

Tillsonburg POST

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New carbon monoxide detector rules start Jan. 1

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

New regulations on carbon monoxide detectors will take effect on Jan. 1.

Known as the silent killer, carbon monoxide is created from the burning of fuels, such as natural gas, propane, heating oil, or wood, that aren't entirely burned in furnaces and other fuel-burning appliances.

Carbon monoxide poisoning can lead to headaches, nausea, dizziness, confusion, drowsiness, and death.

Previous regulations required carbon monoxide detectors in a home if it had a fuel-burning appliance, a fireplace, or an attached garage. The new rules will require a carbon monoxide detector in a home if it is heated by a fuel-burning appliance that is not contained within the home.

Also new is a requirement that a carbon monoxide detector be installed on every story of a home. Previously, carbon monoxide detectors were only required outside sleeping areas.

Geoff Hayman, Tillsonburg's fire prevention officer, explained that the air circulates throughout the house with forced air heating.

"Where fuel-burning appliances are in the building, there needs to be one in the service room, adjacent to the sleeping area, and on each floor," he explained.

For instance, in a split-level home, a detector would be required in the basement where the furnace is, on the main floor, and on the top floor where the bedrooms are. Previously, one was only needed outside the bedrooms. The other big difference would be in a four or six-unit complex with centralized heat, which will now need one in every suite.

"This is an improved level of safety for everyone,"

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

CANDLELIGHT CONCERT

J.D. Group String Quartet from Toronto entertained the crowd at St. John's Anglican Church for a candlelight concert last Friday. The concert was the culmination of the 125th anniversary celebrations held by the church. For the \$25 admission fee, guests also received complimentary refreshments during the break, including mince tarts, shortbread and Christmas goodies, plus apple cider. A piano recital by parish member Christina Mulholland rounded out the evening.

Is Tillsonburg closer to a new town hall?

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Tillsonburg may be closer to seeing the design of a new town hall after the last council meeting.

At the Dec. 8 meeting, council discussed an item titled "Tillsonburg Customer Service Centre Design Building Renovation" in closed session. The related outcome was for council to "direct staff to report back in open session at a future meeting with a comprehensive report including detailed costing and the proposed design for a Customer Service

Centre Design-Build renovation." Two criteria of the Ontario Municipal Act, likely related to negotiations (one of the criteria is broader), were cited as the reason for discussion in closed session.

Council had previously approved a design for the site at 10 Lisgar Ave that would demolish the existing building, but then reconsidered the action to explore alternate sites for a new town hall. A location on Harvey Street owned by the town was also a contender. The former Peavey Mart location was considered, also in closed session at a previous meeting, but that option appears to have been abandoned.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



Merry Christmas



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CO detectors will be required on every floor

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Hayman said. "It's much less expensive to buy a \$35 plug-in carbon monoxide detector than it is to bury someone."

He said the change was made to bring the fire regulations into compliance with the building code, which required this for new construction.

The original requirement making carbon monoxide detectors mandatory in homes with fuel-burning appliances was a result of the Hawkins Gignac Act, a Private Members' Bill put forward by Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman. The bill was brought forward in the wake of the death of the Hawkins Gignac family in Oxford County.

Hayman said between 85 and 100 people per year still die from carbon monoxide poisoning.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Report to look at costs of renovating 10 Lisgar for town hall

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Cost of the options ranged from \$10.9 million to \$12.4 million for a new build on Lisgar to a range of \$7.4 million to \$11.4 million on Harvey Street. These estimates did not examine the costs of renovating the existing 10 Lisgar Ave. structure.

At the Dec. 8 meeting in closed session, council also considered "Offer to Purchase – Portion of Ground Lease Lands (Harvey)". If that discussion was about the town purchasing additional land on Harvey Street or selling the existing parcel, wasn't made public.

Council also previously passed a motion

that construction of the town hall couldn't start until 50 per cent of the costs were in place from the sale of existing assets.

The creation of a town hall reserve was also approved at the Dec. 8 meeting. Previously, funds for the construction were earmarked in separate reserves. The reserve will already have \$2.55 million in it. The majority of this, \$1.7 million, is from the sale of 25 Maple Lane. The remainder is savings from the rent at the present locations as compared to what was paid in the Tillsonburg Town Centre, and a capital item coming in under budget.

Nearly 143 impaired charges laid in OPP Western Region in three weeks of RIDE

Members of West Region Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) took nearly 150 impaired drivers off the province's roads after Week Three of the 2025 OPP (Ontario Provincial Police) Festive RIDE (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) campaign.

