executive director and artist Tabitha Verbuyst stand next to the recently completed painting in the food bank.

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

The Helping Hand Food Bank intake room is brighter and more cheerful thanks to the addition of a large painting at the front of the room.

"The volunteers are welcoming, the processes are welcoming, but the space didn't match," said Helping Hand Food Bank coordinator Samantha Hamilton.

She noted it felt like an old school – which it is – and wanted it more inviting and warmer. Hamilton went to the Station Arts Centre and asked if an artist would like to complete a painting on the former blackboard.

"Tabitha (Verbuyst) jumped on board and volunteered to help out," she said.

Verbuyst said Hamilton had an idea for a design incorporating vibrant florals and hands.

"From that idea, I figured adding fruits and vegetables would make sense and keep it more vibrant and inviting.

The 4 x7-foot blackboard took Verbuyst an entire weekend to complete. She had to sand the areas where the design would go, block them out with primer, and then apply the paint. The entire process took about 25 hours.

The painting was part of work to renew the building as a whole and included painting the hallways and other rooms. This project will hopefully be one of many collaborations between the food bank and Station Arts Centre.

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Six2s bring decades of punk, metal and DIY influence to Tillsonburg



BEN ANDRESS

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

MUSIC CORNER

What started as a loose collection of musicians messing around with Motley Crüe covers and heavy metal has evolved into the band Six2s – a group that has leaned heavily into being a punk and thrash outfit built around original music and a refusal to take itself too seriously.

The band is set to make their way to Tillsonburg with the current lineup featuring Sean Cavvannah on drums, Fraser Farquhar on lead guitar and vocals, Steve Gagliardi on bass and backing vocals and Cease Radder on rhythm guitar and vocals.

Six2s began in 2014 as a ‘mess around band’ where the original group included a drummer named Jer, a neighbour and another musician. The group experimented with covers before Radder began jamming with them on Christmas night in 2014.

“I cannot play metal,” Radder recalls. The group began making up their own material instead.

The lineup continued to evolve. Johnny O joined on bass before Jer took a trucking job that pulled him away from the band. Paula O took over drums and B Rad Trojan joined on lead guitar and Jer eventually returned on vocals.

After one show, Jer stepped away and the remaining members continued as another project called Bleeter. Radder still wanted to keep Six2s alive and restarted the band with Jer in 2016. By 2017, they had accumulated a collection of original songs shared between Six2s and Bleeter.

The band also began inviting musicians to sit in for guest appearances eventually bringing Cavvannah into the fold, followed by Farquhar. Radder moved from bass into the role of vocalist while the lineup continued to take shape. By the summer of 2018, the Six2s was ready to hit the stage.

In 2019, the band recorded its album titled Break and Disintegrate which was originally scheduled for release in April 2020. Then, like countless other bands, their plans were derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The album was eventually released without the planned promotional push of radio and touring. CHRW's Faster n Louder radio program gave the record a memorable debut by playing the entire album twice during its re-

lease celebration.

The band eventually went quiet. By 2022, Jer was preparing to move north, bringing an end to Six2s. Other projects followed including Bleeter, The Wall Punchers and The Quills but each eventually ran its course.

After the summer of 2025 Radder, Cavvannah and Farquhar began talking about bringing Six2s back. They found a rehearsal space, recruited longtime friend Gagliardi on bass, and began relearning the songs from Break and Disintegrate. They also brought in songs from The Wall Punchers and The Quills that had never received their proper chance, and paired those songs along with a new collection of material.

That emphasis on writing has always been central to Radder's approach. The result is a band that draws from punk, metal and thrash while incorporating a distinctly DIY attitude. The music itself is difficult to fit neatly into one category.

“We are high energy. Danceable indie punk thrash. Some may call it skate rock. They would not be wrong,” Radder says with a laugh. “We are all semi-retired skateboarders except Fraser. He is an enthusiast though. Musically, our influences span from the stuff we grew up with. 70s, 80s, and 90s punk and metal. With ethical guidance from Fugazi.”

That eclectic list of influences reflects a band that is not interested in simply recreating the past. Six2s may draw heavily from the mu-

sic its members grew up with but the goal is to continue creating rather than becoming a tribute act to their own history. The band members simply want to write songs and put on a good show while doing it on their own terms.

“We just like playing. It is getting tougher because I’m very adamant about how I want things to work,” Radder explains. “Lots of things have changed in the past six years with venues and such. I’m flexible on some issues. Some I’m not and will not participate in. What I hope people take away from our show? That they saw a good show had a great time and come back again.”

For a band that began more than a decade ago as a group of musicians simply making noise together, Six2s has travelled a long and winding road to make it to Tillsonburg this month. With a new lineup, old songs being re-discovered and plenty of new material in the works, the band is back where it belongs which is to be on stage making noise and having a good time.

Six2s will be bringing friends The Headcases and Nothing Shocking to Paddy’s Underground located at 20 John Pound Road on Saturday, Oct. 17. Tickets are \$10 for this 19-plus concert and will be available at The Mill, online at www.eventbrite.ca and also at the doors night of the show. If you want to follow and keep in touch with Six2s you can follow them on their official social media account at www.facebook.com/SIX2s

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**OCT. 17 - SIX2S W/ NOTHING SHOCKING & THE
HEADCASES**
Paddy's Underground
\$10 – 8 p.m. – 19-plus

**OCT. 24 - THE ACTION W/ DESTINED FOR THE
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Local photographer recounts changes over 50 years

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Local photographer Fred Meulemeester witnessed many changes in photography and his business over the past 50-plus years.

Meulemeester started in business as Fred's Photography part-time in 1973 or 74. He always had an interest in photography, and then bought a camera and took instructional courses in portraiture, weddings, and fine art.

He started working full-time as a bricklayer, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. Then, in the late 1970s, when interest rates skyrocketed and the bricklaying business slowed, he decided it was a good time to switch careers.

"When I got into photography, my dad wasn't too happy," he recalled.

In his early days, professional photographers used medium-format cameras with film larger than the more common 35mm. Many photographers had a darkroom to print black and white, colour or both. Meulemeester did both.

When Meulemeester started full time, only one other photographer was in town. It was a friendly competition, and when that photographer retired, he gave Meulemeester some equipment.

For five years, Fred's Photography had a downtown location on south Broadway. Meulemeester recalls doing enough passport photos in a month to pay the rent when he was the only photographer offering the service in town.

"It used to be if someone phoned the passport office and asked where they should go for photos, they always said Fred's Photography," he said. "Printing them in black and white, they were always nicer."

Weddings and portraits were his main forte for the first couple of decades. He recalls shooting 66 weddings in his busiest year. Most of the weddings were in the area, but he took one in Cancun and another in Calgary.

