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**CANADA DAY
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(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

A RECORD-BREAKING TURTLEFEST

TurtleFest broke records on many fronts this year, including the size of the crowd, which was estimated to be as high as 45,000 to 50,000. The two-day event started on Friday at Annandale House and continued on Saturday in the downtown, and again at Annandale House.

TurtleFest draws record crowd

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

By all accounts, this year's TurtleFest was a record breaker. While official attendance numbers are a few weeks off, TurtleFest chair Mark Renaud estimated the crowd at 45,000 to 50,000 people. The official numbers will be based on cell phone ping data from within a geofence set up by Environics in the downtown BIA area. The company has similar geofences set up in BIA districts across the country.

"They don't know who, but they know the phone was there, and

there most of the day," Renaud explained of the process. It can also reveal demographics of the attendees.

TurtleFest coordinator Terry Fraser noted that last year the street crowd thinned by 3:30 or 4 p.m., but this year the street was still busy at that time.

Committee member Vanessa Fortner, who was on the ground for the BIA the entire day, agreed.

"The past three years, what we see is it gets busy from noon to three o'clock, and then slows down," she said. "This year, all the way from 11 a.m. to 5:45 when it started raining, it was just a sea of people."

CONTINUED TO PAGE 28

Public input approved for new sports fields

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Council gave the go-ahead to town staff to start a public engagement process on a proposal to relocate the four Annandale ball diamonds to new town land on Mall Road.

The proposal would also include selling the property where the diamonds are currently located for residential development, with more green space than other developments. Proceeds from the sale would be used to offset the purchase price of the Mall Road property and diamond development.

The motion passed by council was to proceed with the public input process to relocate the diamonds to 67 Mall Road. This would include consulting with members of all town committees, user groups, and hosting two public information sessions. The development is in the consultation phase, and is not moving ahead yet.

A report from Development Commissioner Cephas Panschow stated that, during the 2022 campaign trail, council members heard that more green space and recreational amenities were needed in town. When the property on Mall Road, which is in Norfolk County, became available, it was seen as an opportunity to expand recreational facilities.

The town purchased the 36-acre property for \$6.2 million in April 2024. A consultant was hired to complete the plans for what was known as Project Big Swing. The first phase of the development would have four softball diamonds, with lights. With more parking than the present facility, Panschow told council it would open up possibilities for hosting tournaments, which would bring revenue to town.

A second phase could add additional soccer fields to the development, but is not finalized, as is the case with the third phase. A walking track would be built around the perimeter of the property, which is behind the cemetery.

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Proposal would see ball diamonds moved

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

"We know we can't add to the Annandale diamonds right now, and what's going to happen if we added a third site is we would be spreading out staff, and it wouldn't be as efficient in terms of vehicle and people movement," Panschow said.

The proposal for Annandale is a mix of townhomes and four-storey residential buildings that will retain as much green space as possible. It will be developed in partnership with a private-sector developer in the future and will be what Panschow called "fairly priced".

"In many aspects, the town is at a crossroads," he said. "Important decisions need to be made about enhancing future services. We can't ignore the growth across every sporting segment in town, so this proposal is exciting and timely in what we are considering."

Deputy Mayor Dave Beres asked if there are restrictions to keep higher apartment buildings out of the area.

"I love this, perhaps for the next 10 years as long as I'm around, that would be beautiful, but I'm looking at the long run and the growth projections what our population could be we could require higher-density level," he said.

Panschow said the proposal is for a mixture of medium-density residential that is a mix of townhouses and two four-storey apartment buildings.

"If we're looking at skyscrapers in the future, that's not the ideal location," Beres said.

"Having played ball for 30-some years and being on the executive, I'm sure people there will be happy to never see another baseball in their yard," said Coun. Kelly Spencer.

She noted the recreation master plan noted the need for more baseball diamonds, but she asked how replacing four with four is an increase.

Panschow said the new diamonds will be more modern and efficient and have lighting. He added that the soccer fields are conceptual only and could be replaced by more baseball diamonds.

"At this point, we're looking to double capacity by adding lighting," he said.

Coun. Chris Rosehart asked why taller apartment buildings weren't being considered, given that there are already taller buildings in the area.

"I'm trying to understand why this isn't more than less," she said.

Panschow said medium density was settled on after considering the area's infrastructure.

After reading the motion, Coun. Chris Parker called this an exciting project.

"It's great we are going out to get this type of public engagement," he said.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy agreed, adding, "No decisions have been made, and that's why we are going out to the public to get feedback."



A conceptual drawing of the residential development that could be built on the ball diamond property if the diamonds move to the town's property on Mall Road.



A drawing of the Big Swing property on Mall Road, showing the four ball diamonds to be built in the first phase if the development proceeds.

EDITORIAL

Kudos to TurtleFest organizers

Not that many years ago, being surrounded by towns with community festivals, Tillsonburg stood out as being what could be termed a “festival-less town”. TurtleFest changed that 13 years ago, and in a big way.

This weekend’s festivities were record-breaking in several ways: the number of attendees, the number of booths, and sales figures for many downtown retailers.

Organizers estimate crowd attendance at 45,000 to 50,000 people based on past attendance and the volume of people in the street. If that number is correct, a quick Internet search puts it on par with the Boots and Hearts Music Festival and in third place for top attendance at a small-town festival. For those who aren’t country music fans, this multiple-day festival in Orillia draws the top names in country music internationally. The only ones with greater attendance are Elmira’s Maple Syrup Festival and Midland’s Butter Tart Festival, both of which top 60,000 people.

Going from not having a festival to the

top five small-town festivals in the province in 13 years is no small accomplishment. It’s something festival originators and current organizers should be proud of.

Having such a successful event is a true community partnership. Sponsors play a vital role in making TurtleFest a no-cost event. The more than 100 volunteers are crucial in ensuring things run smoothly on the day of the event. The committee, which is small but mighty, is at the crux of the success.

When tens of thousands of people come to town, it is definitely an economic boost to businesses and restaurants, one that may be crucial for some that experience summer slowdowns.

As organizers start planning for next year, which will likely continue the upward trend in attendance and number of booths, they may have their sights set on becoming the number one small-town festival in the province. Viewing the festivals that are the competition, a few booths selling maple butter tarts may just make that goal come quicker.

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



(ANDREW STANCEK PHOTO)

A “cast “of thousands: a fishing story



**WRITER'S
CORNER**

NORMA COLLIS

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Over the years, I have supported my husband’s love of fishing, by gifting him with various rods and reels and an endless supply of fishing lures. I know nothing about the vagaries of fishing lures and these items are always chosen because they “look pretty”. Sometimes I even remark on what a lovely pair of earrings a particular set of lures might make.

This kind of remark always elicited a “side eye” look accompanied by a huge sigh.

David had accumulated an extensive collection of hooks and lures when we were first invited to join friends at their cabin on a small lake in the Haliburton Highlands region.

The land sloped down from their cot-

tage to the lake at a very steep angle. On the shoreline and overhanging the lake, were beautiful, wide branching trees. The fish loved to hang out in the shade of these trees, and I loved to read while sitting under those trees. David, on the other hand, loved to stand beneath those trees and then cast his fishing line out into the waters of the lake.

He is a left-handed caster, and his casts were often somewhat wild and erratic. No matter where I sat, I had to be ready to hear my fisherman yell “Fore” which in fisherman talk means “Duck!”

“The wind caught it....sorry,” David would say.

It was not long before many of those beautiful, overhanging trees, were festooned with an enviable selection of fishing accessories.

As yet another rather expensive lure became entangled in the low hanging branches, David would exclaim, “I meant to do that you know.”

This was followed by a chorus of “Sure, Daves” from our cottage owner friends, plus their nearest neighbours who were often sitting out on their dock nearby.

It was “mission impossible” to retrieve any of those lures. The now decorated branches hung out too far over the water so using ladders, or attempting rescues

from a boat were both impossible.

Summer after summer, we were invited back to that cottage. Summer after summer, my ever-hopeful spouse added to the growing collection of “branch festooned” lures.

It became a running joke, and was often the dinner topic of many a cottage barbecue.

From time to time, David and our host would try their luck by leaving shore and fishing from the cottage canoe. It was not uncommon to see our two fishermen, paddling madly for the safety of land, followed by a black swarm of mosquitoes.

One summer’s morning, the men returned empty handed from their early-dawn fishing expedition. They were commiserating over coffee about their continued streak of bad luck regarding their attempts to “bring home the bacon” in the form of a large and tasty fish.

They had left their fishing gear down on the dock. I strolled down the hill to that area and picked up David’s rod and reel. I idly cast the line out into the water where the lure bounced off the trunk of a dead-fall tree half-immersed in the murky waters of the lake.

I immediately felt the pull of a fish on the end of the line. The two fishermen heard my calls for help and arrived just in

time to see me reel in a largemouth bass. David often teased me about the fact that I referred to the fish as a “Big Mouth Bass.” He firmly informed me that only a “big mouth” will brag about catching a largemouth fish.

One summer, David and I traveled to Britain, and our travels took us to Portmeirion in Wales. I was fascinated by the extensive gardens that the rather eccentric original owner of the estate had created. Scattered throughout the vast gardens, were various pieces of statuary. Each one of these pieces bore a verse celebrating and paying homage to a particular summer. The inscription would include the year, and this would be accompanied by a beautifully crafted piece of poetry about the attributes of the summer in question.

David, I exclaimed “I have the perfect hostess gift to take to our friends’ cottage next time you go fishing there.”

We’re going to find a concrete loon or a huge casting of a mosquito. It can go underneath the offending fishing lure trees. It will have a verse attached to it. It can read “Here’s to the summer of ’93, A very good summer, Except for those trees!!”

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

Pedaling the Tillsonburg News in the 1970s



**PAST
IMPERFECT**

WAYNE HUTCHISON

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Every week I read parts of several newspapers – the Globe and Mail, the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, the Tillsonburg Post, and even my local paper. And all of them get delivered electronically with just a click of a mouse. But that's not how we received our newspapers back in the 1970s.

As was common for kids back then, I delivered the London Free Press. It was published six days a week, Monday to Saturday. Saturday was the thickest and heaviest, followed by Wednesday. Tuesday was always the “light” day. I had around 35 customers on North Street East, Falcon Road, and Tanager Drive.

As we lived in the middle of the neighborhood, the papers would be dropped off at the end of our driveway in the middle of the night. I'd get up early before school to deliver, usually starting at about 6:30 a.m. From our driveway, I'd take roughly one-third of the papers in my canvas bag, and head off to the west, either on foot or bicycle. I'd go from house to house, working my way to Northern Lane, then cross the road and catch the vet clinic on the way back home. Then I'd put some more papers in my bag, and head up Falcon and Tanager, before turning around and repeating the process one last time heading down North Street to the east. I only very rarely had customers on the east side of the train tracks, so usually didn't have to go down the hill.

On a good weather day, riding my bike, I could deliver the papers in about 45 minutes. On a cold, wintery day, slogging through snow drifts on foot, I might be out there twice as long. And this was before North Street had sidewalks and streetlights – just narrow gravel shoulders and deep ditches. In the winter, everything was done in the dark – delivering papers and collecting payments. And I did it on my own – no parents or siblings helping out. It was my job, and I had to do it myself.