To date, West Region OPP officers have conducted 1,533 RIDE check events across 13 West Region detachments, with the fol-

lowing results after the first three weeks of the annual enforcement and education campaign:

- 143 impaired driving charges.
- 21 warn-range suspensions.

Of these numbers, Oxford County accounts for 13 impaired charges and two warnings.

Provincially, OPP officers have laid 602

impaired driving charges and 65 warn-range suspensions in 5428 RIDE check events in OPP-patrolled areas across Ontario.

This year's OPP Festive RIDE Campaign runs from Nov. 20, 2025, to Jan. 1, 2026. During the campaign, the public can expect an increased OPP presence on West Region roads and highways as officers

conduct RIDE initiatives 24 hours a day, seven days a week throughout the province.

The OPP remains committed to taking alcohol/drug-impaired drivers off our roads through enforcement and public education. If you suspect that someone is driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs, it is important to call 9-1-1 to report it.

Traffic stop leads to charges

An individual from the Tillsonburg is facing impaired driving related charges following a proactive traffic stop.

On Dec. 13, at approximately 4 p.m., the Oxford Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Detach-

ment were conducting general patrol around Concession Street East and Lisgar Avenue, in the Town of Tillsonburg. A traffic stop was conducted after a vehicle was observed driving erratically.

Vladmir Sabo, 63-years-old, of Tillsonburg, has been charged with Failure or Refusal to Comply with Demand and Dangerous Operation.

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Suspension (ADLS) and a seven-day vehicle impoundment was initiated as per statute.

The accused was released from custody and is scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Woodstock on Jan. 26, 2026.

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EDITORIAL

We wish you a Merry Christmas

The number of shopping days to Christmas are shrinking, and the hustle and bustle for shoppers is increasing.

Amidst the bustle of the season, it's important not to forget what Christmas is about. Beyond the religious connotation associated with Christmas, there is more to what is commonly referred to as the true meaning of Christmas. It's a season to spend time with family, and an occasion to share with others.

The pages of today's Post reflect many of these sentiments. Laurel Beechey's column looks back at the original Christmas story, and what the manger was from an historical perspective. She tackles the question if the traditional scenes with domestic animals surrounding Christ's birth are accurate. I learned something from reading this, take a look.

One thing every one associates with the true meaning of Christmas is the joy on a child's face when seeing Santa Claus, or opening gifts on Christmas morning. There is an age where the magic is alive, and that can be seen in the letters to Santa from local elementary school students in the second section of today's paper. A big thank you to the teachers who helped pull this together.

A new Christmas feature this year by Robin Kraft is showcasing the Christmas stories of local residents. There are some

great stories from well-known and not-so-well-known local residents that are sure to elicit a chuckle.