Then, portraits and weddings started to slow down as dance and skating photography picked up about 35 years ago. At one time, he shot photographs for 25 dance schools and 10 skating clubs from Sarnia to the GTA.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

With a digital camera around his neck, local photographer Fred Meulemeester steps back in time, pointing to a photograph of himself from the 1980s with a Hasselblad medium-format camera. After more than 50 years of recording local families, he closed his business this spring.

He took hundreds of thousands of photographs over the years.

Then, the business started to slow down after COVID lockdowns caused many of dance schools to close.

Changing technology

Meulemeester said he was busier before the advent of digital, when he was still using film.

"Most people didn't have a good film camera," he said, which is why they relied on a professional.

Then, in the early 2000s, digital cameras were launched. In a way, this was good.

"You could shoot what you want and eliminate the ones you didn't want," Meulemeester said.

But, as technology advanced, many people flocked to digital cameras.

"It's a little easier, a little more forgiving," he said. "You can snap a couple of pictures, check the back of the camera. Before, you had to have a light meter and wait for the prints to come back."

"The digital cameras have really taken off. When I first started with digital, the cameras were okay, but they aren't what they are today. Some of the digital cameras are

now sharper than film cameras.

"Nowadays, with smartphones, everyone wants to take photos."

Meulemeester also witnessed a change in how people valued family photographs. When he started, interest rates were high, and people couldn't afford as much, but family photographs were important. The photographs were a part of family history. Now, he sees less emphasis on this, and all people want is digital photographs.

Having attended as many weddings as he did, he has a few tales to tell. He recalled one wedding where he was waiting at the bride's home for photographs, and she didn't arrive there until five minutes before she was to be at the church. The bride did show, though, and the wedding went through.

He also remembers a trend a few years ago to do 'trash the dress' photographs a few months after the wedding. For some of these, he went to the Elora Gorge or the Sandhills.

"We didn't really trash it completely, but it was pretty dirty," he said with a smile.

Now 77 years old, a decision was made to close the business this spring.

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Voter packages should be in voters' hands

JEFF HELSDON
Editor

With online voting starting next week, Tillsonburg voters should be prepared for the process.

Registered residents should have received their voter information letter last week. It includes a PIN specific to each person and describes how to vote online or by phone. Voters will need their date of birth and PIN to vote.

Voting opens on Oct. 13 at 8 a.m., and continues until Oct. 26 at 8 p.m.

Tillsonburg Manager of Legislative Affairs/Clerk Trisha McKibbin said that if people haven't received their letters by Oct. 8, they should contact the voter help centre at clerks@tillsonburg.ca or call 519-688-3009 ext. 4790. Voters can register throughout the voting period, but must go to the Tillsonburg Customer Service Centre to register.

"To be added to the voters' list, a person will need to come in person to the customer service centre, 10 Lisgar Ave., and provide valid photo identification and proof of residence or property ownership," McKibbin said. "Once an individual has been added to the voters' list a voter information letter will be issued to them."

If the PIN is lost, McKibbin advised reaching out to the voter help centre and a new one will be issued.

Voter help centres will be available throughout the voting period. Reach out to the help centre for assistance.

This is the third municipal election where Tillsonburg has used online/telephone voting. It was first used in 2018 alongside in-person voting before the municipality moved to online/telephone voting for the 2022 election.

Intelivote Systems Inc., a Canadian company specializing in election and voting technology, has been contracted to deliver the voting platform. It ensures votes are anonymous and cannot be linked to an individual elector. Intelivote also provides training and logistical support to town staff.

The company has delivered more than 115 municipal elections.

"Intelivote maintains a hosted data centre environment in Halifax through Bell Canada, which also hosts some of the most sensitive government and financial systems running in Atlantic Canada," McKibbin said. "The full range of services they deliver, including high-speed, high-bandwidth data capability, and scalable IVR (telephone) port availability, demonstrates their commitment to ensuring maximum performance, communications path diversity and application redundancy."

After voting closes on Oct. 26, the town will post unofficial results on its website after the polls close at 8 p.m.



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"I appreciate that Stephen, as an elected official, has attended so many local events over the years no matter what the venue, showing his love of our town and all in it. He has always been very accessible, helpful, friendly and willing to discuss situations and share information quickly. During his years as Mayor, the town has grown and changed, yet has not experienced any great crises or controversies. His respect for our past while preparing for our future is a unique quality to have in a local leader. Stephen continues to demonstrate that."

- Laurel Beechey (Citizen of the Year – 1994 / Canada 150 Community Leader Award – 2017)



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HOSPITAL HAPPENINGS

LISA DAHM

Executive Assistant, Rural Roads Health Services

Rural Roads Health Services (RRHS) has begun the process of strategic planning. A strategic plan provides clarity, aligns teams, and guides decision-making. It is the foundation upon which every project, program, and portfolio decision is built.

Within an organization, when everyone understands where the organization is heading and why, decisions at every level become faster, more consistent, and better aligned. It also helps a supporting community to understand the direction of the organization when a strategic plan is transparent and built on the values of

its community.

A good strategic plan answers three questions: Where are we now? Where do we want to be? And how will we get there? Through those questions, the plan improves focus, decision-making, accountability, resilience, and long-term performance, and ultimately serves as a structured blueprint aligning people, resources, and actions toward a shared long-term direction.

Alexandra Hospital, Ingersoll (AHI) and Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital (TDMH) have been partnering on their strategic plan since the Boards of Directors signed a Joint Agreement in 2012. The most recent strategic plan refresh was completed in 2024 with the intention to create an integrated plan as RRHS in 2026.

Since then, the AHI and TDMH mission statement has been to be a key partner in supporting the health of our communities with excellent patient care and accessible specialized services.

Our vision has been to be your region-



al health hub providing excellent patient care and access to integrated, specialized care through entry points close to home.

The plan has been completed by four strategic priorities supported by our values of quality, accessible care, collaboration, innovation and community. The current Strategic Plan is available on our website at www.ruralroadshealthservices.ca.

vices.ca.

Following integration, RRHS recognizes that it is time to update our strategic plan and the best way to do that is to engage our team members within the hospital and members of the communities served by RRHS.

The RRHS team will be at events over the next weeks seeking input on the next strategic plan from community members. We will be looking for ideas on what is most important to you when it comes to healthcare in your community.

We have also launched a Strategic Plan Community Survey, that is available at the QR code included here.

You can also join us on Monday, Nov. 2, from 6:30–7:30 pm at the Mount Elgin Community Hall for a community-based discussion. Seats are limited by the capacity of the hall. RSVP before Oct. 28 by emailing info@rrhs.ca.

We look forward to your feedback through the survey and the community event, as we all strive, together, to keep healthcare close to home.