Every customer wanted their paper delivered a certain way too. Some wanted the paper put in their mailbox, some in the rungs under the mailbox, some between the screen door and main door, one even through the mail slot in the door (that was difficult when the paper was too thick – I'd have to slide it through in two or three sections). There was none of this riding by and throwing the paper onto the front yard. And no plastic bags either – it was up to me to keep the papers as dry as possible.

When I started delivering the London Free Press, the price was 80 cents per week, but it gradually increased

to 90 cents and then #1. I really didn't like the \$1-price as that tended to reduce the amount of the “tips” I'd receive each week. Speaking of tips, collecting just before Christmas was always the best. Many customers would give me a tip of \$5, sometimes more. December was always the best month for income! Normal income was about \$1 per month per customer – about \$35 per month, or about \$200 in today's dollars – not bad for a 10-year-old kid.

I usually went collecting after dinner during the week when customers were most likely to be home. On a good weeknight I'd find 90 per cent of them home, and only have to circle back to the three or four I missed later in the week.

How did I keep track of who had paid and who hadn't? I had a little two-ring binder with thick pressboard covers that held perforated sheets of ticket “stubs”. When collecting, the customer would pay me for the papers, and I would tear off and give them the “stubs” for the paid weeks. This was a simple way for carriers to know who had paid, who hadn't, and for customers to get a receipt when they paid. I even had one customer on Tanager Drive who would leave the payment in a glass jar between the screen and door of the man-door entering her garage. I'd take the money and leave the ticket stubs in the jar.

How did I deliver my papers when on vacation? We didn't go on too many vacations back then, but when we did, I would ask our local Tillsonburg News carrier who lived just down the street – current Post editor Jeff Helsdon – to take my route for me. We'd do the route once together and he'd have it from there. And when he went on vacation, I'd take his News route for him.

Delivering newspapers was a great learning experience, and a great source of income. It's too bad that it's not a job for kids anymore.

Norfolk OPP investigating serious rollover collision on Bell Mill

Police are investigating the circumstances surrounding a serious collision that occurred near Courtland.

On Friday, June 12, at approximately 7:19 p.m., members of the Norfolk County Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), Norfolk County Paramedic Services, and the Norfolk County Fire Department responded to a rollover involving a sedan on Bell Mill Side Road.

The investigation determined that the vehicle was travelling on Bell Mill Side Road when it left the roadway and entered a field. The driver, a 48-year-old resident of Oxford County, was transported to hospital with

life-threatening injuries. A passenger in the vehicle sustained minor injuries.

Bell Mill Side Road was closed between 3rd Concession Road and Goshen Road for several hours to allow for the investigation.

The West Region OPP Traffic Incident Management Enforcement (TIME) Team is assisting with the investigation. Investigators are asking anyone who may have witnessed the collision, or who may have dash cam footage or information that could assist, to contact the Norfolk County OPP at 1-888-310-1122.

Tillsonburg POST

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Stop means stop: OPP concludes road safety campaign

As the "Stop. Look. Live." campaign concludes, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is reminding drivers that the importance of safe driving extends far beyond the campaign period.

Throughout the week, officers worked to raise awareness and address behaviours that contribute to preventable collisions. However, the risks at intersections remain present every day.

"Every life lost on our roads is one too many. These tragedies are preventable, and every driver has a role to play in keeping our roads safe," said Staff Sergeant Julie McLeod, West Region OPP Traffic and Marine.

Drivers are urged to carry these safety practices forward:

- Come to a complete stop at every stop sign
- Look carefully and more than once before proceeding
- Ensure the roadway is clear and safe
- Stay focused and avoid all distractions

Taking a few extra seconds at an intersection may not seem significant, but it can make the difference between life and loss and those few seconds could mean someone returns home safely to their loved ones.

Stop. Look. Live. - Because every life matters, and every decision counts.

Town applies to development charges reduction program

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Tillsonburg council directed staff to apply to a provincial program that would allow development charges to be cut in half for the next three years.

Development charges are fees paid to a municipality by a developer to cover infrastructure costs associated with population growth. There are strict criteria for what the money can be used for. In Tillsonburg's case, one recent example is the development charges paid for the new pickleball courts, meaning they didn't have to come from the tax levy.

Ryan Wood, the town's recently hired Budgeting and Financial Planning Coordinator, said a 50 per cent reduction in development charges would result in \$3.4 million in lost development charges over the three years of the program. He said program approval is not guaranteed.

Coun. Chris Parker asked what the benefit is to the council of applying to the program, keeping in mind that the province could force a reduction in the fees at any time.

"I believe the benefit and intention of the program is to increase development in the community as well as grow potential tax base for the community," Wood said.

Deputy Mayor Dave Beres asked if the lost development charges would be made up for by more homes being built. He also asked what the criteria are for mandatory charges, noting that the town has no industrial development charges,

whereas Oxford County does.

Manager of Finance/Treasurer Renato Pullia explained that both the provincial and federal governments are looking to stimulate housing and are looking for municipalities to partner with. He said the speed with which the program came up – the deadline to apply was June 19 – may be due to the HST rebate on homes only being in place for one year.

Coun. Pete Luciani said he understands the need to build more housing, but added, "With the position we're in now, I'm not sure how much this is going to help us.

Parker agreed but said the town doesn't have much control over growth.

"My fear is we don't support it, and we don't participate in this program; we're going to be caught in a position where we don't get any funding. I have a feeling it's going to get mandated," he said.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy said at the county level, when it was discussed, it was revealed Oxford would be competing against larger centres such as Toronto, Mississauga and London.

"The sentiment is it's going to be difficult for smaller municipalities to participate in this program," she said. "That was the sentiment at the county table, it's a long shot."

Luciani, who read in the original motion to accept the report as information, didn't accept a friendly amendment from Parker to apply for the program. After Luciani's motion was turned down, a motion was passed to apply for the program.

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Tillsonburg Travel celebrating its 65th anniversary

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Just about everything in the travel industry has changed from the days when Tillsonburg Travel opened its doors in Market Square 65 years ago, except for the need for top-notch customer service.

In the 1960s, travel agents manually wrote out airline tickets after inserting a ticket blank into a credit card imprinter. A travel agent received different inserts for the machines from each airline. Tillsonburg Travel founder Luc Van Maele recalled those days, along with Lisa Hirt and Mary Beth McElhone, who worked for him and bought the company after he retired.

The company started through a series of circumstances that came together for founder Luc Van Maele. When the Van Maele family came to Canada from Belgium in 1955, Van Maele was trained as a chef. After a year working on a tobacco farm, he was employed at the Tillsonburg Golf and Country Club as a cook in the summer and by Canadian Leaf Tobacco Company in the winter. He started a

weekly radio program on CKOT in 1957 for the Belgium community in the area.

"I was approached by a travel agent, not from Tillsonburg, and he said you should do a group trip to Belgium," Van Maele recounted.

After a successful trip in 1960, the agent suggested partnering on a travel office in Tillsonburg. Although his partner bailed at the last minute, Luc and his wife Nicole went ahead with the venture, opening a small office near the former town hall.

In 1962, Tillsonburg Travel was the first Canadian travel agency to operate a non-stop charter flight from Toronto to Brussels on the Belgium airline Sabena. Many more flights followed, including the first international flight from London, ON, which also went to Belgium. Van Maele recalled in the early days the Malton Airport, now Pearson International, was just a single hangar.

A travel agency had to be approved by each airline it wanted to sell tickets for at the time Van Maele built the company. Tillsonburg Travel gradually built its repertoire of companies it worked with.

Talking about how the company started,

Van Maele remarked, "In my case, it was a lot of coincidences, it wasn't planned."

He took some travel courses after he started, but wasn't formally trained in travel.

As Tillsonburg's industrial base grew, Tillsonburg Travel booked flights for many of the companies, including the tobacco board, TDS, Hoover and DDM. The company moved on to Broadway in 1971 and to its present location in 1980.

Through the years, Van Maele continued to book the flights to Belgium. He was knighted by the Consul General of Belgium for promotion of tourism between Belgium and Canada and for his 46 years of involvement on the Belgium Program on CKOT.

In 2005, when Van Maele retired, Hirt and McElhone purchased the business. McElhone had been working at Tillsonburg Travel since 1985, after graduating from the travel and tourism program at St. Clair College and gaining industry experience at two other employers. Hirt started in 1996 after completing travel and tourism at Fanshawe College, and working in Norwich for five years.

McElhone stayed in Tillsonburg after starting there, liking to work with familiar faces.

"There's something that makes you feel good about working with people you know," she said.

Hirt also liked working in her hometown.

McElhone commented on the technology over the years as the largest change, saying they used to have to call every tour company to get a price and make a reservation.

"You had a phone stuck on your ear all day," she said.

Technology and online booking also made an impact on the travel business, but in a serendipitous way.

"We thought when 9-1-1 occurred, and it shut down the world for two days, it was the worst thing in travel," McElhone said. "Little did we know with Covid it would be shut down for two years."

During the Covid years, both McElhone and Hirt worked from home. There was barely enough business to keep the two of them going. Then, when travelers were frustrated trying to navigate the refund process during Covid, many came back to booking through an agent.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

This photo from 1971 shows Luc and Nicole Van Maele ready to board a Pan Am flight in New York City as part of a Round the World trip in 1971.

McElhone retired in 2024, wanting to travel herself and visit her children in Australia and Alberta more, and Hirt purchased the business.

Today, Hirt says the company offers personal and professional service customers can't find through online agencies or by booking themselves. She and the other three agents are well-traveled and can offer insight into a destination. Tillsonburg Travel belongs to Travelsavers consortium and is one of its top 30 agencies in Canada. Pricing can match what is offered online, and in some cases, there are special offers not available through web purchasing.

Hirt is seeing a trend towards more adventurous traveling in the last few years.

"People want more off the beaten track, an independent tour," she said.

There are still challenges, such as world issues, with the "media blows everything up" making it worse. The present fuel prices aren't helping; the weather is more extreme, and Cuba, one of the popular winter destinations, is currently shut down.

"But I love it," Hirt said, adding there are still many options to travel, including cruises on sailboats, and on smaller boats.

"There's something for everyone," she said.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

As Tillsonburg Travel celebrated 65 years this month, the company's owners gathered to reflect on its ups and downs over its history. Left to right are: Lisa Hirt, Luc Van Maele, and Mary Beth McElhone.

Overheard at the Coffee Shop

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Katherine Englander running for councillor position

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

A local business professional has thrown her name into the race for Tillsonburg council.

Katherine Englander filed her papers on June 12. Most recently, she founded and operated Katherine Englander HR Services in Tillsonburg and later established HRP4B. This company became the HR Business Group after its sale.

Englander moved to Tillsonburg in 1985. She lived in town until 2014, moved to Port Stanley, and then back to Tillsonburg in September 2025. During her time in town, she raised her family in town and served as a volunteer coach. Her son, Andrew, owns Attain Health. She brings a background in business leadership, human resources, governance, and community development.

"Throughout my career, I have worked with organizations of all sizes, helping them navigate growth, change, and strategic planning," she said.

Community service has always been important to Englander. She is currently on the Tillsonburg BIA board of directors, and has been a volunteer with the Heart and Stroke Foundation, and was a member of the Culture Committee and chair of the Canada Day Committee in 2000. She has also served on several boards in the St. Thomas area, including the Chamber of Commerce and Workforce Planning



Katherine Englander. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Board. Englander was also the chair of the Better Business Bureau of Southwestern Ontario.