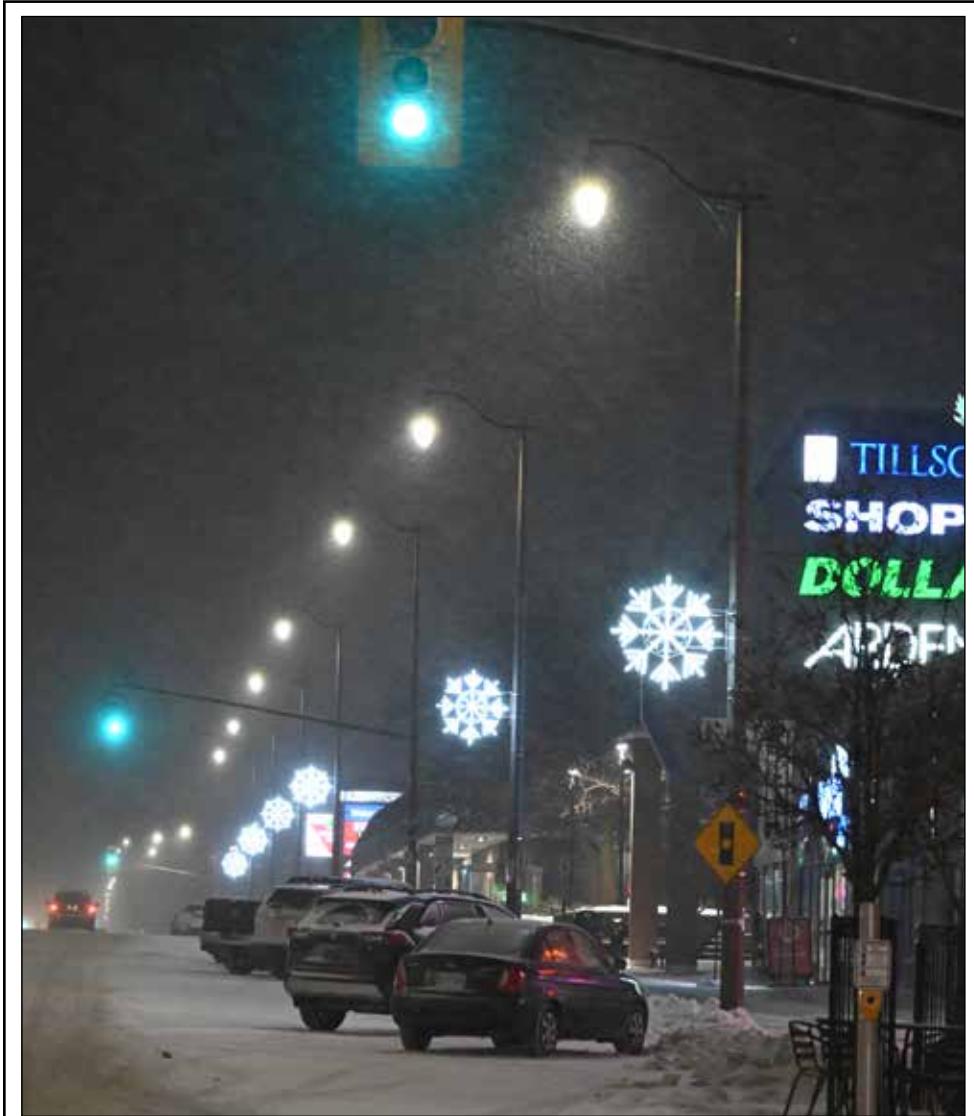
There are numerous references in today's Post to the displays at Annandale National Historic Site, and what Christmas was like 200 years ago. Take a moment to look back at what Dec. 25 was like for our ancestors and it may help appreciate what we have today.

While shopping and gathering those last-minute gifts, don't forget the less fortunate. The Salvation Army again didn't run its mail campaign, and is depending entirely on donations made through the kettle campaign or at one of the two locations in town. Helping Hand Food Bank is always in need of donations, both of food and monetary. And there are many other local campaigns to help those in need.

One parting word, from an unorthodox source – Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens' Christmas Carol – "I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year." Let's take the advice of one who learned the hard way about Christmas spirit, and keep the spirit of Christmas in our heart throughout the year.

Please read, and enjoy the best of the season.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!



Snowy night in Tillsonburg.

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Meet Cute moments in movies, and with a personal touch



WRITER'S CORNER

NORMA COLLIS

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

At a recent Christmas gathering, we started talking about watching some of the TV Christmas movies that are offered, in abundance, at this time of year.

The story lines are usually quite predictable, and early in the plot development there is always a "Meet cute" moment. Sometimes it takes place in the line-up at a coffee shop or the heroine has been sent by her boss to foreclose on a family-run inn that is about to fall into bankruptcy.

This led to a young woman in our group, asking how each couple at the gathering had met. She wanted to know about our personal "Meet cute" stories.

Most of us had met at a dance. We had to remind the young woman that our dating years occurred long before the introduction of Internet dating web sites. Dances

were a great place for "Meet cute" opportunities.

Everyone thought it was quite amusing that, upon our first meeting, I could not remember my husband's last name. In my defence, Collis is an unusual last name. I have since, spent a good deal of my married life correcting people as they write the name Collins onto various legal documents.

As a matter of fact, the school board I was working for, after our summer wedding, issued my September pay cheque to a "Norma Collins". We were only paid once a month, and it was always on the last Friday of the month. My last pay cheque for the summer had been issued on the last Friday of June. It was a long three months before my bank account was topped up. I was getting quite desperate for funds. Fortunately, my bank manager stepped in and straightened out the confusion very quickly.

If you search the meaning of the surname Collis, Google informs you that Collis has English origins, primarily as a topographical name for someone living near a hill taken from Latin colles or old English Coll. The name then evolved into "Colin" which is short for Nicholas, and then evolved into distinct family names like Collins and Colliss. Obviously, somewhere along the line, a lazy ancestor dropped the extra "S" from the name.

My older sister got very exasperated with me when I told people that I had just met this nice guy named David.

"What's his last name?" I would be asked. "Oh, I can't remember" I would reply, "it's a very unusual last name."

"For heavens sake" exclaimed my sister "Remember his name this way.....Don't call us, we'll call you. His last name is Collis for goodness' sake."

"Oh, OK," I said sheepishly, not thinking at that time that I would be taking that name as my surname in the not-too-distant future.