Pretty Little Nightmares on display at Station Arts

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

The Station Arts Centre's latest exhibit is in tune with Halloween with a title of Pretty Little Nightmares.

Don't worry, though, the exhibit is not that scary.

Pretty Little Nightmares is the title of ceramic artist Jennifer Dawes' exhibit that was "inspired by the strange, spooky and wonderfully peculiar things that have always found their way into my studio."

The pottery pieces include ghosts, skeletons, demons and spiders, but are functional. For instance, skeletons appear on both incense holders and mugs.

"There is humour and personality in these pieces, a skeleton can be cheerful, a ghost can be charming, and even a demon can become an oddly lovable character," the show statement says.

Dawes, 34, is from Woodstock and has been involved in ceramics since high school. She went to the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design to earn a degree in ceramics and art history. After completing residencies in Medicine Hat and at the Banff Center, she started on her own.

"I've been trained and taught by amazing potters and ceramic artists," she said.

Besides selling pottery and giving lessons from her home studio, Dawes also teaches classes at other locations such as Burning Kiln Winery and Cow Bell Brewery.

One of her 'spooky' favourites has been making small ghosts. Rather than scary, Dawes said the ghosts are cute, giving the example of the unicorn ghosts. She has a collection of 16 different ghosts in the series, and has added making ghosts to her teaching.

The Station Arts Centre exhibit includes Dawes' mugs. "Putting art into everyday objects brings a smile to your face," she said of the mugs.

Some potential customers point out that they already have a lot of mugs.

"People say you should see my mug cupboard," Dawes laughed. "No, you should see my mug cupboard. There's always room for another one."

She estimated she has about 50 mugs, both her own and those from other potters.

"It's a huge collection – might be closer to an addiction," she smiled.

This is the first time Dawes has had a solo exhibit at the Station Arts Centre. The show opened on Oct. 2, and runs until Oct. 30.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Jennifer Dawes displays one of her skeleton mugs, part of the exhibit Pretty Little Nightmares, which showcases her pottery at the Station Arts Center.



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Rotary Youth Exchange Program offers the opportunity of a lifetime

ROBIN KRAFFT

Post Correspondent

Rotary Youth Exchange student Evan Yallop has returned from Germany with many new friends, unique experiences and a worldly perspective.

Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) is an international student exchange program coordinated by Rotary International for 15 to 19-year-old students. Thousands of young people have benefited from the program, which involves total immersion in a different culture, learning a new language, making friends and experiencing the world from a fresh perspective. Closer to home, the Rotary Club of Tillsonburg has coordinated over 100 student exchanges.

Amy Yallop, Evan's mom, described it as the opportunity of a lifetime. There was

some trepidation at first, and they knew they would miss him, but the Rotary Club made the process easier.

"It was about our child and giving them the opportunity to see the world and expand their horizons," Amy said. "As parents this is what we are raising our children to do, go out in the world and live your life. The thought of sending our child away to another country was scary but the more we went through the process and met with Rotary the more comfortable we became. The training that they provide not only to the kids but also to the families was amazing. As Rotary says: 'It's not a year in your life, it's a life in a year!'"

Evan, an 18-year-old student in grade 12 at Glen-dale High School, was away on exchange from July 31, 2025, to July 10, 2026. He

gave a presentation of his experiences at a Rotary Club meeting on Sept. 21 at the Salvation Army Church, where the Rotary meetings are held.

"I just returned from Deutschland," Yallop said. "My host city was Göttingen. I attended the Felix Klein school. They're very strict about phones in school, so I don't have many photos of school. There were other exchange students there, and we were primarily learning the German language."

Evan shared many photos taken outside of school, explaining various traditions, celebrations, and introducing his host families. He visited castles, cathedrals, museums, landmarks, and toured around Europe.

"I got to see the Colosseum, the Prague Cathedral, and an enormous dome in Hungary," Yallop said. "Croatia was so beautiful, we hiked to a beautiful, massive waterfall in a gorge. I swam in the ocean for the first time while I was there. I spent a week in Berlin. We hiked up a hill that divides East and West Germany. You can see all of Berlin from there. It was a long walk and we felt very accomplished."

His host families provided a stable home life experience, and some wanted to show him the sights, while others wanted to show him where they grew up. He visited an island in the north of Germany and got to experience the expansiveness of the coast and the ocean.

Evan also shared photos of the variety of cuisine he sampled during his adventures, including a huge schnitzel and a fish sandwich which he tried in the port city of Hamburg.

"It was unnerving, but pretty good," Yallop said. "I also had handmade pasta from Italy. It was way better than I was expecting. It



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Rotary Youth Exchange student Evan Yallop (second from left) with exchange student friends in front of the Parliament building in Berlin.

eclipsed any other pasta I've had in my life. I know it's a stereotype, but the pizza was excellent too, they know their pizza!"

"I have become friends with many people from many countries and walks of life," Yallop said. "They are people I feel I can truly relate to in a sense many others cannot. It's hard to explain though I may never see them in person again. I will never forget them and what they meant to me."

The Tillsonburg Rotary Youth Exchange contact and President-Elect, Rebecca Fink, was an exchange outgoing student to Peru a few years ago.

"Being a youth exchange student is something that I will always hold close to my heart as it such an amazing experience for young students," Fink said. "My exchange helped me get out of my comfort zone by learning a new language and gave me amazing independence at such a young age. It gave me an amazing second family that I still talk to and an amazing second home. I joined my Rotary Club to see this program continue on and hopefully be able to see many more students experience all the amazing things

that I got to experience as a youth exchange student."

Tillsonburg Rotary Club President Gloria Aykroyd and her husband have hosted seven exchange students over the years.

"From the early days in the late 1980's when my husband and I first starting hosting Rotary Exchange Students when our daughters were still living at home, to the present time as empty nesters, all our lives have been enriched by these experiences," Aykroyd said. "The trust that these youth have in coming from a different country,

often having to learn English as a second language, to immerse themselves into our home and community is never shy of amazing. We learned from them as much as they learned from us and with many it has meant life-long relationships. What a beautiful way to promote peace, global connection and understanding in our world."

Applications are now being accepted for the 2027-2028 school year until October 15. Contact Tillsonburg Rotary Club at exchange@rotarytillsonburg.ca for more information.



(ROBIN KRAFFT PHOTO)

Evan Yallop wearing his distinctive red blazer, issued by the Tillsonburg Rotary Club and worn by all outgoing Canadian Rotary Youth Exchange students. The blazer signifies that the student is from Canada, and as Evan collected pins and badges, it became a wearable diary of his exchange year. One of his favorite experiences was visiting a zoo where he met Davis the seal.



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TOWNSHIP OF NORWICH NEWS

Norwich councillors approve dormant building permit policy

LUKE EDWARDS

Post Contributor

A new policy that establishes a framework for how staff deal with building permits that have remained open for several years is meant to reduce town liability in the case of future legal action.