"Tillsonburg is a community with tremendous strengths and exciting opportunities ahead," said Englander. "I am running because I believe residents deserve practical leadership, responsible de-

cision-making, and a council that listens carefully to the people it serves."

She sees the biggest challenges will be managing growth while maintaining affordability, the town's character and protecting the services residents expect. She believes council will need to address infrastructure demands, housing availability, economic development, healthcare recruitment, and long-term financial sustainability. Her campaign will also focus on transparency, accountability, and community engagement.

Englander believes her experience in

governance, leadership, and business will be a valuable addition to council. She has talked to existing council members and has been following what's been happening.

"Building, operating, and successfully selling my own company required many of the same skills needed on council: strategic planning, financial oversight, problem-solving, collaboration, and accountability. I believe this experience would allow me to make informed decisions and contribute effectively on behalf of Tillsonburg residents," she said.



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TILLSONBURG COUNCIL BRIEFS

Internship program

Town council approved an internship program, in principle, that would be a joint venture between the town and the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO).

Peter Raji, Manager of Innovation and Strategic Services, explained to council members at the June 15 meeting that the funding for the eight-month part-time position would be split between AMCTO and the town. He suggested having the person, if the program is approved by AMCTO, review the town processes for interaction between departments. If there is time, he said the person could also develop standard operating procedures so there are records of what an employee does on a daily basis if someone left for any reason.

The town's cost would be \$15,000 plus \$650 for software and hardware costs, and would be funded from the employment reserve.

Flag policy updated

Tillsonburg has a new policy for when its flags will be flown at half-mast and for lighting the clock tower.

"The current policy doesn't provide formal direction on clock tower lighting and offers limited guidance on discretionary half-masting, resulting in an inconsistent ad-hoc approach," said Laura Pickersgill, deputy clerk.

For instance, the existing policy allowed flags to be flown at half-mast to recognize the death of senior officials and line-of-duty deaths. The new policy will also allow these, plus the flag to be flown at half-mast for the death of current and former town employees and others at the discretion of the CAO.

Tillsonburg adopts AI policy

Town staff and council now have a policy to guide their interactions with artificial intelligence.

"As we all know, just about everything we do in today's world revolves around AI," said Peter Raji, Manager of Innovation and Strategic Initiatives. "We want our staff to know the right way to interact with this software,

when it's okay to use these tools, and the best ways to use these tools because with anything technology-wise there are inherent risks, so we want our employees to be aware how to interact and get the best value from this technology."

The adopted policy provides guidelines of what is allowed but also has flexibility to allow for adjustments to technology changes.

Two CIP applications approved

The difference between the funding level for two different applications under the town's Community Improvement Program drew questions from council.

The first application, from local software developer OPID Technologies, was to renovate the building at 92 Broadway to allow the company to expand from its present space on Harvey Street. The Broadway building formerly housed a pawn shop.

Development Commissioner Cephas Panschow recommended funding of \$13,000 for OPID - \$10,000 of matching funding under the Commercial Building Interior Renovation Program and \$3,000 under the Accessibility Renovation Grant. The application by Kermar Properties Inc. for the former PeaveyMart building on Concession Street was at a higher level. Panschow suggested funding \$9,000 under the Contaminated Property Incentive Program and a multi-year tax increment grant back program with a value of \$164,780.

Asking about the difference in funding levels with the grant back program, Coun. Kelly Spencer questioned why there was such a huge difference between the possible levels that ranged from \$57,000 to \$160,000.

Panschow explained the Kermar project is the type of initiative the previously-approved CIP was designed for, taking old buildings and revitalizing them. He said council has approved the program for newer buildings, but at a lower rate.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy asked for a clarification on the program, affirming she was correct in understanding, "We're not giving up tax revenue, we're potentially slowing up when we receive the gain revenue."

Panschow affirmed she was correct. In other words, the

program provides companies a break on the increase in taxes that would have been paid for improvements made at the level assigned, but still requires paying taxes at the previous rate. The program provides incentives for up to 10 years.

Rokeby Road reconstruction approved

Reconstruction of Rokeby Road was approved by council at a cost of just over \$1 million.

The lowest bid in the tender for the project, which was previously approved as part of the capital budget, was approved for \$1,044,116 from Euro-Ex Construction of Woodstock. Reconstruction of the road will improve drainage in the area, and assist businesses in the area.

Coun. Chris Rosehart asked if this was a road shared with Norfolk, and was told it was and Norfolk was contributing \$250,000 to the project.

Coun. Chris Parker asked why Norfolk was only cover about one-quarter of the cost.

Logan Vandevyvere, Acting Manager of Engineering, said Norfolk was only going to provide \$218,000, and then it increased to \$250,000.

"I am surprised they contributed any because when we first talked about this project there was a feeling they wouldn't contribute any," Parker said.

Deputy Mayor Dave Beres asked if there was any more potential industrial use on the road in the stretch that was being repaved. Development Commissioner Cephas Panschow said there is only room to expand on the existing properties.

ROMA tour

Deputy Mayor Dave Beres reported good things came out of a visit to town by officials from the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA). Beres, who is a ROMA director, said the tour in Norfolk and Oxford Counties included a tour of downtown Tillsonburg. Officials from other communities were impressed with the cleanliness of the downtown, and two have asked Downtown Tillsonburg BIA Executive Director Mark Renaud for more information.

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GENERAC



Dee Tosto vying for seat on town council

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

A Tillsonburg businesswoman is the latest to file her papers to run for council.

Dee Tosto, who moved to Tillsonburg three years ago, found Tillsonburg quickly felt like home and became involved in the community. She runs *deefy.ca*, a graphics and corporate events company.

She is involved with Community Living Tillsonburg, the Station Arts Centre, the Downtown Tillsonburg BIA, the Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce, and the Tillsonburg Horticultural Society.

Tosto has more than 35 years of experience in communications, project leadership, and collaboration across the public,

private, and not-for-profit sectors. A graphic designer and project manager by profession, she has spent her career bringing people together, both by working independently and as part of a team. She is also a member of the Association of Registered Graphic Designers.

Asked why she decided to run for council, Tosto answered because she cares about the community and wants to contribute.

"I have always believed in being involved, whether through volunteering, serving on boards, or supporting local initiatives. Running for council feels like a natural next step," she said. "Now is the right time because I have built strong connections through community involvement and developed a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing Tillsonburg. I believe my experience in collaboration, communication, and project leadership can help move important initiatives forward. My campaign is built around a simple belief: collaboration builds community."

Tosto sees the big issues over the next four years as managing growth while preserving the qualities of Tillsonburg, access to health care and enhancing regional transportation options.

"Supporting our regional hospital is important to ensure residents have access to timely, high-quality care close to home, and to strengthen the overall health system that our community depends on," she said.

Tosto suggested building stronger partnership with neighbouring communities to help better connect the communities.

"Underlying these challenges is the need for strong communication and public engagement so residents are informed, heard, and involved in decisions affecting their community,"



Dee Tosto.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

she said.

Tosto watches the replay of council meetings, reviews the agendas and listens to the weekly meeting updates from Coun. Kelly Spencer. She also garners feedback from being involved in the community and attending events.



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WATER FUN IN THE SUN

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTOS)

Students at Monsignor O’Neil enjoyed a variety of activities on a Play Day that included many outdoor events with and without water. (Top photo) A fun twist on the tug of war was to put a small pool and springer in the middle. (Bottom photo) The overhead water bucket dump was a relay that emphasized team work, and could involve a soaking if the aim was off. Other events included a water sponge race, potato sack race and obstacle course.

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Tillsonburg FC U9 boys pick up title, bouquet of fun in Welland

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

The Tillsonburg FC U9 boys soccer team picked up a bouquet of fun along with a U9B Bridge Tier championship at the one-day Welland Wizards Rose Festival tournament Saturday, June 13 in Niagara.

Tillsonburg competed in a six-team, two-pool division also featuring the Port Colborne Storm, Fort Erie Sting, Grimsby Red, Welland Wizards Black and London Alliance Mustangs.

Tillsonburg opened pool play with a comparatively-comfortable 4-0 win over Port Colborne.

"We played our game," said head coach Taras Bondarchuk. "Pass and score, with good passion."

In order, Francesco Macri, Sawyer Van Ittersum, Nathan Sulkowski and Stan Bondarchuk found the back of the net for the winners, with goaltender Tyler Wood keeping a clean sheet.

"We played pretty good," said coach Bondarchuk.

FC's second pool game was against Fort Erie, unfolding as a physical contest between two determined teams.

"It was a battle," said Bondarchuk. "To be honest, it was harder than the final game."

Van Ittersum scored the game's lone goal in the first half, with Tillsonburg's defence and Wood equal to the task of locking up a one-nil victory through the second.

"We played confident and kept our position," said Bondarchuk.

The 2-0 record placed Tillsonburg atop the B Pool standings, qualifying the team for the Bridge Tier Ranking A Final against Grimsby, which won its Pool A round robin against London and the host Wizards.

It was a contest between teams adopting a similar style said Bondarchuk, Grimsby proving a highly-skilled side which liked to move the ball.

"We played the same tactics."

Van Ittersum scored the first half's lone goal, FC taking a 1-0 lead into the break as a result. Grimsby opened the second half with a strong push Bondarchuk credited.

"But our goalie saved a lot. He saved a lot of shots."

Tillsonburg's opponents finally broke through with around five minutes remaining in regulation, forcing FC to reset and refocus.

"We didn't give up and pushed hard," said Bondarchuk.

Van Ittersum scored what would stand as the game winner in the contest's latter stages, his second marker standing up as the winner.

Eight players represented Tillsonburg FC at the event, part of a broader U9 group also including Beckett Leistra, Raymond Adeniyi, Hudson Kenline, Jasper Janzen, Bennett Heath, Xavier Magno, and Grant Maltby. Collectively, they play on two five-versus-five entries in the Elgin Middlesex District Soccer League's (EMDSL) U9 Division.

The teams play 'festivals', friendlies involving several teams in which official



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Tillsonburg FC U9 boys soccer team captured the U9B Bridge Tier championship at the Welland Wizards Rose Festival tournament Saturday, June 13 in Niagara. Team members included, in the front row, Patrick Wood; (second row, left to right) Carraig Moraes, Sawyer Van Ittersum and Stan Bondarchuk; third row, left to right, Francesco Macri, Nathan Sulkowski, Luke Van Den Brink and Tobias Van Ittersum; and in the back row, head coach Taras Bondarchuk.

scores are not kept, although coaches and players do have an idea of how they're doing.

Bondarchuk is a former professional soccer player and coach originally from Ukraine. His focus is on moving the ball, passing and developing soccer 'chemistry.'

"They're doing well, really well," he con-

cluded, a statement applying to the overall group's development, along with the performance at Welland. In speaking with other coaches at that event, Bondarchuk discovered some had not heard of Tillsonburg.

"A small city, but we showed where we are," he concluded.

Red Sox back in winner's column, defeat Dover 8-3

GRAHAM NICKERSON

Post Contributor

The Tillsonburg Red Sox snapped their three game slide Friday night at home when they took down Port Dover 8-3.

The win was a total team effort with contributions from up and down the line up while Tillsonburg pitching silenced the otherwise mighty Clipper bats.

Making his fourth start of the season, Paxton Bale toed the slab for three innings

of six-hit, three-run ball, though only one run was earned. The youngster made quick work in the first, sitting Dover down in order but ran into traffic in the second when the defence behind him combined for four errors that brought in two runs.