Then the young woman asked all of us if we had dated other people before meeting our spouses.

I found myself telling a story that I don't tell very often.

I had my first job teaching in the city of Guelph. At that time Guelph was still quite small and very "small town" in many of its 'prim and proper' attitudes.

Sometimes this made dating a real challenge. I was walking into a local bowling alley with a date one evening when some students from the school I was at, were just leaving. My maiden name was Taylor, "Good evening Mrs. Taylor" they said. "Hello Mr. Taylor" they said to my date." I was embarrassed but "Mr. Taylor, handled the misunderstanding with good grace and humour.

However, I had to draw the line at an-

other very nice young man named Robert. We met at a dance held on campus at Guelph university. He told me that he was studying agriculture at the university, and that his parents owned a farm north of Toronto. He asked me out on a date and I agreed. He told me that he had his own vehicle that was normally used on the farm, but his parents had allowed him to have it to drive to school and to get around the city of Guelph.

I prepared myself for the fact that he might pull up at my place driving a vintage tractor. Instead, I was greeted by a very well kept and quite upscale pickup truck waiting at the curb. It was only as we got closer to the truck, that I was able to read the neatly written name of the family farm, as it appeared on the side of the passenger door of his truck.

He hadn't told me that his parents owned a horse farm. There in gold lettering for all to see was their business name.....Featherstone Farm Stud Service.

I suggested that it was a nice evening for a walk. I added that I had to draw the line because, as I explained to my date, "I teach in this town. I can not be seen in your truck."

That was one "Meet Cute" that was a total failure.

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

Were animals present when Jesus was born?



THE STAGE IS THE WORLD

LAUREL A. BEECHEY

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

I recently was told that in the Bible story of Jesus birth, there are no animals!

Really? There had to be animals! What about their donkey? They arrived to find the inn full. Didn't they stay in the inn's stable because when Mary gave birth to Jesus, they used a manger for his bed. A food trough equals animals. Think about the hymns: "Away in a manger, where the cattle were lowing." Or "Between The Ox and the Donkey" or "The First Noel". All of these placed animals at Jesus' birth. Animals are also standard in most artistic renderings of nativity paintings, carvings and music!

Opening my Bible, my first surprise was there is only one account of Jesus' birth and that is Luke 2:7,12,16. 'They' were right - no animals!

Time to dig deeper. The Greek word used by Luke in 2:7, kataluma has over the millennium been given various translations, including: 'inn; guest room; or lodging.'

Yet today with clearer translations; newer archeological information and new technology, have opened up more possibilities. There are different words Greek used for now for inn, lodging, and now kataluma consistently means a "lodging space inside a typical house."

I never considered Joseph's genealogy, which is why they were going to Bethlehem. Luke 2:4, notes "Caesar Augustus decreed that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world, and everyone had to go to their own town to register." Their "own town" meant birthplace. Genealogy was very important in biblical times, and in this case, the male lineage. Joseph's father was Jacob, and their line went back through Solomon to the House of David in Bethlehem.

Joseph and Mary didn't have a lot of money. Why go to an inn when you can stay at your relatives, and Joseph had family in Bethlehem.

Dr. Michael LeFebvre, titled his article published by The Biblical Mind, "Jesus Was Probably Born in a Relative's House, Not an Inn". He noted, "The Christ child was not born in a stable alone with the animals but in a small house crowded with people—the kinds of people He came to save." This was based on Luke's use of the word kataluma: 'lodging space inside a typical house.'

Archeology has also given us a clearer picture of what humble/peasant home would have been like at this time and place. Dr. LeFebvre, used a design for a 'humble' home in ancient Palestine is known as a "pillared house" or a "four room house".

LeFebvre's explanation: "Picture a capital letter E viewed from above. Each of the four straight lines of the E represents a room, (not a wall). Three rooms are

parallel, running from the front of the house toward the back. The two stripes between them (the white spaces in the E) are where pillars supported the upper part of the house, dividing the lower floor into three rooms. A fourth room ran perpendicular to the others along the back of the house. It was raised up from the front rooms and in a one-story house it was the living, eating, sleeping space." If a two-story house, that room was typically used for storage of human foods, oil, honey and other needed items. Of the three smaller rooms, those with an outside wall would have window for airflow, sheltering the household sheep and goats needed for their milk, cheese, wool etc. The rest of the herd were penned elsewhere, or in their fields. The next two interior walls were low barrier walls and with mangers on top for food and water for the animals. The center room could be just a walking space to get to the back storage room, or perhaps storage or visitor overflow. The third room was for implements and tools needed for the home, animal care and working their fields.