Township staff said the issue is very common among municipalities, where

open building permits remain on the books for several years, creating both operational and legal challenges as older paperwork may not be as complete as staff would nowadays prefer.

"These circumstances can make it increasingly difficult for a municipality to determine what work was completed, what was previously inspected and whether construction that cannot now be readily observed complied with the

requirements in effect at the time," the staff report said.

The new policy directs how staff address building permits depending on how long it has been since the last activity, such as an inspection, review of permit issuance. It describes "proactive permit management" for applications where last activity occurred within the past five years and reactive management for permits where last activity oc-

curred between five and 15 years. After that the permit moves into a "historic dormant permits" phase.

"This is very much about mitigating our liability. The likelihood of this affecting somebody on a day-to-day basis in an over 15-years-old permit is fairly low," said CAO Matt Smith. However, for the township, having a policy in place would help if there's ever a court proceeding.

Rising fuel prices taking a bite out of Norwich coffers

LUKE EDWARDS

Post Contributor

Just like many homes and businesses, the rising cost of oil is being felt at Norwich town hall.

In a financial update to council at the Sept. 22 meeting, staff highlighted an increase of more than \$50,000 the township spent on fuel through August 2026, compared to the same period in 2025. Norwich surpassed \$200,000 in fuel costs in the time frame this year, and were under \$150,000 through Au-

gust 2025.

Gas and diesel prices have been rising alongside rising crude oil prices since the U.S. and Israel attacks on Iran earlier this year led to Iran responding by closing the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping lane for oil.

"Of course, when we did the budget that was before the price had a substantial increase, and diesel is probably a major factor in there," said Treasurer James Johnson.

Despite the increase to fuel costs, "there are no significant variances that

staff are aware of from regular business," the report said. There were a few other overages, including \$41,500 in the vehicle maintenance budget due to an engine replacement for a grader previously identified, \$60,000 for materials and supplies in the grading budget as a result of last year's nasty winter, and \$8,000 for the arena budget as a result of fire code orders.

On the bright side, a tender for painting at the arena came in significantly below staff estimates. The winning business submitted a bid for just over

\$34,000, while staff had budgeted to spend up to \$120,000.

Staff said they were just as surprised as council about the bid, which convinced them to do some extra research.

"We did check references on the low bid because the low bid was so low. And all of the references we checked said 'we were really concerned because the bid was so low, but they did brilliant work so you should go for it,'" said CAO Matt Smith. "So we went for it, and they did brilliant work and now we know how much that costs."

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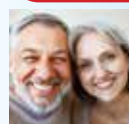
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Rotary
Club of Tillsonburg



Fall Book Fair!
Tillsonburg Town Centre Mall
200 Broadway



Mon	Oct 19	9am to 7pm
Tue	Oct 20	9am to 7pm
Wed	Oct 21	9am to 7pm
Thur	Oct 22	9am to 7pm
Fri	Oct 23	9am to 7pm
Sat	Oct 24	9am to 2pm





Pricing

- Children’s books - \$1 ea or 3 for \$2
- Paperbacks - \$2 ea or 3 for \$5
- Hard cover - \$4 ea or 2 for \$6
- Puzzles and Board Games - \$5 ea

New location near the LCBO

Fundraiser to support Community Service Projects including the Community Pantry!

We are committed to conservation and the protection of natural resources. Please bring your own reusable bag.



BANNER INSTALLATION COMPLETED (JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)
Some of the partners responsible for the banners on Quarterline Road gathered with the completion of the installation of the banners. Left to right are: Frank Moore, Tillsonburg Military History Club; Sarah Jackson, Tillsonburg Hydro (THI) hydro ops coordinator; Kyle Jacob, THI linesman; Tom Brown CD, Tillsonburg Legion president; Kurt Hussey, THI linesman; Diane Hodges, Legion past-president; Grant Yarmie, THI linesman; Michael DeJong, THI finance manager; Niki Rogers, THI billing coordinator and THI linesman Ryan Fitch in the bucket.

WEEKEND QUIZ

by Jake Grant

1. What is the capital city of New Zealand?

2. Which element has the chemical symbol, Fe?

3. Who painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel?

4. Which country is credited with inventing paper?

5. Which boxer was nicknamed 'Smokin' Joe'?

6. In a standard deck of 52 playing cards, how many face cards are there?

7. Which everyday
- product was originally marketed in the 1890s as a wallpaper cleaner?

8. True or False. Bananas are botanically classified as berries, while strawberries are not.

9. Which famous novel begins with the line "Call me Ishmael"?

10. Which Canadian province is the smallest by land area?

This week’s answers are found on pg. 35



THE NEXT BIG NEWS



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COMING EVENTS

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TAMMY KYLE*
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226.970.2490



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EXPECT MORE.

OCTOBER 19 | 5 - 7 PM
OLDE FASHION HAM SUPPER
Otterville United Church, 231 Main Street East, Otterville
Tickets: Adults \$20, Children 2-12 \$8, Under 6 Free.

OCTOBER 18 | 1:30 PM
THE BLAZING FIDDLES
St. Paul's United Church, 88 Bidwell Street, Tillsonburg
Don't miss the fabulous live Music Show featuring "The Blazing Fiddles" as seen at Grand River Cruises playing your favorite fiddle music. Advance Tickets available by contacting Dianne Parnell at 519 871 3454 or at the door. \$40 cash only.

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 9 | 1 - 4 PM
KEN LIGHTHEART AND THE NORTSHORE RAMBLERS DANCE
Tillsonburg Legion, 16 Durham St, Tillsonburg, ON
Only \$7 cash at the door. Cash bar open. All Welcome!.

OCTOBER 14 | 12 - 1 PM
TILLSONBURG LEGION LUNCH
Tillsonburg Legion, 16 Durham St, Tillsonburg, ON
Serving chili and cornbread! Comfort food for your soul for only \$15 per person. Includes coleslaw, dessert, tea and coffee. While quantities last! Bring a friend! All Welcome!

OCTOBER 16 | STARTS 5 PM
AN EVENING WITH TED BARRIS EXPLORING "CANADIANS IN KOREA"
Tillsonburg Legion, 16 Durham St, Tillsonburg, ON
Tillsonburg Military History Club invites you to an evening with Ted Barris exploring "Canadians in Korea" at the Tillsonburg Legion on Friday October 16. Social hour at 5:00pm, Roast Beef Supper at 6:00 pm. speaker Ted Barris at 7:00 pm. Tickets \$30 per person. For more info call 519-842-5281.