A key second out was made when left-fielder Kent Collings threw out Cory Barnard at third with the runner trying for an extra base. Barnard flashed his spikes, sliding in, and cut third baseman Rob Verhoeve badly in the leg. Verhoeve stayed in

the game for one more inning before being lifted for Bubba DeClark who made his return to the Red Sox after a hiatus dating back to the middle of last season.

The Sox got the scoring started in the first after Jordan Vitias reached on a fielder's choice, swiped second, and was knocked in on a Fish Verschueren single to right.

In the top of the third, the Clippers took the lead after Gavin Barnard led off the inning with a double. Sam Wilson laced a hit up the middle that scored Barnard. Simon

Storuschuck, trying to score from first on the play, was gunned out at the plate by Verschueren's throw from right.

Iron Ring Rachar led off the home half of the third, drawing a base-on-balls, then Vitias rapped a double to deep center to bring home Rachar. A two-out single by Verhoeve was good enough to tally the second Red Sox run of the inning and tie the game.

Tillsonburg would recapture the lead for good an inning later when DeClark stepped in to the lefty batter's box with two outs.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 13

Red Sox back in winner's column, defeat Dover 8-3

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Like a scene out of The Natural, Bubba drove a 3-2 offering to deep centerfield for a home run just as the ballpark lights turned on. The former London Major and Red Sox veteran hadn't lost any of his power over the long off season.

Bale was lifted for Verschueren to start the fourth and the lefthander dominated for four innings, retiring all 12 batters he faced, striking out seven including four straight at one

point.

Four insurance runs were tacked on in the sixth with Gavin Barnard now pitching for Port Dover. Tillsonburg rattled off three hits, a walk and an error to put the game out of reach.

This weekend Tillsonburg travels to London for a tournament hosted by the Byron Baseball Club.

Port Dover.....021 000 0 – 3 6 2
Tillsonburg.....102 104 X – 8 11 4

TILLSONBURG	AB	R	H	PO	A	E
RACHAR, SS	2	1	1	0	0	0
OATWAY, 1B	3	0	1	7	0	0
VITIAS, C	2	2	1	9	0	0
VERSCHUEREN, RF, P	3	1	2	1	1	0
VERHOEVE, 3B, EH	3	0	2	1	1	1
WEST, 2B	2	1	0	1	2	2
COLLINGS, LF	3	1	1	0	1	1
PROUSE, CF	2	1	1	0	1	0
DECLARKE, EH, 3B	3	1	1	0	1	0
BALE, P, RF	2	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	25	8	11	21	6	4

Summary: **ER**, Pt. Dover 1, Tillsonburg 8; **LOB**, Pt. Dover 4, Tillsonburg 6; **HR**, De-Clark; **2B**, G. Barnard, Vitias, Prouse; **RBI**, Rachar, Vitias, Verschueren, Verhoeve, Prouse, DeClark (2); **W**, Verschueren; **L**, S. Wilson; **BB**, S. Wilson (1), G. Barnard (1); **K**, S. Wilson (2), G. Barnard (1), Bale (1), Verschueren (7);**Time**, 1:46.

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WEEKEND QUIZ

by Jake Grant

1. How old is Canada turning this Canada Day?

2. What is the national animal of Canada?

3. Who was Canada's first prime minister?

4. What landform sits between British Columbia and Alberta?

5. Charlottetown is claimed to be "the birthplace of _____".

6. What are Canada's two official national sports?

7. The four divisions of the Canadian Corps fought together for the first time at what battle?

8. In what year was Nunavut established?

9. Who was the lead singer of the Tragically Hip?

10. Who ran across Canada to raise awareness for cancer?

This week's answers are found on pg. 34



CHAMBER HOSTS GOLF TOURNAMENT (JEFF HELSDON PHOTOS)
The annual Tillsonburg and District Chamber of Commerce golf tournament was another success, selling out again. (Top photo) Wendy Dube of WD Accounting chips the ball to the green while her teammates, Amy Tilton of Final Staffing and Traci Southwood and Savanna Fitch of Inovata Foods, watch. (Bottom photo) Cedric Tomico of the GOAT team sports the team shirts for the occasion at the tee block while Andrew Burns of McFarland Rowland Insurance watches.

Teams on the top of three slo-pitch divisions undefeated



**EYE
ON
SLO-
PITCH**

DAVE WEAVER

Post Columnist

Hard to believe that we're heading towards the half-way point of the slo-pitch season in Tillsonburg. Teams have been participating in qualifying tournaments as well the Super Series and Senior Circuits. The nationals for casters teams will be taking place in Dorchester on August long weekend.

Ladies' Division

Sunspace/Bill Klyn Carpentry have won three in a row and are tightening up the race for second and third spot in the division. They had an impressive win over Foldens Machine Works on the Monday before mercying Queen Bees on the Wednesday. Simmonds Mortgages had mercy wins over Resting Pitch Face and Wildcats. Resting rebounded with a win over Queen Bees. Cooks Concrete Jays shutout Foldens and beat Wildcats on the Monday game, where the league and bystanders honoured the memory of Rhonda Sergeant. Jays set up the diamond and took down the bases in a sign of class towards the Wildcats. That's what Tillsonburg Slo-Pitch is all about: class and respect towards each and everyone.

Simmonds Mortgages-19, Wildcats-0

Simmonds-Forrestt Ashley 4-4; Tena Bueckert 4-4.

Wildcats-Ling Wong 1-1; Tracey Coderre 1-1.

Game Synopsis-Forrestt Ashley was just a homer shy of hitting for the cycle for Simmonds, Tena Bueckert doubled and scored two runs.

Simmonds Mortgages-17, Resting Pitch Face-5

Simmonds-Shannon Oneill 4-4; Kim King 3-3.

Resting-Martina McCallum 3-3; Katie Pittock 3-3.

Game Synopsis-Eleven of Simmonds 12 batters scored at least one run. Shannon Oneill and Jackie Wood-Van Santen each hit a pair of doubles

Sunspace/Bill Klyn Carpentry 15, Foldens Machine Works-7

Sunspace-Amanda Stubbs 4-4; Claire Barker 4-4.

Foldens-Roxy Dekeyser 4-4; Jen Francis 3-3; Mackenzie Brackenbury Gr Slam, HR.

Game Synopsis-The story in this one was Foldens' Mackenzie Brackenbury going yard twice at Kiwanis. Sunspace pulled this one out with a seven-run bat-around seventh. Gemma Ladosz led the winner's attack with a triple and four runs scored.

Cooks Concrete Jays-12, Foldens Machine Works-0

Cooks-Maddi Obar 3-3; Mayra Baelde 3-3.

Foldens-Lisa Howey 3-3; Mandi Vickers 2-3.

Game Synopsis--The Jays scored four in each of the first and fourth innings, lead-off batter Kayden Thornton scored three runs.

Sunspace/Bill Klyn Carpentry-14, Queen Bees-2

Sunspace-Nicole Morgan 3-3; Ashley Gee 3-3.

Queen Bees-Carolyn Vanlagen 2-2; Jenna Vanvliet 1-2.

Game Synopsis-Ashley Gee doubled and scored three runs for the winners.

Resting Pitch Face-9, Queen Bees-1

Resting-Katie Depew 4-5; Hailee Beckett 4-4.

Queen-Sam Norman 1-2; Alyssa Berkeley 1-2.

Game Synopsis-Hailee Beckett and Katie Depew each scored two runs for the winners.

Cooks Concrete Jays-14, Wildcats-3

Cooks-Melissa Hughes 5-5; Maddi Obar 4-4.

Wildcats-Jordan Triska 3-3; Ling Wong 2-3.

Game Synopsis-A six-run sixth keyed the Jays win, Melissa Hughes scored three runs for the winners.

Men's Division 1

1,2 Seal Insulation Hawks beat Leeswood Construction Dirty Mitts on consecutive nights after defeating Sunspace/Bill Klyn Carpentry on the Tuesday to remain unbeaten. The Mill recorded a big walk-off win over the Cubs. Cobra Chickens mercied the Cubs but Hit N Run then mercied them in the next match-up. The Mill sit in second, but are just two points up on the Cubs, Leeswood Construction Dirty Mitts and Cobra Chickens.

Hit N Run-22, Cobra Chickens-7

Hit N Run-Daniel Unger 4-4; Jacob Froese 4-4; Diedrich Klassen 2 HR; Peter Klassen HR; Franky Klassen HR; Jacob Klassen HR.

Cobra-Ethan Fehr 3-3; Nathan Froese 3-3.

Game Synopsis-Diedrich and Jacob Klassen were each a triple shy of hitting for the cycle for the winners.

Cobra Chickens-26, Cubs-11

Cobra-Marcus Peters 4-4; Jesse Froese 5-5, 3 HR; Brian Dyck 2 HR; Matthew Reimer HR Nicholas Blatz HR.

Cubs-Chris Dyck 4-4, HR; Jamie Teichroeb 3-4; Marcus Enns HR; Joel Dyck HR.

Game Synopsis-Cobra Chickens scored 19 runs over their final four at-bats, Jesse Froese had a big night homering three times.

1,2 Seal Insulation Hawks-7, Leeswood Construction Dirty Mitts-6

Hawks-Ben Bueckert 3-4; Johnny Klassen 3-4.

Leeswood-Kent Collings 4-4; Greg Onaitis 3-4.

Game Synopsis-The Hawks walked this off with a one-out triple from Daniel Enns.

1,2 Seal Insulation Hawks-26, Leeswood Construction Dirty Mitts-10

Hawks-Martin Klassen 5-6; Jesse Hiebert 5-6, Gr Slam HR; Johnny Klassen HR; Johnny Epp HR.

Leeswood-Trevor Stuyt 3-4; Colin McDonald 2-2; Devin Lee HR.

Game Synopsis-The winners fielding only eight, had little trouble in this one, with everyone in their order reaching at least three times and scoring at least two runs.

1,2 Seal Insulation Hawks-16, Sunspace/Bill Klyn Carpentry-4

Hawks-Jake Klassen 2-2; Daniel Enns 3-4; Johnny Epp HR; Martin Klassen 2 HR; Cam Bueckert HR; Jesse Hiebert HR.

Sunspace-Andy Lockstein 3-3; Randy Miller 2-3; Dallas Dalby HR; Nathan Boldt HR.

Game Synopsis-Johnny Epp led the winners with a homer and a pair of doubles.

The Mill-26, Cubs-25

The Mill-Darrin Pace 5-7, HR; Mike Supinski 5-7; Bryan Deblaire 2 HR; Josh Stubbs 2 HR; Steve Derks HR; Tim Morgan HR.

Cubs-Jamie Teichroeb 6-6, HR; Johnny Dyck 5-6, HR; Joel Dyck HR.

Game Synopsis-Twelve homers hit between the two teams in this one. The Mill walked it off on a Josh Stubbs base hit as they scored eight in the inning.

Men's Division 2

The Pelicans remained unbeaten after a forfeit win over Sticky Bandits. At My Playground/IQT Logistics won twice defeating Quackheads and Mavericks who had been on a roll. Underhill Farm Supply walked off the Mavericks on Friday night. Strike Force rounded out the week's action with a lopsided win over Quackheads.