A two-level house had a ladder up to the main lodging space. That upper room was where the family ate, slept and lived - the "lodging space." The heat from the animals warmed the family rooms on the second floor in the colder months. One and two level homes had a ladder up to the roof to expand their living/sleeping space, especially in the hot weather. With relatives coming for the census in winter, it makes sense there was not enough room in the upstairs rooms. Mary and Joseph, could have been housed in the ground floor centre room and used one of the mangers to lay Jesus in.

Well, I must pay more attention when I read.

Town turns down battery storage project

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Tillsonburg council turned down a proposal to build a bat-

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Publisher

Stewart Grant • stew@granthaven.com

Editor

Jeff Helsdon • jeff@granthaven.com

Graphic Design / Sales Inquiries

Stacie Eden • info@tillsonburgpost.com

Business Development

Heather Dunbar • heather@granthaven.com

Administration

Jen Gaetan • jen@granthaven.com

Contributors

Jeff Tribe, Laurel Beechey, Debbie Kasman,
Paul Knowles

36 Water St. St. Marys, ON, PO Box 2310 N4X 1A2
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tery storage facility on an industrial property at 500 Highway 3, but said the decision may be revisited in the future.

Matt Kennedy of Skyline Energy, which is proposing the 30-megawatt facility designed to store excess off-grid capacity generated at night and then release it during peak demand, was back before council on Dec. 8 to ask for a support resolution. This was his third time before council, and second time asking for the support resolution. At the last meeting, he was asked to come back with more information.

Kennedy said the \$70-plus million facility would unlock significant grid capacity during peak times. He explained the site chosen was on industrial land, not prime agricultural land, as directed by the province. Woodstock council recently approved a similar facility.

Given a concern about a possible fire at the site, Kennedy said the company would fully fund firefighter training. Construction of the facility would also generate many jobs.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy asked if there would be any line loss with such a facility.

"When the power is put back on the grid, there is some form of loss," Kennedy said. "We oversize the batteries to ensure that is accounted for in our design."

Coun. Chris Parker said he visited an existing battery storage facility in Haldimand County, which he noted was in a more rural setting. He noted that a generator was running constantly and asked if that was normal. Kennedy said it was not.

Coun. Kelly Spencer asked if there were any issues with the existing battery storage facilities in the province.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 5

Tillsonburg POST

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Town turns down battery storage project

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Kennedy said he wasn't aware of any issues, but said most are still under development. Answering a question about health risks, he said the batteries used are lithium iron phosphate, which is a different technology from that used in cars or phones.

"It's larger, it's heavier, but what comes with that is it's more stable. It's a lot safer battery with a lot lower fire risk," he said.

Reading a motion saying council is not in favour of the facility at the present time, Parker said he has safety concerns. Looking at the community benefit, he noted it "barely moves the needle".

"Maybe when this technology comes on line and we see more in operation, maybe it's something we can look at," he said.

Beres also noted the key part of the

motion is at the "present time".

"The unknowns are scaring me for the returns on it. The key is maybe our door may be open in future years," he said.

Interviewed later, Gilvesy also had concerns with the technology being so new.

"At this stage, there are simply too many unknowns," she said. "It's important that Tillsonburg not be the first to host a project of this scale when we have the opportunity to observe real-world impacts in other communities first. This proposal also does not resolve the town's long-term capacity issues. It may defer them for a short time, however the transformer station will still require significant upgrades regardless. For these reasons, council felt it was not in the best interest of our community to move forward with this project at this time."

BIA financial review finds no wrong doing

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A financial review of the Downtown Tillsonburg Business Improvement Association, in connection with an anonymous letter circulated last summer, found "no wrong-doing or financial irregularities".

After the anonymous letter was circulated last summer, council asked for a review of alleged cash transactions in connection with six businesses. The town's auditor completed a deep dive into the transactions, and a report to council stated the investigation was concluded satisfactorily and the requested cash records were provided.

In a follow-up to the investigation, a statement was released from the town stating council "supports and defends" the BIA board of management.

Coun. Kelly Spencer said the review generated costs that were paid by the taxpayer.

"Board members of the BIA shared they have spent countless hours on retrieval of these transactions," she said. "This took away time and opportunity costs from them. The harassment led to two board members resigning, and kept the BIA from fulfilling their mandate. Our BIA board felt frustrat-

ed with this extra audit as the BIA already had an audited 2024 and this was a result of an anonymous letter and no wrongdoings were found."