OCTOBER 17 | 2 PM
NORWICH DISTRICT CURLING CLUB OPEN HOUSE & GRAND RE-OPENING
17 Phebe St Norwich
Join us as we "pass the torch" with the first rocks being thrown by three-generation families

Correction:
The "Olde Fashion Ham Supper" at Otterville United Church was incorrectly dated as October 10 in last week's paper. The correct date is October 19. We apologize for the inconvenience.

of the NDCC. Light refreshments will be available. More info curlnorwich@gmail.com

OCTOBER 19 | 7:30 PM
DELHI & DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY ANNUAL "SILENT AUCTION" FUND RAISER.
Delhi Friendship Centre, 418 Queen St., Delhi, On.
Just like a big yard sale. Come and see what we have to offer and get a real bargain. MEMBERS, FAMILIES & FRIENDS all welcome. Enter at the parking lot off William Street.

OCTOBER 24 | 10 AM - 3 PM
OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY CIRCUIT BOOK (STAMP) FAIR
Church of the Epiphany, 560 Dundas Street, Woodstock Ontario N4S 1C7
Free Admission & Parking. Stop in and buy some stamps and meet fellow stamp collectors. About 8 participating stamp clubs. Contact: dheaton3e3@gmail.com Website: http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford

OCTOBER 24 | 9 AM - 1 PM
TILLSONBURG CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE FALL RUMMAGE SALE
St. Mary's Church, TILLSONBURG
Please come join us at our fall rummage sale. Clothing and footwear for the family. Housewares, glassware, bedding, home decor, toys and trinkets, jewelry, books and much more. Everyone is welcome. Fully Accessible. Admission is free. Please bring a bag (or two) to carry home your treasures. Thank you for your continued support

OCTOBER 31 | 7 - 11 PM
LEGION HALLOWEEN DANCE
Tillsonburg Legion, 16 Durham St, Tillsonburg, ON
featuring Kick'n' Kountry Live! This is a 19+ event. \$10 cash at the door. Cash bar open from 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm. Prizes for best dressed!

ONGOING CLASSES, CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

MONDAYS & THURSDAYS
OTTER VALLEY TAI CHI
St. John's Anglican Church, 46 Ridout St. W., Tillsonburg
Spots still available in new Monday morning and Thursday afternoon classes. Mondays 9:00 – 10:30 am Introduction, 10:30 – 11:30 am Foundations. Thursdays 2:00 – 3:30 pm Introduction, 3:30 – 4:30 pm Foundations. Enjoy gentle exercise with

others as you work to improve flexibility, balance and stamina. Call 519-688-9779, email ottervalley@canadiantaichiacademy.org, visit canadiantaichiacademy.org

WEDNESDAYS | 6 - 7:30 PM
CANADIAN TAI CHI ACADEMY TILLSONBURG
Classes take place at St Paul's United Church, Fox Alley South entrance off Ridout Street
Continuing sessions and Lok Hup occur from 7:30 – 8:30 PM. Additional practice sessions are available Fridays from 10:00 – 11:00AM. For more information: Email: tillsonburg@canadiantaichiacademy.org, Website: canadiantaichiacademy.org. Everyone welcome. Improve your health.

3RD TUE. OF MONTH | 6:30 - 8:30 PM
CAREGIVER CONNECTION
Revel Realty Woodstock, 111 Huron Street (Virutal/hybrid options available)
Are you worried about your child or youth? Parents and Caregivers for Mental Health (PCMH) is here to listen, support, and walk alongside you on this journey. Our free Caregiver Connection peer support groups offer parents and caregivers a community of support. Can't make it in person? Join one of our virtual or hybrid groups! Visit family.cmho.org or email oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca for more information.

OXFORD COUNTY DIABETES EDUCATION PROGRAM
Appointments are available at Alexandra Hospital Ingersoll and Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital and by phone
Are you looking for support with your Diabetes? Our Team of Registered Nurses, Registered Dietitians and a Social Worker is here to support YOUR goals. We can help with medication adjustments, lifestyle and diet changes, stress management, weight reduction strategies and more. **SELF REFERRALS ARE WELCOME.** Please call 519-485-9611 to book an appointment. Let's work together!

MONDAYS | 7 - 9 PM
MODERN SQUARE DANCING IS FOR YOU!
Thames Valley Dance Club
Looking for something to do in the evening or something new to try? Modern square dancing is a great way to learn something new, have fun, meet new friends, relieve stress, and get some exercise! All you need is comfortable shoes and casual clothing. No experience or partner is required and anyone over the age of 12 is welcome (children from 12-15 with an adult, please). **The 2025-2026 season has started at the Ingersoll Pipe Band Hall, 108 Wonham St. S. Ingersoll.** The first night is free, and after that the cost is \$7.50 per person each Monday, paid monthly at the start of the month. For more information, contact Julie at 519-535-3314.

2ND TUES. OF MONTH (SEPT. TO MAY) |

2 - 4 PM
4TH TUES. OF MONTH (SEPT. TO MAY) | 7 - 9 PM
OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY
Church of the Epiphany, 560 Dundas Street, Woodstock Ontario N4S 1C7
If you have never belonged to a stamp club, now's the time. Meet new friends, grow your knowledge and collection. Contact: Don Eaton dheaton3e3@gmail.com. Website: http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford

3RD WED. OF MONTH | 10 AM - NOON
LYNN RIVER PROBUS CLUB
Army, Navy & Air Force Club, Simcoe, ON. Corner of Water St. and Culver St. Simcoe. Enter via Culver St.
Our retired and semi-retired members enjoy diverse interest groups, friendship and fellowship. We have interesting speakers at our monthly meetings as well as time to socialise. Current and prospective members are welcome to join us at the Army, Navy & Air Force Club, Simcoe, which is on the corner of Water St. and Culver St. Simcoe. Enter via Culver St. For more information, please visit our website at: lynnriverprobus239.com or email lynnriverprobus239@gmail.com

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS | 7 - 9 PM
SATURDAYS | 10 AM - 12 PM
LEARN BRAZILIAN JIU-JITSU (BJJ)
North Broadway Baptist Church
Thanks to donor support, we've been able to purchase mats and uniforms, and our instructors generously volunteer their time. This isn't a business—any donations go straight back into the program to help buy more uniforms, mats, and equipment. If it's within your means, a \$20 monthly donation helps support the program, but if not, classes are completely free. **Classes are open to anyone 14 and older.** If you'd like to try a class, please arrive about 15 minutes early to sign waivers and get fitted for a uniform. Information can be found at: https://www.northbroadwaychurch.ca/nbmfa, https://www.facebook.com/northbroadwaymf, https://www.instagram.com/northbroadwaymf/ Inquires can be made at: nbmfa@northbroadwaychurch.ca

EVERY OTHER FRIDAY | 1 - 4 PM
BE FALL-ISH AND COME TO THE INGERSOLL COUNTRY MUSIC JAMBOREE
Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St. S., Ingersoll
Join us, walk ins welcome. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Perform, listen, dance & enjoy! September 18, October 2, 16 & 30, November 6 & 20, and December 4.