At My Playground/IQT Logistics-16, Quackheads-13

A.M.P.-Trent Masschaele 4-4; Jayden King 3-4.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 15

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1,2 SEAL INSULATION HAWKS	8	0	0	16
THE MILL	5	2	0	10
CUBS	4	3	0	8
COBRA CHICKENS	4	5	0	22
LEESWOOD CONSTRUCTION DIRTY MITTS	4	5	0	8
HIT N RUN	2	6	0	4
SUNSPACE/BILL KLYN CARPENTRY	1	7	0	2

MEN'S DIVISION 2	W	L	T	PTS
PELICANS	9	0	0	18
ALL SEASONS ESTATE CARE BANDITS	6	2	0	12
STRIKE FORCE	5	3	0	10
AT MY PLAYGROUND/IQT LOGISTICS	3	3	1	7
STICKY BANDITS	3	2	0	6
PAPA'S AUTO SPA	3	4	0	6
MAVERICKS	3	5	0	6
UNDERHILL FARM SUPPLY	2	5	0	4
DESIGNATED DRINKERS	1	6	0	2
QUACKHEADS	1	6	0	2

MEN'S DIVISION 3	W	L	T	PTS
SANDY SHORE BREW JAYS	7	0	0	14
SLUGGERS	7	1	0	14
JOHN BEERE	4	4	0	8
BEER BOMBERS	2	3	0	4
NAPA/COWARD'S PHARMACY MAULERS	2	6	0	4
WOLFPACK	2	6	0	4
BIRD'S GOLF	0	3	0	0

MEN'S DIVISION 4	W	L	T	PTS
N.I.M.	12	1	0	24
BRICKHOUSE BOYS	8	3	0	16
R.L.P.MELANIE LUKSYS	7	7	1	15
SMOKIN BASES	4	8	0	8
DIAMOND KINGS	4	9	0	8
TORNADES	2	9	1	5

LADIES	W	L	T	PTS
COOKS CONCRETE JAYS	11	0	0	22
SIMMONDS MORTGAGES	9	2	0	18
FOLDENS MACHINE WORKS	7	4	0	14
SUNSPACE/BILL KLYN CARPENTRY	6	5	0	12
RESTING PITCH FACE	5	7	0	10
WILDCATS	5	7	0	10
QUEEN BEES	0	11	0	0

Quackheads-Christian Bevan 4-4; Scott Mudford 3-4.

Game Synopsis-Trent Masschaele scored three runs for the winners.

Underhill Farm Supply-9, Mavericks-8

Underhill-Craig Robb 4-4; Bruce Hietkamp 3-3; Aaron Dyck HR.

Mavericks-Ryan Sinden 4-4; Doug Falkins 3-4.

Game Synopsis-Craig Robb walked it off for Underhill hitting a two-run double.

At My Playground/IQT Logistics-15, Mavericks-9

A.M.P.-Connor Smith 3-3, HR; Keenan Coderre 3-3.

Mavericks-Jason Carlisle 3-4; Ryan Landry 3-4, HR.

Game Synopsis-Connor Smith was just a triple shy of hitting for the cycle for the winners.

Strike Force-23, Quackheads-10

Strike Force-Jake Enns 5-5; Henry Klassen 4-5.

Quackheads-Scott Mudford 4-4; Bob Long 3-4; Dylan Graydon HR; Phil Beauvais HR.

Game Synopsis-A big seven-run sixth put this one for Strike Force, Jake Wall drove in two in the rally.

Men's Division 3

Sandy Shore Brew Jays won a pair to remain unbeaten. They scored 33 runs and allowed just seven in the two games. They faced a tough test on Tuesday as they go up against the Sluggers who have lost just once, and sit atop the division in wins. John Beere picked up a mercy win over Wolfpack.

John Beere-25, Wolfpack-10

John Beere-Nathan Sullivan 5-5; Ryan Simmons 5-6.

Wolfpack-Rick Klassen 3-4; Cam Butler 3-4.

Game Synopsis-Jack Finnigan, Nathan Sullivan and Mark Carrel each scored four runs for John Beere.

Sandy Shore Brew Jays-16, John Beere-1

Sandy Shore-Duane Nutt 3-3; Devon Schultz 3-3.

John Beere-Jack Finnigan 2-2.

Game Synopsis-Twelve of Sandy Shore's 13 batters scored at least one run.

Sandy Shore Brew Jays-18, NAPA/Coward's Pharmacy Maul-

ers-6

Sandy Shore-J.D. Collier 4-5; Mike Haegens 4-5.

NAPA-Jeff McKay 3-4; Matt Bowers 3-5.

Game Synopsis-J.D. Collier led the winners with a pair of doubles and four runs scored.

Men's Division 4

N.I.M. got revenge on Brickhouse Boys, who had handed them their only defeat mercying them this time around. They also mercied Smokin Bases. Brickhouse Boys won over Diamond Kings by nine. R.L.P. Melanie Luksys took three of four points in a doubleheader with Tornados.

Brickhouse Boys-16, Diamond Kings-7

Brickhouse-Aiden Hoshal 4-4; Court Cronheimer 3-3; Luke Thomas HR; Shawn Knelsen HR; Parker Morris HR; Tony Epp HR .

Diamond-Ben Bueckert 3-3; Henry Froese 3-4, HR.

Game Synopsis-Brickhouse went yard four times in the win, and lead-off batter Aiden Hoshal scored three runs.

R.L.P. Melanie Luksys-20, Tornados-20

R.L.P.-Jeremy Tanahill 4-4; Caden Craggs 4-4.

Tornados-Tyler Bouck 4-4; Jack Soares 3-4.

Game Synopsis-Jeremy Tannahill scored four runs for R.L.P., Tyler Bouck scored three for Tornados.

R.L.P.Melanie Luksys-17, Tornados-11

R.L.P-Nate Granger 3-4; Braeden Redling 3-4.

Tornados-Ben Serrador 3-3; Tyler Bouck 3-3.

Game Synopsis-Blake Ash, Braeden Redling and Caden Craggs each crossed three times for the winners.

N.I.M. -25, Brickhouse Boys-10

N.I.M.-Jeff Wheeler 5-6; Cory Chambers 5-6.

Brickhouse-Shawn Knelsen 4-4; Aiden Hoshal 4-4.

Game Synopsis-Everyone in the winner's order scored at least two runs.

N.I.M.-24, Smokin Bases-9

N.I.M.-Dave Court 4-5; Brodie Earls 4-5.

Smokin-Colton Trudel 3-3; Reg Burnett 3-3.

Game Synopsis-Jeff Wheeler scored four runs for the winners.



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(STUART BLOWER PHOTOS)



A Nash Construction runner crosses the base as Sweaburg’s defender catches a ball that arrived too late.



Samuel Rai (green) waits for the ball, as Tate Parker (Yellow) heads home in Tillsonburg house league U-7 game between Lions and McFarland Rowland.



In recent U15 baseball action between 3E Power Services Ltd. and Hogarth Insurance, Gabriella Rutledge, crosses the plate as catcher Grace Verkerke goes for the tag.



Emily Wagner, Tillsonburg Panton Paint and Collision U-7’s first base, left, listens to Ingersoll runner Dallas Dillman during a game last week.



Jack Wallace of the Tillsonburg U-13 J & E Construction slides into the plate during a game against the Simcoe Giants while Dylan Townsend steps to the side.



Mandryk, Morgan and Vervaeke Law’s first baseman is in pursuit of a Wiltshire Realty Inc. runner during a recent U-7 house league game.

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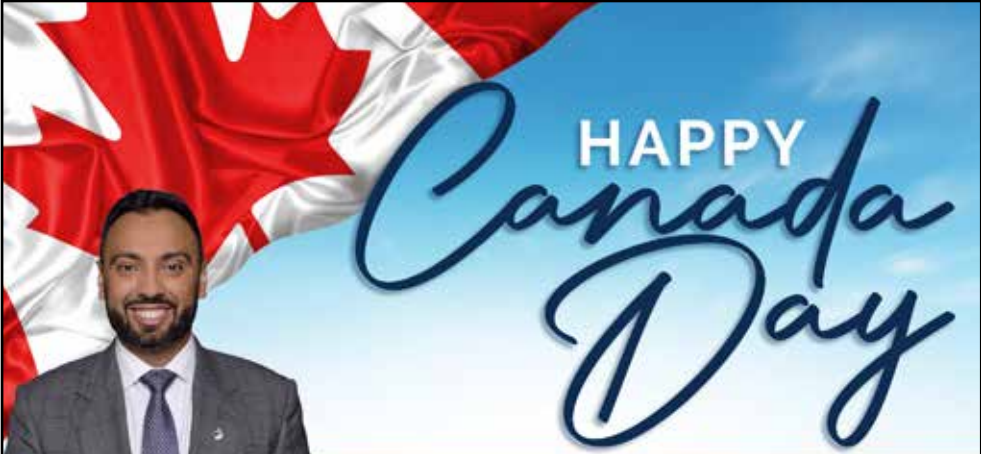
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Parkette renamed in honour of Tillson family

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

A ribbon cutting on Friday afternoon officially renamed the green space housing the fountain at the corner of Broadway and Oxford Street the Tillson Family Parkette, but didn't show the quick work by

the business and volunteer community that made it come together.

Kate Bakos, Cultural Heritage Manager/Curator, said the committee working on last year's 200th anniversary of the town's founding realized the importance of the town's founders.

"We would not have Tillsonburg today without the Tillsons," she said. "This park is a way of paying tribute."

Tillsonburg Mayor Deb Gilvesy highlighted the work by Jesse Goossens, partner at Thomson and Goossens, and Shane Curtis, president of Curtis Wilcox, who spearheaded the work in the park, along with the BIA.

"Your work has created a fitting space to honour the Tillson family," she said to the two local businessmen. "The transformation in such a short time is nothing less than extraordinary."

In an earlier interview, Curtis explained he was retained by the town when he operated Horticultural Solutions to build the original park. He designed it at no cost to the town and charged only for construction and materials.

Fast forward to a few weeks ago, and he was

talking to Goossens, who asked how the parkette could be improved.

"The problem is that over time, if the plants aren't pruned annually, they can get overgrown," Curtis explained.

A plan was developed to revitalize the park in connection with the BIA, which coordinated the power washing of the fountain. The plan is to have different plantings in the bed, depending on the season. It will start with pansies in the spring, to be followed by a show of colour in the summer and mums in the fall.

"The BIA is proud and excited to work with a committed group of individuals and organizations in the community to revitalize a downtown focal point," said Executive Director Mark Renaud.

Two ornamental pear trees were removed from the park to open it up. Cur-



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Jesse Goossens, left, and Shane Curtis, along with the BIA, were the driving forces behind the revitalization of the Tillson Family Parkette.

tis' gardener planted petunias, purple fountain grass and diplamedia. Curtis enlisted Kinsmen members, along with their children and his daughter, to plant new shrubs.

Goossens donated money towards the project.

"We're public service-oriented," he said. "Where we can get in-

involved and make an impact, we're going to."

The Tillsonburg Horticultural Society, whose members did the planting in the park, was consulted and agreed to relinquish care of the park so that other areas can be focused on. Curtis will donate care of the parkette for the next 10 years.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

With an official ribbon cutting prior to TurtleFest, the parkette at the corner of Broadway and Oxford Street was renamed the Tillson Family Parkette. Cutting the ribbon were, left to right: George the Turtle, Coun. Kelly Spencer, Joan Weston, MPP Ernie Hardeman, Mayor Deb Gilvesy, Kate Bakos, Noah Culp and Tabitha Verbuyst.