She also said the board has two accountants as members, as well as a financial manager for the province. Spencer was adamant that council should stick to its policy of not responding to anonymous complaints.

BIA agreement renewed

At the same meeting, on Dec. 8, council approved a new memorandum of understanding with the BIA. The new agreement saw a 50 per cent increase in the amount paid from 2025, to bring the 2026 total to \$58,959. Going forward, the agreement has two per cent increases per year for 2027 and 2028.

BIA Executive Director Mark Renaud said the increase was due to greater costs associated with clean-up and maintenance of the downtown. He said there is a higher frequency of social issues, and the severity of the incidents has increased.

Council also approved the appointment of Jennifer Young of Jennifer Young Paralegal to the BIA board of management.

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Kinsmen bridge reconstruction delayed

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Issues with the existing supports have pushed the target opening of the Kinsmen Bridge back to March.

The opening date for the bridge was initially set for January, with restoration of the trail in Participark completed in March after the weather improved. That date is now being pushed to mid-March, as detailed in a report to council at the Dec. 8 meeting.

Planmac Consulting, the firm overseeing the project, wrote: "The supplier of the bridge could not initiate the manufacture of the piercolumns above the existing stone columns until further measurements were taken, the intent always being to maintain as much of the existing heritage structure. Once the top of the stone pillars were fully accessible and the measurements were taken it was determined that the existing built stone columns are not perfectly aligned and rotated which meant modifying the structural steel to receive the new bridge. The top of the stone columns would be modified to receive the structural steel accordingly. The design engineers worked together to find solutions to modify and receive the pier column new structural steel and coincide with its installation on the existing stone foundations. The contractor also proposed some modifications to the stone caps to enhance the finishes and ensure water runoff would not be trapped."

Carlos Reyes, Director of Operations and Development, said it's expected the bridge will be at the site in mid-January.

Coun. Bob Parsons asked Reyes about the financial implications of the delay, and Reyes told him there weren't any.

He also assured it is made from Canadian steel and is made in Canada after a question from Mayor Deb Gilvesy.

With portions of the old bridge salvaged, the council was wrestling with the possibility of creating a static display, either in Participark or adjacent to Veterans' Memorial Walkway. The report said John Veldman, a member of the Bridge Street Reimaging Task Force, would provide no-cost design services to incorporate the former bridge into the walkway.

Council received the report for information.

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(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Construction of the new Kinsmen Bridge has started at Algonquin Bridge in Thorndale. The completed structure is expected to be delivered to Tillsonburg in January and open to the public in mid-March.

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A country boy's memoir becomes a bestseller

ROBIN KRAFFT

Post Contributor

Doug Lester hadn't initially planned to write a book, but his memoir *With A Little Bit of Luck* has become a bestseller.

It all began with an ancestry project during the pandemic, when Lester was researching his family history. Having a better understanding of where he came from, he began to write about his formative years for family and friends. He dipped back into humorous stories that he had written as a columnist for his wife Cheryl's Bayham area newspaper.

He described how his life was transformed in 1951 when his mother gave him a good scrubbing and they visited a white stucco house on Roger Hawkins' chicken farm. His father was hired as the flock manager and they lived on the property with the farmer and his family, occupying the back part of the house. On that first visit, he found a kindred spirit in Roger's son Hugh.

"I basked in the glow of that first friendship, we were inseparable," Lester said. "I would have gone to a rural school, but Roger paid my fee so that I could attend the town school with Hugh and that transformed my life. In the summer of my Grade 3 year, Hugh died in a

car accident. I had just been swimming with him that morning. He inspired me, and that is part of what I share in the book, the devastation. I was a lost boy after his death."

The first 174 pages of the book describe the first 20 years of Lester's life, including three dozen vintage photographs from his collection.

"I contacted David Stover at Rock's Mills Press and sent him some material," Lester said. "He felt it had potential and encouraged me. I wanted an epilogue, a few pages, but it had a life of its own, and took two years to finish. It was published last December, and did well. It was the number one memoir on Amazon for a time."

It took five years in total to write the book, but Lester knows all about endurance. The mile-and-a-half walk to school every day as a child, overcoming the loss of his friend, long work days in the tobacco fields, and years of running.

"In 2024, I completed my second lap of the equator," Lester said. "I've logged 49,804 miles and competed in marathons. When I was teaching and I realized that the kids could outrun me, I started running. I wasn't a great athlete in high school but I had endurance. I wasn't fast, but I was steady."