WEDNESDAYS & FRIDAYS
TILLSONBURG BRIDGE CLUB
Two games weekly at the Tillsonburg Senior Centre - 45 Hardy Ave.
SOCIAL BRIDGE - Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m.
A relaxed, friendly game for learners, returners and everyone else.

COMING EVENTS

DUPLICATE BRIDGE - Fridays, 1:00 p.m.

Still friendly, but a bit more structured and competitive.

Please arrive 10 minutes early.

Questions? tburgbridge@gmail.com or FB: TburgBridge

SATURDAYS, JUNE 6 - SEPT. 19 | 10 AM - 4 PM

PLATTSVILLE & DISTRICT HERITAGE SOCIETY 2026 EXHIBIT - HOLIDAYS & CELEBRATIONS THAT BRING US TOGETHER

Archive & Museum at Chesterfield, 816661 Oxford Rd 22, Bright (June 20 - visit us at Plattsville 175)

Donations accepted. Refreshments. For private viewing email plattsvilledistrictheritage@gmail.com or call 519.535.1417.

1ST AND 3RD TUES. OF MONTH TILLSONBURG LIONS

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

1ST WED. OF MONTH | 7 PM

WAGNER MEMORIAL TEETERVILLE LEGION BRANCH 526 - MEMBERS GENERAL MEETING

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

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

www.teetervillelegionbranch526.ca

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

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

You do not need to be a member to Volunteer, Just contact the legion and leave your name and number and purpose of your call. Someone will get back to you as to where you might be needed. Students and Adults welcome.

Open hours. Wed.-Fri. 3 pm-10 pm, Sat. 1 pm-10 pm, Sun. 1 pm-6 pm. For More Information call, the Legion at 519-443-5588 or teetervillelegionbranch526.ca

VON OXFORD SUPPORTIVE CARE PROGRAMS

Navigating any form of grief can feel overwhelming; however, with the right support, guidance, and education, individuals can discover a pathway to help in the healing of grief.

VON Oxford Supportive Care Programs offer assistance for grief stemming from various circumstances, such as the death of someone, caregiving, serious illness diagnoses, and life transitions. Through education, connection, and compassion, our programs create a safe space for individuals to explore their emotions and learn effective coping mechanisms during the grieving process.

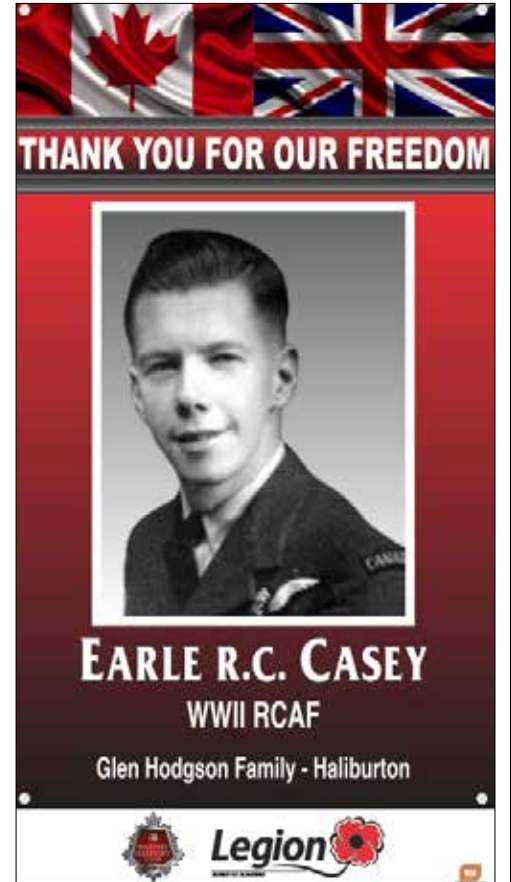
Contact us today to learn more about VON Oxford Supportive Care Programs: Email: oxford.griefsupport@von.ca, Phone: 1-888-866-7518. All Programs are Free-of-charge.

MEET THE PEOPLE OF THE MEMORIAL VETERAN BANNERS

FLIGHT SERGEANT EARLE ROBERT CECIL CASEY

Earl joined the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II at the age of 17 thus requiring his mother's signature due to his age. He served with the 428 Ghost Squadron as a rear tail gunner in a Lancaster bomber. His first 11 missions over Germany were uneventful, but he vividly recalled a daylight raid where he and his mid upper gunner shot down a ME 262 jet, a harrowing memory that always haunted him. On April 13, 1945 (Friday the 13th), his plane was shot down over the North Sea. The crew survived by swimming to the safety of a dinghy. They spent the next 12 days floating on the North Sea. It was their own urine and Earl's daily Bible readings that kept them alive. Earle was reported missing in action on April 17, 1945. Due to injuries, a broken leg and shoulder, he was hospitalized rather than being sent to a POW camp. He was eventually liberated by the British Eight Army (the Desert Rats) and taken to a medical facility in Brussels. He finally returned home on July 14, 1946. After the war, Earle met and married Jean Gould and settled in Haliburton Ontario. He managed the Dysart Independent Telephone System, and was employed by Bell Canada.

Flight Sergeant Earl Robert Cecil Casey passed away in 2008 at the age of 84.



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JAY BARUCHEL IS COMING TO FCFF.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2026 7:00 PM

THE WOLF PERFORMANCE HALL, LONDON, ON

Join us for *The Stunt Driver*, an unbelievable, big-hearted Canadian true story about stuntman, Ken Carter. Following the film, stick around for an exclusive, *In Conversation With* London-born director Michael Dowse and star Jay Baruchel!

VISIT FCFF.CA FOR MORE DETAILS



TICKETS

Weapons call in Oxford County results in education

On Saturday, Oct. 3, at approximately 6:30 p.m., the Oxford detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) received reports of individuals with firearms at an abandoned business on Highway 59, near Salford Road, in Norwich Township.

Police attended the scene and located nine individuals with BB guns. There was an increased police presence while officers completed their investigation. The investigation revealed that the individuals

were making a video.

The nine individuals were educated on the safety and legal requirements of handling items that look like firearms in public.

Oxford OPP wants to remind the public that there are specific safety measures, permissions, and notifications that are required to be made in advance, if fake, replica or prop firearms will be visible to the public.

Tillsonburg POST

Driver arrested for stunt driving in town

On Oct. 3, just before 11a.m., Oxford OPP stopped a vehicle on Broadway, in Town of Tillsonburg after it began with a police vehicle directly behind it.