UPCOMING SHOWS

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\$10 – 8 p.m. - All Ages/Licensed

JUNE 28 - MUSIC ON THE LAWN SERIES W/ WADLEY STATION
Annandale NHS - Free Entry – 7 p.m.

JULY 5 - MUSIC ON THE LAWN SERIES W/ VANCE CZERWINSKI
Annandale NHS - Free Entry – 7 p.m.

JULY 10 - DUMB CRUSH W/ THE ICK
Paddy's Underground
\$10 – 8 p.m. - All Ages/Licensed

JULY 12 - MUSIC ON THE LAWN SERIES W/ GEORGE FULOP
Annandale NHS
Free Entry – 7 p.m.

JULY 30 - THE SADIES
Paddy's Underground
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Town council waives fee for Indigenous Day

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Tillsonburg council wrestled with the best way to tackle fees being charged to local groups for town staff time and materials associated with events.

Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk Trisha McKibbin presented council with a report on the topic after members of the Tillsonburg Historical Society approached council members about waiving fees for Indigenous Day, which was held on June 21. The fees being charged are \$56 for safety cone rental and \$195 for Memorial Park pavilion rental, for a total of \$252.

McKibbin said the \$7,500 budgeted for waiving event fees has been exhausted. Turtlefest also previously came forward with the same request, which council granted. Town staff is working to update the bylaws and rates.

"These rates cannot easily be changed without changes to this bylaw," she said.

Coun. Kelly Spencer asked if the historical society has a budget for this, but McKibbin said she wasn't didn't have that information.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy pointed out the 28 events listed in the report weren't charged for setup prior to this year.

"This is the waiving of the fees, which is different than waiving of park fees," she said, emphasizing the two are separate.

McKibbin explained the rates and charges come from the rates and charges bylaw, and the only way to make a change is to rescind or amend the bylaw.

"There is no way for staff to make changes or adjustments," she said. "What's in the bylaw needs to be followed."

The proposed change would give staff more authority to make decisions on these types of requests.

Coun. Pete Luciani asked if Indigenous Day is on the

21st, and council passes a bylaw at the next meeting, if it wouldn't be a moot point.

McKibbin said it's possible for council to waive the fees in that night's meeting, but Luciani questioned further whether the whole issue wouldn't be dealt with at the June 22 meeting.

"We need to get this right. Staff in multiple departments are working on it," McKibbin said, adding the completed bylaw won't be back until the August meeting.

Gilvesy reminded these charges are new to these groups, and asked if the historical society paid up front, if it would be reimbursed.

McKibbin said technically the fee isn't waived. She pointed to Turtlefest, explaining the direction given was to pay the fees from the tax stabilization reserve.

Director of Finance/Treasurer Renato Pullia said it is possible to reimburse fees paid.

"Traditionally, the fair hasn't paid this," Gilvesy said. "This is one reason I brought this forward."

She also mentioned there weren't fees paid in the past for the Station Arts Centre's Canada Day celebrations or the farmers' market either.

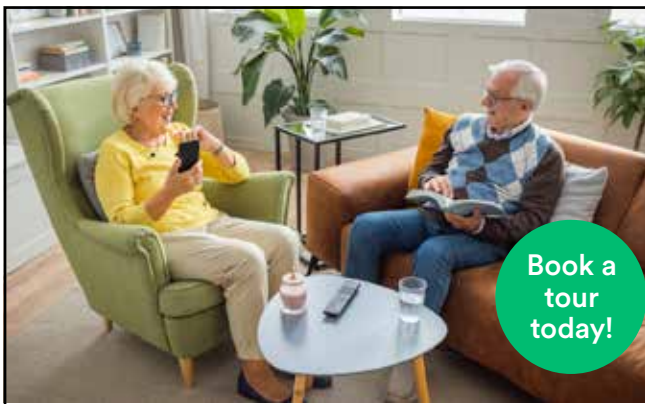
"It's a domino effect that impacts a number of policies," McKibbin said.

Gilvesy requested that some direction be given for the other events at the meeting on June 22.

Coun. Chris Parker, who put forward the suggested motion, amended it for the Tillsonburg District Historical Fees to be paid through the tax rate stabilization reserve.

Spencer agreed, saying that since the town passed a motion supporting the Truth and Reconciliation Act, part of that is hosting public learning and cultural events. She said staff should consider this when working on their report.

Council passed the motion to have the fees associated with Indigenous Day paid through the reserve.



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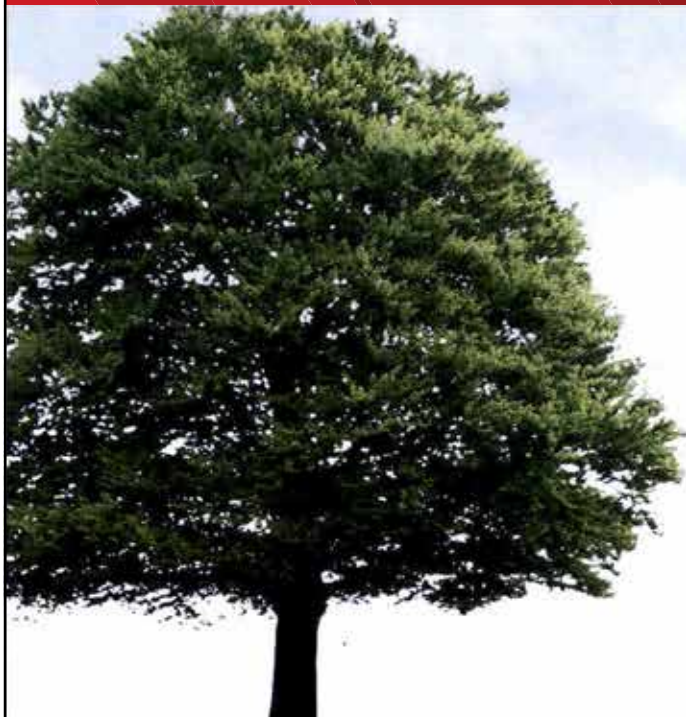


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JULY

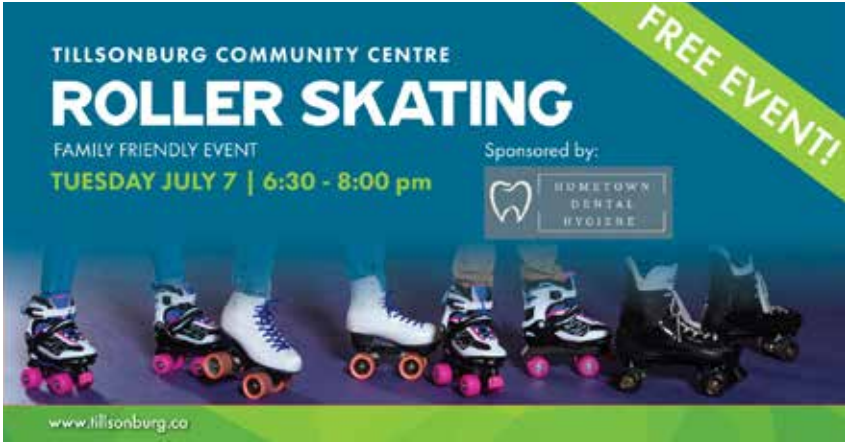
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Indoor Pool Closed July 1 - July 31, 2026 for Biennial Maintenance			Town Facilities CLOSED Canada Day on the Lawn 10:00 am - 2:00 pm Lake Lisgar Water Park Free Swim 11:00 am - 6:00 pm	Annandale NHS CLOSED (In lieu of Canada Day) Kinsmen Bridge & Veteran's Memorial Walkway Reopening 12:00 pm		Fishing Derby at Lake Lisgar 7:00 am - 12:00 pm Lake Lisgar Water Park Free Swim 11:00 am - 6:00 pm
Lake Lisgar Water Park Open Daily 11:00 am - 6:00 pm						
5	6	Drop-In Programs 10:00 am & 1:00 pm FREE Roller Skating 6:30 - 8:00 pm	Drop-In Programs 10:00 am & 1:00 pm	Drop-In Programs 10:00 am & 1:00 pm Culture After Hours 4:00 - 7:00 pm	Drop-In Programs 10:00 am & 1:00 pm	
Lake Lisgar Water Park Open Daily 11:00 am - 6:00 pm						
12	Council Meeting 5:00 pm	Drop-In Programs 10:00 am & 1:00 pm Roller Skating 6:30 - 8:00 pm	Drop-In Programs 10:00 am & 1:00 pm	Drop-In Programs 10:00 am & 1:00 pm	Drop-In Programs 10:00 am & 1:00 pm	
Lake Lisgar Water Park Open Daily 11:00 am - 6:00 pm						
19	20	Roller Skating 6:30 - 8:00 pm	22	23	24	25
Drowning Prevention Week						
Lake Lisgar Water Park Open Daily 11:00 am - 6:00 pm						
26	27	Roller Skating 6:30 - 8:00 pm	29	Culture After Hours 4:00 - 7:00 pm	31	
Lake Lisgar Water Park Open Daily 11:00 am - 6:00 pm						

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FREE Community Event Highlight



Legend

All Ages

Town Hall

Adult Program

Museum

Youth Program

2026

SWOX NEWS



Gillis running for mayor of SWOX

DEBBIE KASMAN

Post Contributor

Craig Gillis, Ward 6 councillor for South-West Oxford (SWOX) Township, has filed his papers to run for mayor of SWOX.

When asked why he decided to run for mayor, Gillis says, "Why not?" He is currently completing his second consecutive term as councillor. After graduating from the University of Guelph in 2002, Gillis began working as a herdsman for Wilmarlea Farms Ltd. in Embro. He moved to Beachville shortly after and married his wife, Tanya, in 2006. In 2009, he joined the SWOX Fire Department at the Beachville Station. He was elected Beachville Fire Association President in 2011 and for Ward 6 councillor in 2018.

"I feel I've learned a lot about the municipi-

pal process over the past two terms and I'm capable of taking on a larger role," Gillis said. "I've always enjoyed working with others as a team and hearing about their perspective on things."

There are several projects Gillis wants to see to completion.

"Finishing our broadband-Internet project" so that it's available "to every premise in SWOX will be satisfying when completed," he said. "Not just business needs quality Internet service anymore. People working from home, school and education programs, agriculture, and many more need steady Internet connection in today's world."

Gillis is most proud of his work on the Beachville Museum Board.

"Getting our museum more noticed and used for community events and engagement

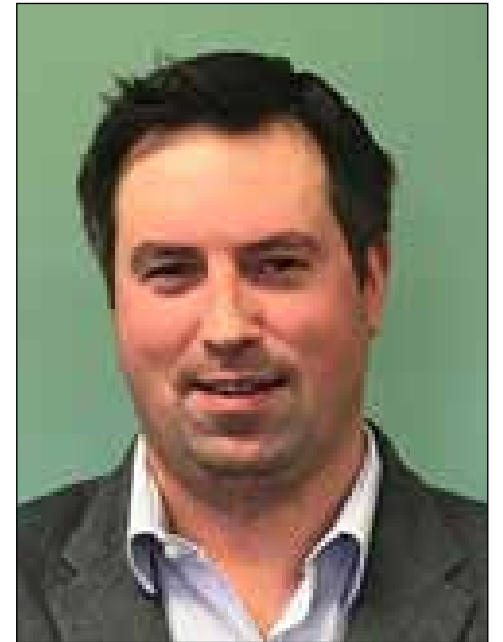
within the area has been great to see. A small museum doing big things is a great mantra they have."