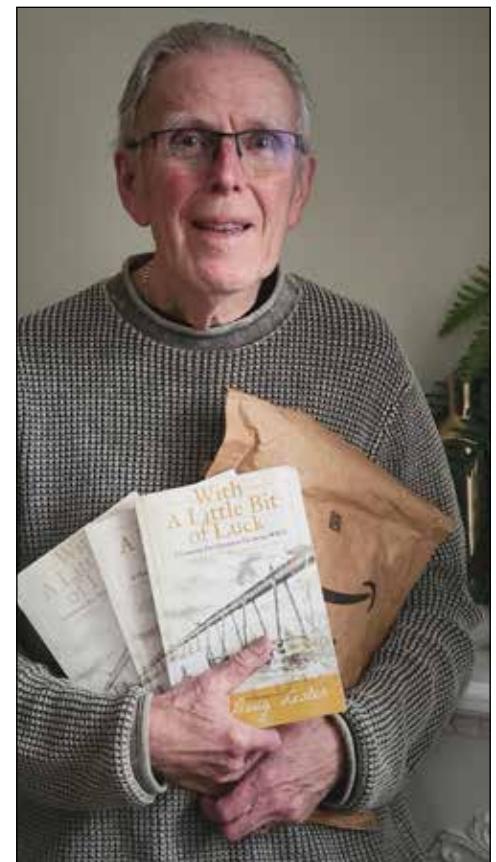
Lester was a teacher and principal before getting into education-directed counselling and coaching. In 2016, he published his first book: *12 Steps of Self-Leadership: The Difference Maker's Guide to Living and Leading on Purpose*.

"I got into teaching because I wanted to make a difference," Lester said. "I have faith in human beings and the universe. I'm working on another short book now (*Circles of Trust: The Willie Jordan Story*) to support people, to give hope, to show people that change is possible."

Lester described his childhood environment as a pretty small world, in some ways, and his preference for practical over theoretical may be attributed to his rural upbringing.

"My memoir, *With A Little Bit of Luck*, is as much a tribute to my hometown of Tillsonburg as it is about me," Lester said. "The post-war mix of immigrants and long-time residents provided a rich environment for a country boy like me. Farming and industry has been part of Tillsonburg from the start. As I was growing up just after WWII, the quality of the schools, service clubs and churches set our little town apart."

Editor's note: Watch the Jan. 8 edition of the Post for an excerpt from Doug Lester's book.



(ROBIN KRAFFT PHOTO)

Author Doug Lester received the first copies of his memoir *With A Little Bit of Luck* in December 2024.

Weekend Quiz

by Jake Grant

1. Where does Santa live?
2. How many reindeer does Santa have?
3. In the classic song, "Frosty the Snowman," what made Frosty come to life?
4. Which fairy tale were the first gingerbread houses inspired by?
5. Which popular phrase was made popular by Ebenezer Scrooge in "A Christmas Carol"?
6. Who catches the Grinch stealing?
7. Buddy the Elf sticks to the four main food groups, what are they?
8. What is the color of the berries on mistletotoe?
9. Where was Jesus laid after he was born?
10. What is the day after Christmas called?

This week's answers are found on pg. 18

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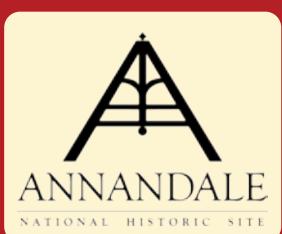
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January 2 - 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
January 3 - Closed
January 4 - 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.



Olivia Mae Graham's debut album focuses on lyrics



(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Olivia Mae Graham's debut album is now available as a CD, vinyl record and digitally. The newly released CD and vinyl versions have two bonus songs.

CHRIS ABBOTT

Post Contributor

Local country artist Olivia Mae Graham's debut album, *Nobody*, is now available digitally, along with vinyl and CDs.

"We just got our vinyl records and CDs," said Graham. "There are two bonus songs on the vinyl and CD... and those two songs will also be available (digitally) in 2026 – a deluxe edition to come in the new year."

Pre-sales exceeded her expectations, she said.

"I am glad that we did a pre-sale because we were able to order more than I anticipated. It definitely shocked me. It's really cool to be able to see people own something that I worked so hard on over these past few years."

"This project has been such a long time coming," said Graham, who over the last five years has written hundreds of songs.

"It's something that I have been working towards my entire life. So, to actually have it here, and to see it in a physical form, something I can hold and feel, is... I don't even know how to describe it. It's just so, so cool."

Graham is proud of the songs selected for her debut album. They focused on the lyrics, she said, and 'every song counted' and had a purpose on the album.