At the time of the incident there were multiple pedestrians and motorists in the immediate area.

The driver, a 24-year-old from Tillson-

burg was charged with stunt and careless driving and was issued a 30 day licence suspension. The vehicle was impounded for 14 days.

Thank you to the members of the public who stopped to express their appreciation for taking careless drivers like this off the road.

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tillsonburgpost.com

Living Retired: 'grandkids in car seats'



**LIVING
RETIRED**

GARY CHALK

Non-Pulitzer Prize Winning Columnist

Okay. Who was the wise guy who made children's car seats mandatory?

Baby boomers didn't have car seats growing up – and we survived. There were no seat belts; no special harnesses. Parents just put us in the back seat of the car, lit a cigarette, and drove off.

Now don't get me wrong. I understand car seats keep children safe and secure – while their parents careen down the highway texting LOL on their cell phone.

Jan and I are not 'Car Seat Certified' so when we visit our two granddaughters we don't dare take them out in the car. Instead, we spend the first half of the day lying down on the floor reading Dora the Explorer books. Then we spend the other half of the day trying to get up off the floor. Exhausted, we come home and go to bed at 6:30!

Figuring out how to get your grandchildren into their car seats is like trying to use your television remote to record The Fireplace Channel – it's impossible!!

The first step in placing your grandchildren into their car seats is to understand that each car seat is designed to fit a specific child. There are rear-facing car seats – known as RFCS, front-facing car seats – called FFCS, and booster seats named – you guessed it! – BS! Enough said.

Whether your grandchildren go in the rear-facing car seat, the front-facing car seat, or the booster car seat depends on their height and weight. To avoid confusion among grandparents – who just want to

take their grandkids for a ride! – the car seat manufacturers suggest you refer to a 'Fit Chart.' Allow three hours. And one splitting headache. But wait. Did anyone think of simply asking your grandchildren which seat they sit in when their parents take them on a car ride to fall asleep?

Lifting your grandchildren into their car seats is a two-person job. Your wife's role is to say, "Dear, please don't use those words around our grandchildren." She is also present to call 9-1-1 when you smack your head on the garage floor after your grandchild kicks you in the groin.

Once you successfully lift your grandchildren into their proper car seat – and had a timeout with gummy bears and a juice box – the time has come to figure out how the damn three-pronged buckle works. Allow one hour. And an intervention by your wife!

Next, it is time to pull the series of convoluted over-the-shoulder straps together and tighten the overall harness. Allow one hour and an argument with your grandchildren,

who by this time have to go to the bathroom.

Some grandparents make the mistake of installing car seats in their own car. WHOA! This is why...

There is a Universal Anchorage System (UAS), the Seat Belt Only (SBO) and the Seat Belt + Locking Clip (SB+LC) installation systems. Allow three hours. And an argument with your wife, who can be counted on saying, "Go into the house while I figure this out!"

I have an idea for a book that needs to be written for grandparents. It's sure to be on The New York Times Best Seller List: 'Car Seats For Dummies: A Step-By-Step Guide To Instruct Old People How To Put Young People In Car Seats.' Written in large font.

Living Retired is written by Gary Chalk and published throughout Canada and USA. To receive Living Retired each week by email, or to book Gary to bring his unique sense of humour to your service club, corporate event, or retirement party email Gchalk@me.com

Edward Jones

> edwardjones.ca

Your retirement questions answered.

- Retirement planning
- Investing - RRSP, TSFA, RESP
- Business planning
- Estate planning
- Wealth protection strategies

Let's get started



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Financial Advisor

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Tillsonburg, ON N4G 5K9
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keegan.alvestad@edwardjones.com

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A heartfelt thank you to the Tillsonburg community for your continued support.

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Scan to view our latest flyer and store details:



RIDDLES

What has many rings but no fingers?

A phone.

I sometimes run, but I can't walk. What am I?

A nose.

It has keys, but no locks. It has space, but no room. You can enter, but can't go inside. What is it?

A keyboard.

What has hands but cannot clap?

A clock.

Poor people have it. Rich people need it. If you eat it you die. What is it?

Nothing.

What kind of tree can you carry in your hand?

A palm!

They come out at night without being called, and are lost in the day without being stolen. What are they?

Stars!

SUDOKU

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

Solutions on Page 35 Level: Beginner

PET OF THE WEEK



SPONSORED BY:



MURPHY AND FIFE FLYER

ELECT

Stephen
MOLNAR

✓ COUNCILLOR

“On behalf of my wife Colleen, and myself, we wish you all a very special, safe and healthy Happy Thanksgiving. Best Wishes to you all as we hope you are able to enjoy all our community has to offer with family and friends.”

- Stephen

519-983-VOTE (8683)

votemolnar@execulink.com

Authorized by Stephen Molnar.

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

WORD SEARCH

THANKSGIVING TABLE

R	G	M	K	A	T	C	T	D	C	Y	W	H	W	Y	E	K	R	U	T
I	M	E	R	G	T	R	O	F	H	A	R	E	W	O	L	F	Y	A	M
A	L	W	B	R	A	P	B	R	D	E	P	H	I	M	H	L	C	O	A
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**OH,
THE
PLACES
WE'LL
GO!**

PAUL KNOWLES

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Kingston Penitentiary sets the standard for guided tours.

If you have visited a fair number of historic sites, you'll know that sometimes, you're on your own to wander, reading information panels (or not finding any information at all). On other occasions, you may be guided by a well-informed student or an older volunteer.

But at Kingston Penitentiary, you will meet several guides on your way through the foreboding site, and they will all be people who worked at the Pen when it was hosting maximum security prisoners, not curious tourists. And those former guards, medical staff and other personnel bring an amazing authenticity and personal touch to the tour.

A caution: there is very little that could be called "entertaining" in a tour of the Pen. Because the stories here are harsh, often violent, and tend to reveal the worst side of humanity. But it is one of the most educational and thoughtful tours we have ever taken.

The Kingston Pen opened on June 1, 1835, and finally closed 178 years later, in 2013. In its earliest incarnation, the prison was enclosed with a cedar fence... which proved dramatically ineffective, as prisoners escaped on a very regular basis.

That problem was solved with the construction of 42-foot limestone walls, which in the 1950s were replaced with reinforced concrete. All of which gives the Pen its ominous aspect, even though

not a single criminal is resident there.

There are several tour options; we took the hour and a half option (we were hosted by Tourism Kingston), which costs \$42.50 and which we would highly recommend. It would be tough to tell the whole story in less than that amount of time.