When asked what he thinks the big issues or challenges facing SWOX will be over the next term, he said,

"Financial costs for infrastructure, equipment and projects will have to be looked at more carefully to be sure we are using funds the most efficient way. Also the ever changing provincial goals and policies, i.e. building and the conservation authorities, will have to be navigated over the next few years," he added.

When asked if there any decisions he has made on council that he regrets, Gillis says there are none. "I feel I've been confident in the choices that I've made in the past."

So far, none one has filed nomination papers to run against him.



Craig Gillis.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

George Klosler appointed as Ward 3 councillor in SWOX

DEBBIE KASMAN

Post Contributor

At its June 16 meeting, South-West Oxford (SWOX) council voted to appoint George Klosler as Ward 3 councillor, replacing Valerie Durston who passed away in April.

A by-election was not possible because the deadline for by-elections in an election year has passed and appointing a next-place finisher from the last municipal election was not an option as Durston was acclaimed. Council called for applications for appointment to fill the vacant seat in May.

Klosler is recently retired from a career spanning 35 years in the agricultural finance sector, holding the position of Senior District Director with Farm Credit Canada for 13 years before retiring.

He is a recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for community service contributions, a member of the Canadian Association of Farm Advisors, past president of the Canadian 4-H Council, a current member of Dereham and District Lions Club and Lions International, and president of the Mount Elgin community hall board.

Klosler will hold the seat until the municipal election in October, but has filed nomination papers to run for Ward 3 councillor in October as well.

He says he is eager to apply his knowledge of community development, financial oversight, and public engagement to serve the municipality. He is particularly interested in addressing key issues such as agricultural development, community services, financial constraints, public engagement, and the development of the new municipal building

and park.

Klosler beat out John de Bruyn and Aaron Lonsberry who also applied for the position.

De Bruyn is a past president of Oxford County Junior Farmers and Oxford County Pork Producers, a past member of the County of Oxford Land Division Committee, a former chair of the Salford Landfill Liaison Committee, and a member of the College of Veterinarians of Ontario. Lonsberry works as a traveling service technician, is a firefighter in Mount Elgin, and a local farmer.

Klosler will be sworn in at the July 14 meeting.

Both Klosler and de Bruyn plan to file nomination papers to run in the municipal election in October. It is not

known at this time which wards they plan to run in. Candidates do not have to live in a specific ward to run for councillor in that ward.

The township approved new ward boundaries last July, but these boundary changes will not take effect until the new council is organized after voting day on Oct. 26.

Nomination papers have currently been filed as follows: Paul Buchner for Ward 1, Pete Ypma for Ward 2, William Van Lagen for Ward 3, Isaiah Friend for Ward 4, David (Dave) Mitchell for Ward 6, and Craig Gillis for mayor.

Mary Holmes is the only candidate to put her name forward to date for school board trustee. Holmes is running for trustee of the London District Catholic School Board.

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\$3 SUMMER MENU

HARVEY'S
400 Simcoe St., Tillsonburg

TURTLEFEST

TurtleFest attendance could top 45,000 people

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

She said the huge crowd returned with the evening entertainment.

"We had a number of food trucks that had to close early," Renaud said, explaining that running out of food was the reason. "That's an indicator of how busy it was."

In addition, several retailers reported a record day.

"The impact of TurtleFest goes far beyond the downtown," Renaud said. "The number of people who eat in town, shop, or put gas in is tremendous."

Estimates were TurtleFest last year generated \$1.5 million in revenue. This year, there will be more.

One change this year was putting many of the food trucks in the parking lot to the north of the Tillsonburg Town Centre with seating in the area.

"I had a number of comments from people about that, and certainly the seating accommodation for people was good,"

Fraser said.

A last-minute addition of a giant pool with paddle boats, which was donated by Super Air Bounce Rentals, was a hit.

"There was a line-up at that all day long," Renaud said. "The kids absolutely loved it."

Fraser noticed the Nate Haller concert in the evening drew more younger people.

"It's become a real party place downtown for young people," he said.

Attendance at Annandale festivities were also robust. More than 400 attended the movie on the lawn on Friday night and there were 1,364 people who came out for Saturday's events.

Another change this year was moving the Station Arts Centre's Creative Imaginations Station from Broadway to Bridge Street. This is the first time Bridge has been closed from Broadway to Bidwell, and it was a success.

"The Station Arts Centre was thrilled to once again be a part of Turtlefest, welcoming hundreds of families and visitors to our Creative Imaginations Station throughout the day," said executive director Tabitha Verbuyst. "With six hands-on craft stations, spinning art, chalk activities, mural painting, and face painting, the area was busy from start to finish."

Fraser said he has been to a number of festivals, and TurtleFest is different.

"One thing that's really special is the way the vendors get involved," he said. "They're not only selling their wares, but also having some interactive activity in their booth. That's what makes it unique."

Fortner gave credit to TurtleFest committee member and Copper Mug co-owner Kim Sage for a musical program that helped draw the crowds. She gave the example of Coty Robinson, who opened for Haller, saying Sage knew he had a big following that would bring people.

Sage was also the unofficial turtle keeper, leading George the Turtle around for most of the weekend. Fortner recounted one instance where she dropped Sage and George off in front of the Tillsonburg Town Centre and they were supposed to work their way down the street. An hour later, they hadn't moved because there were so many people who wanted a photo with George.

Renaud said one of the secrets to success is TurtleFest is it's a no-charge event. He said all the sponsors help in this regard, but in particular pointed to Execulink, TD Bank, Experience Ontario, Shaw's Ice Cream, Tim Horton's, Giant FM, Enviro-haul and Spectra Sign and Print, who were the largest sponsors.

As for next year, Renaud said, "The challenge is there's so much interest in TurtleFest, we need more real estate to put more booths out."



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

George the Turtle models for Zoe Walker, Addy Swance and Audrey Cooper as they complete turtle rocks at Annandale on Friday night.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Mai Burton completes a turtle Lego that was handed out by Toro LUG. The group handed out 300 turtle Lego turtle kits custom designed for TurtleFest.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

The George the Turtle inflatable from Super Air Bounce Rentals was a hit, as always, with a constant line-up.



(ALIYAH HELSDON PHOTO)

The Fire Guy wowed the crowd with his ability to juggle fire while in some precarious positions.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Young Entrepreneur Alley was a big hit again that showcased the work of 14 young entrepreneurs. Emily Hietkamp, left, was selling rubber band bracelets while her brother Keith was promoting the charcuterie boards he makes from local wood.

TURTLEFEST



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Lucas Gagen from Reptilia shows the crowd a uromastyx lizard from Asia during one of the three reptile shows during the day.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Creating turtles from egg shell cartons was one of the many activities in the Station Arts Centre's Imagination Creation Zone. Casey Cassidy is pictured putting the finishing touches on his turtle.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

What's TurtleFest without live turtles? Nolan Felstead of Scales Nature Park handles a Blanding's turtle in one of the displays at Annandale National Historic Site.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

The Tim Burr Lumberjack show had the crowd laughing and awed at the same time with his stunts and humour. Juggling fire and hatchets were amongst his tricks.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

The number of interactive activities at the booths are one thing that sets TurtleFest apart from other festivals. Abby Ortiz is seen here playing cornhole at the Sobey's booth.



(ALIYAH HELSDON PHOTO)

Rising country star Nate Haller was the headliner on the TurtleFest stage Saturday night, packing the street for a free show.



FREE FOOD

- Popcorn
- Snow Cones
- Cotton Candy
- Cake

ACTIVITIES

- Face Painting
- Carnival Games with Prizes
- Button Making
- Tattoos
- Oversized Games
- Otter Scavenger Hunt
- Jelly Bean Guessing Game
- Open House

FOOD TRUCKS

- Suppa Swirls
- Soda Street
- Speedy Fries

**Food and activities
while supplies last!**

ANNANDALE NHS CANADA DAY FUN FAIR

July 1st

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

30 Tillson Ave., Tillsonburg, ON



RIDDLES

Why are Canadian students so smart?
They get a lot of ehs.

What has antlers and sucks blood?
A moose-quito.

Why is maple syrup always so sad?
Because it's sappy.

How do you stop bacon from curling in the frying pan?
Take away its broom.

What does Canada produce that no other country in the world can?
Canadians!

How did the beaver get online?
He logged on.

What did the beaver say to the maple tree?
It's been nice gnawing you!

Why shouldn't hockey players tell jokes on the ice?
Because it might crack up!

Why do hockey players like baking cakes?
Because they're great at icing.

What do Canadian ghosts eat for lunch?
Boo-tine!

Someone tried to sell me Canada.
But I was having Nunavut.

Why did the fugitives run to Canada?
Because they had nowhere else Toronto.

Where are there a lot of Bigfoot sightings?
In Sasquatchewan!

Why did the pirate move to Manitoba?
He heard he could Winnipeg!

SUDOKU

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

Solutions on Page 34
Level: Beginner

PET OF THE WEEK



WAFFLES

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HOURS:

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

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

WORD SEARCH

AT THE GRILL

V	T	Z	B	M	T	C	R	N	H	M	I	I	G	A	H	N	N	W	L
S	R	S	U	R	B	E	E	D	M	M	V	C	S	I	S	H	E	A	T
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- BACKYARD
BARBECUE
BURGER
CHARCOAL
- CHICKEN
DELICIOUS
FLAME
FLAREUP
- GRATE
HEAT
MARINADE
PROPANE
- SAUSAGES
SEAR
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TONGS
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EXPECT MORE.

JUNE

JUNE 26 | 1 - 4 PM

KEN LIGHTHEART AND THE NORTSHORE RAMBLERS Tillsonburg Legion

Cash Bar. \$7 admission at the door. All Welcome!

JUNE 26 | 5 - 6 PM

ROAST BEEF DINNER Tillsonburg Legion

\$18 per person includes mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetables, buns, desserts, tea, and coffee and HST. Cash at the door. While quantities last. All Welcome.

JUNE 27 (RAIN DATE: SUNDAY, JUNE 28) | 9 AM - 4 PM

FLY DAY & OPEN HOUSE Tillsonburg Regional Airport, 244411 Airport Road, Tillsonburg

FREE Admission. Come fly with us! Join us for our June Open House and Fly Day. We welcome everyone to this FREE-admission, family-friendly outdoor event that offers aviation enthusiasts the opportunity to see our collection of vintage Harvard aircraft up close, tour our hangars, explore our restoration projects, purchase souvenirs, and best of all, go for a flight! (additional cost for flights). Come explore North America's largest fleet of Harvard aircraft and what the volunteers are doing to keep the history and legacy of these Second World War warbirds alive. While pre-booking flight experiences is not necessary, it is recommended. Contact crewflights@harvards.com to ensure your seat! In case of inclement weather, check our Facebook page for RAIN DATE updates.

**JUNE 28 | DOORS OPEN NOON, GAMES START 1 PM
CHILDREN'S CANADA DAY BINGO**

Tillsonburg Legion

Free for children ages 5-14 (must be accompanied by an adult). Door prizes, bingo prizes, snacks available.

JULY

JULY 17 & 18

BRANTFORD UKULELE FESTIVAL

Tickets for the 2026 Brantford Ukulele Festival, set for July 17th and 18th are going fast! Register before April 17th to get in on the Early Bird special. Get details on performers, workshops and more at

brantfordukulelesociety.org.

JULY 19 | 2 PM

DECORATION DAY FOR FORESTVILLE CEMETERIES

Hillcrest Cemetery, 638 Charlotteville Road 1, Forestville

Rain or shine. Bring your lawn chair, a friend, and umbrella. Music will be provided by "Blue Chicory". Everyone welcome!

ONGOING CLASSES, CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

3RD TUE. OF MONTH | 6:30 - 8:30 PM

CAREGIVER CONNECTION

Revel Realty Woodstock, 111 Huron Street (Virtual/hybrid options available)

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

STARTS 7 PM

THE TILLSONBURG & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS MUSIC ON THE LAWN

Annandale N.H.S. , 30 Tillson Avenue

JUNE 28 - "Wadley's Station"

JULY 5 - "Vance Czerwinski"

JULY 12 - "George Fulop"

JULY 19 - "North Shore Ramblers"

JULY 26 - "1962" - Cindy McMaster

AUGUST 2 - "Blue Sky" - Archie Wright

AUGUST 9 - "Kickin Kountry"

AUGUST 16 - "North Shore Ramblers"

BEGINNING AT 6:30 PM

AUGUST 23 - "George Fulop"

AUGUST 30 - "Blue Sky" - Archie Wright

Bring your own lawn chairs. (Music may be cancelled at short notice due to weather. Call 226-970-1432 for cancellations.) Goodwill offering will be taken.

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

**EVERY OTHER FRIDAY | 1 - 4 PM
SPRING INTO THE INGERSOLL COUNTRY MUSIC JAMBOREE**
Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St. S., Ingersoll

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

FRIDAYS | 1 PM

INTERESTED IN BRIDGE? JOIN US AT THE TILLSONBURG DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB Tillsonburg Senior Centre - 45 Hardy Ave, Tillsonburg

Don't have a partner? Come anyway and we will match you up with someone. For more information, visit their Facebook page: [TburgBridge](https://www.facebook.com/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.

COMING EVENTS

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.

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226-290-0994

Port Rowan - 1035 Bay St

Port Dover - 413 Main St
(Lower Level)

226-550-1350

Simcoe - 185 Robinson St
(Second Floor)



PAVEMENT REPAINTING

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Donations from Empire Sealing and Paving and GTK Spray and Wash funded the cost of paint for reapplying the veteran's crosswalk design in front of the Tillsonburg Town Centre. Town works crews applied the paint last week. Checking out the paint job were, from left, Billy Joe Peidl of Empire Sealing and Paving, Claude Archambault, Legion Padre Paul Robinson, Legion President Tom Brown CD, Joe Brown, Chris Boldy and Brandon Knack of GTK Spray and Wash.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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10 Bridge St W., Tillsonburg
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OBITUARY

MILTON BEZZO



It is with great sorrow that the family of Milton 'Butch' Bezzo announce his passing at home on Sunday June 14, 2026. Butch was born in Tillsonburg on June 11, 1955 and was predeceased by his parents Richard Laverne and Muriel Bezzo. Butch is survived by his beloved wife of 47 years, Cindy, and their children Lexi, Tanya, and Richard, and his grandchildren Sadie, Selena, and Chantal. Butch

is also survived by his sisters Sharon Delaney (the late Bob Delaney) and Shelley (Terry Veit), as well as several nieces and nephews.

His suffering is now over and may he rest in peace. He will always be in our thoughts.

In keeping with Butch's wishes, there will be no funeral service. A private family memorial will take place at a later time. If so desired, memorial donations can be made to the Ontario SPCA. Wareing Cremation Services, Tillsonburg has been entrusted with Final Arrangements. Your messages of remembrance and condolence may be shared at www.wareingcremation.ca

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CLASSIFIEDS

OBITUARY

ARTHUR EDWARD FLETCHER (NOVEMBER 4, 1936 – JUNE 20, 2026)



With his loving wife Norma and family members by his side, Arthur Edward Fletcher passed away peacefully on Saturday, June 20th, 2026, at the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital, in his 90th year. Resident of Hickory Hills, Wilson Ave, Tillsonburg, formerly of Dereham Twp. RR7 Tillsonburg where he proudly farmed cash crops, eggs, beef cows and later sheep.

Art was a former member of St. Charles Anglican Church, Dereham Twp. and later joined the St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Tillsonburg with his wife Norma. Art served as a foundational committeeman in the early 1970s for the Ontario Egg and Fowl Producers Marketing Board (now known as the Egg Farmers of Ontario) and helped local producers establish a fair pricing framework.

Art and Norma (Lazo) celebrated their 55th Anniversary in the TDMH the day before he passed. Much loved father of: John Marchildon-Fletcher of North York (Ann-Marie) and their children Liam, Lucas, Quinlan, and Jesse; and (Ed) Arthur Edward Fletcher of California, U.S.A (Jennifer) and their children Andrew and Sacha. Art is predeceased by an infant son Anthony. Dear brother of: Bill Fletcher of Waterloo (late Kathy) (late Edna); late Wally Fletcher of Renfrew (Sheila). Lovingly reunited with those who went before him, and survived by much loved extended family in Canada, U.S.A and the Philippines.

Friends, former neighbours, and relatives will be received by the family on Friday, June 26th, 2026, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., in the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes Chapel, 262 Broadway, Tillsonburg. A Complete Funeral Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Saturday, June 27th, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at the St. Mary's R.C. Church, 51 Venison St. West, Tillsonburg, by Rev. Fr. Seejo John. Cremation to follow. Interment on a future date in the Fletcher Family Plot at St. Charles Anglican Cemetery, Dereham Twp. Everyone who knew Art may share their favourite memories and photos, express personal condolences, and, in lieu of flowers, make memorial donations to "St. Mary's R.C. Church - Building Fund" or to the "Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital Foundation" via Art's online tribute page at www.verhoevefuneralhomes.com or by contacting the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes, Tillsonburg (519) 842-4238, who have been entrusted with all funeral arrangements, with confidence.

The family wishes to express sincere thanks to the Doctors, Nurses, PSW's and Staff at Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital for their kindness, compassion and caring service.

OBITUARY

LYLE FREDERICK ROOKE (JULY 29, 1936 – JUNE 18, 2026)



Passed away, peacefully at Woodstock General Hospital, on Thursday, June 18th, 2026, with loving family by his side, Lyle Frederick Rooke, in his 90th year. Born in Mount Elgin, son of the late James A. ("Fred") Rooke and the late former Hazel (McDonald) Rooke. Lyle's family was his pride and joy in life. He was the much-loved husband of 61 years of Mary (Fewster) Rooke. Loving father and

father-in-law of: Jim Rooke (Moya) and children: Aideen, Keelin, all of Dublin, Ireland; David Rooke (Sherri), of Mount Elgin and children: Maggie (Tyler), Kurtis (Katie), Tyler (Sommer); Gayle (Jeff Kindurys) and children: Owen, Aiden, all of Oxford Centre. Lovingly remembered by his brother Stuart Rooke, of Tillsonburg (late wife Dorothy, 2025), as well as by several nieces, nephews and cousins. Brother-in-law to Barb (Raymond) Freeman, Carol Anderson and Dawne Fewster. Predeceased by brothers-in-law: Jaques Anderson, Bill Fewster and Arnold Fewster and sister-in-law Dorothy Rooke.

Lyle was a dedicated dairy then cash crop farmer for many years at his Mount Elgin homestead. As a lifelong resident of the Mount Elgin area, Lyle was invested in his community. Lyle proudly served as the Dereham District Lions Club Charter President (1978) and served as the club's Treasurer for well over 30 years. Lyle was the honoured recipient of the Melvin Jones Fellowship (2008 - 09). Lyle was a 50 plus year member of the Dereham Lodge, No. 624. He was a dedicated member of the Mount Elgin United Church, having served on all church committees for over 60 years. He was also a dedicated Delmer Cemetery Board member. Lyle will be remembered for his dedication to his community and as a wonderful husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend to many.

Friends, neighbours and relatives were invited to attend public visitation on Sunday, June 21, 2026, between 5:00 and 8:00 p.m. and Monday, June 22, between 10:00 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. in the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes Chapel, 262 Broadway, Tillsonburg. A Funeral Service to Celebrate Lyle's Life was conducted on Monday, June 22nd at 11:00 a.m., in the funeral home chapel, by Pastor Lori Minler, of Mount Elgin United Church. Interment followed in Delmer Cemetery. Everyone who knew Lyle is invited to share favourite memories and photos, express personal condolences or contribute memorial donations to "Mount Elgin United Church" or to the "Dereham Centre Community Hall" via Lyle's online tribute page at www.verhoevefuneralhomes.com or by contacting the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes - Burial and Cremation Services Inc. (519) 842-4238, which has been entrusted with all funeral arrangements, with confidence.



OBITUARY

EDITH SULKOWSKI (JULY 14, 1932 – JUNE 17, 2026)



Edith Sulkowski, affectionately known as "Nana" passed away peacefully under the wonderful care of Caressant Care Courtland on June 17th 2026 at the age of 93. Born on July 14, 1932 in Sheffield England to Jack and Ester Vessey. Sister to 3 brothers (Mac, Ray & Gerald) and 4 sisters (Joan, Connie, Sheila & Joyce).

She remained a proud British citizen all her life but left England with her new husband, a Polish Royal Air Force Pilot Czeslaw Sulkowski Sr. to start a new chapter in Canada. She was married July 15, 1950 in Nottingham England. Edith was predeceased by her beloved husband Czeslaw of 59 years who passed away Oct. 15th 2009 at the age of 92. She leaves behind a family of 4. Ches (Cathy) Natalie (Bob) Steve & Deb (Mike). Cherished Nana to 10 Grandchildren - Andrew (Christy) Tony (Raquel), Joey (Ang), Lindsay (Jay), Carly (Mike) Steve, Bryson, Lauren, Nicolas (Emma) Caley (Jeff). Great Grandmother to 15 great Grandchildren - Jacob (Crystal), Ben, Matt, Julia, Sam, Olivia, Lenie, Camila, Dayne, Nate, Everly, Poppy, Austin, Tyler, Ryker.

Family was at the heart of everything important to "Nana". She created a home always filled with warmth, food, kindness and unconditional love. She had the gift of making everyone feel welcome and her smile and positivity could brighten every room. Just ask her friends and caregivers at Caressant Care.

The family would like to thank all who loved and cared for Edith. Especially the amazing and wonderful staff at Caressant Care Courtland and the Tillsonburg Transitional Care Unit staff. You made her feel special. Thank you Dr. Dockx, Alex, Tracey, Nancy, Deb, Gus and all the many Nurses, PSW's other staff - all too many to mention by names. Your compassion, love and care was truly appreciated by all in our family. She was very comfortable and happy in her final year.

Cremation has taken place. She will be reunited with Czeslaw in Tillsonburg Cemetery. The family will celebrate her life at a later date. Instead of flowers please consider a donation to the "Tillsonburg Salvation Army" via Edith's online tribute page at www.verhoevefuneralhomes.com or by contacting the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes - Burial and Cremation Services Inc., Tillsonburg (519) 842-4238.

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