As you tour the stark site, you learn about the evolution of incarceration – and it will probably strike you that it has taken forever for us to decide to treat prisoners as human beings. We may not be there yet. In 1835, the cells measured two feet wide by seven feet long. Or – enough room for a cot. In 1907, those measurements were expanded, and cells now measured four feet by eight feet by 10 feet. Modestly good news for prisoners – until the 1980's, when overcrowding meant double bunks; two prisoners sharing that space. Maximum number of cells at the jail totalled 620; at one point, there were 1250 prisoners, some housed three to a cell.

The sheer expanse of the penitentiary stands in sharp contrast to the tiny amount of personal space the prisoners had in their cells. Looming grey stone and concrete buildings abound – cell blocks, dining areas, medical facilities, recreational areas, and workshops.

Prisoners did work in workshops – the goods they produced were then marketed through a federal government agency. The prisoners were paid a few dollars for their work (\$5 a day in the 1990s), money they could then spend for goods in the prison tuck shop.

Prisoners also worked in construction on the site. In fact, most of the buildings that form the penitentiary were built by prisoners, a unique reality at the Kingston Pen.

Kingston housed federal prisoners – men and women whose sentence was two years and a day or more. The average length of incarceration was 18 years; one guide told us the longest stay she knew of was 36 years.

Another guide, Paul, served as a cor-



A view of Kingston Penitentiary.

(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

rections nurse for 27 years. He showed us around the short-term segregation area, where problem prisoners including those on suicide watch were kept. There, prisoners were subject to strip searches and were locked up for 23 hours a day. The other hour could be spent in an open yard that seemed smaller than a small room in your home.

The most graphic part of the tour comes as your tour group is seated in the central section of the cell blocks, and we learn about the three riots at Kingston Pen – especially the riot of 1971, where prisoners captured six guards, took complete control of the jail, virtually destroyed the place, and took advantage of their several days of control to kill or severely injure prisoners who were confined as sexual abuse perpetrators.

Ironically, the riot was caused because of false rumours that had spread among the prisoners – they wrongly believed they were to be transferred to Millhaven Penitentiary, where, they thought, conditions were far more harsh than even

at Kingston. None of this was accurate, but ironically, when the riot was finally quelled, many of the rioters were sent to Millhaven because Kingston was in no shape to house anyone until extensive repairs were completed.

No visit to the Pen would be complete without crossing King Street and climbing the steps to visit the Penitentiary Museum (once the home of the prison warden). Admission is by donation, and visitors will find all manner of artifacts from the Kingston and other penitentiaries, ranging from the earliest punishment devices (some might say torture) to a drone captured from an attempt to smuggle contraband into Collins Bay Penitentiary in 2022.

These tours are sobering and sometimes shocking. But terrifically worthwhile. We recommend them.

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)

A Kingston Penitentiary tour guide who was a long-time staffer then the jail was in operation.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The entrance to Penitentiary workshops; the footprints are where prisoners were compelled to stand as they were searched upon leaving the workshops.

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OBITUARY

GARY JAMES HOTCHKISS

(APRIL 17, 1951 – OCTOBER 2, 2026)



Passed away, suddenly but peacefully, our much loved husband and father, Gary James Hotchkiss of Tillsonburg and formerly of Courtland, on Friday, October 2nd, 2026, at the age of 75. Gary was born in Toronto, son of the late Robert Hotchkiss and Thelma (Brown) Hotchkiss. For many years, Gary drove dump truck, bought and sold old model cars and more recently ran the storage yard on County Road 13. He was the happiest when surrounded

by family and friends. One of the greatest story tellers of all time. He treasured any and all time that he could spend with his grandchildren. Dearly missed by his much loved wife of 51 years, Dale (Bryant) Hotchkiss. Always a caring father to Mark Hotchkiss, of Tillsonburg. Dearly missed by his grandchildren Emma, Joel and Jase. Also survived by his brother Dennis (Sharon) Hotchkiss, of Toronto, sister Linda, of Peterborough, and by his nieces and nephews Lori-Anne, Lisa, Robbie, Steven, Joanne, Janet, Peter and Michael.

In keeping with Gary's expressed wishes, cremation has taken place. There with neither a visitation nor a formal funeral service. Friends, neighbours and relatives are invited to attend his interment in Tillsonburg Cemetery, on Saturday, October 17th, at 2:00 p.m. Everyone who knew Gary is invited to share favourite memories and photos, express personal condolences or contribute memorial donations to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario via Gary's online tribute page at www.verhoevefuneralhomes.com or by contacting the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes, Tillsonburg (519) 842-4238.

OBITUARY

PETER JR. KLASSEN

(JULY 19, 1950 – OCTOBER 3, 2026)



It is with sadness that we the family of Peter Klassen wish to announce his peaceful passing at home, after a courageous struggle with illness, on Saturday, October 3, 2026, at the age of 76. Peter was born in Chihuahua, Mexico, son of the late Peter and Maria (Wall) Klassen. Over his working years, Peter was a driver for various transport truck companies. He then had a retirement delivery job at Klassen Auto Parts. He will be remembered by family and friends for his love of motorcycle riding, woodworking skills and

for his enjoyment of working on cars and his yard. Above all else, Peter was a devoted husband, father and very proud grandfather - he enjoyed building various items for his grandchildren, fixing their cars to keep them safe and spending as much time as he could with them. Peter was the loving and much loved husband to Cathy (Peters) Klassen, of Straffordville. Together they raised their sons: Daniel Klassen, of Straffordville and his children Teri (Joel Lines), Alex Klassen, Erin (Justin Levinson); John Klassen (Jennifer), of Tillsonburg and their children Jordan (Erica) Klassen (their kids Caleb, Emma), Jelissa (Jake Martin) (their son Kane); Isaac (Wendy) Klassen, of Straffordville and children Zachery Simons, Kevina Simons (kids Addisyn, Noah), Michelle (Austin Wick) (their daughter Paisley). Survived by eight siblings and their families. Also predeceased by his parents and one sister.

Friends, neighbours and relatives were invited to join the family for visitation to be held on Tuesday, October 6th, 2026, between 12:30 p.m. and 1:45 p.m. at Straffordville Evangelical Mission Church. A funeral service of remembrance was held on Tuesday afternoon at 2:00 p.m. in the church, by Pastor Abe Berg. Interment followed in Straffordville Cemetery. Everyone who knew Peter is invited to share favourite memories and photos, express personal condolences or contribute memorial donations to any charity of your choice or to privately assist a family in need. Memorial donations can be made via Peter's online tribute page at www.verhoevefuneralhomes.com or by contacting the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes, Tillsonburg (519) 842-4238, entrusted with all funeral arrangements, with confidence.

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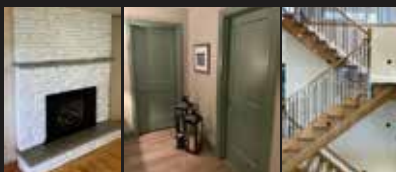
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