"I am so glad that we took the time because it is a work of art that I am so deeply proud of and I can't wait to continue sharing it into the new year."

"I really think I've been able to process

'life' through songwriting. It's something that I do on a daily basis. Some people drink a coffee every morning, I have to sit down and write, and just see what comes out. Every day it's different.

"Unfortunately, in the process, there were songs that were going to be on the album... then next day I wrote a better song. So, there's so many songs that nobody's going to get to hear."

Graham's earlier releases have been singles, she noted.

"I think that's a good way to do it, to have stepping stones, and to give people a little tidbit at a time. Then build towards an album. It has been a fun process for us."

On Dec. 7, Graham performed at her Third Annual Christmas Show and Album Release Celebration at the Hungarian Hall in Delhi, presented by Advanced Towing, a tradition she started in Tillsonburg. Proceeds from the cash raffles were donated to the Norfolk Help Centre to support local families this holiday season.

Nobody marks a pivotal moment in Olivia Mae's rising career. With accomplishments that include a CMAOntario Breakthrough Artist of the Year nomination and a Songwriter of the Year nomination at the Manitoba Country Music Awards, Graham continues to establish herself as one of Canada's most exciting emerging country voices. Her YouTube series, *The Moments In Between*, alongside her dynamic live performances, has helped cultivate a loyal and growing fan base across Ontario.

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Thunder edge Milverton 3-2 in OT shoot-out

MICHAEL HOLLY

Post Contributor

The Tillsonburg Thunder and the Milverton Four Wheel Drives are battling to avoid the 8-versus-9 playoff series and advance directly to the playoffs in February. This sets up Saturday night's game to be a December clash that has early playoff implications.

It did not start out well for the Thunder, with Milverton getting one in the first, and a second in the second period taking a 2-0 lead into the third period. As it was Teddy Bear Toss night, the crowd all had their bears ready to fly, but no cause to do so. The

minor hockey team girls, that have been patiently - actually not so patiently - awaiting their chance to hit the ice to round up the bears were on edge.

With only 5:08 left in the game, everything changed. Danny Attridge got his fifth of the season, from Kurtis Heggie and Braden Robert, and allowed the Teddies to fly. And there was much rejoicing. A total of 171 teddy bears were launched onto the ice and this gave our bit-crusty minor hockey girls the release they were waiting for. All the teddies were donated to the Salvation Army to be included in the Christmas hampers that are given out next weekend. This is the

18th year of the Tillsonburg Thunder Teddy Bear Toss. The Salvation Army and the Tillsonburg Thunder thank you all.

Back to the game, as the action picked up from there. Before the teddy bear counting was done, Mike Findlay notched his first of the season from Attridge and Sebastian Guastadigsegno to tie the score. Five minutes of 3-on-3 overtime did not settle anything, which led to a shootout. Andrew Oosterveld shot first, and launched a rocket into the blocker side bar down. Thunder netminder Ben Blacker saved the first shot, and Braden Roberts lost the handle on the next

Thunder shot. Milverton then rang the post. New Thunder player Hunter Monkhouse sealed the deal with a cheeky deek to the tender's stick side securing a Thunder 3-2 overtime win.

The Thunder have only one more game in 2025 versus the Elora Rocks on Dec. 20 at Tillsonburg arena. Puck drop is at 7:30. Elora and Tillsonburg have a long rivalry, so it is shaping up to be a climatic clash.

Many fans pick up Thunder tickets for Christmas stocking stuffers. The tickets are good for any Thunder home game. There are three left in the season.



(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)

The West Oxford Inferno, assisted by the Tillsonburg Thunder, collected 171 stuffed toys Saturday night, which were presented to The Salvation Army - Tillsonburg.



Thunder's Andrew Oosterveld uses a Milverton defender to take a screened shot.

(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)



(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)

West Oxford Inferno girls hockey team collected the stuffed toys Saturday night during the Tillsonburg Thunder Teddy Bear Toss game against Milverton.



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Gemini boys hockey team relying on contributions from both veterans and rookies

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

Not only does Tillsonburg Gemini boys' hockey veteran Liam Nunn understand where his younger teammates are at, he's in the same position of learning and growing as an Affiliated Player (AP) with the Provincial Junior Hockey League Norwich Merchants.

"It puts it more into perspective," said the Grade 12 Nunn following a four-point performance in a 9-3 Thames Valley Regional Athletics (TVRA) Southeast victory over the Woodstock College Avenue Knights Tuesday, December 9 in Woodstock.

Contributions that will be required from both ends of the experience spectrum for the Gemini to be successful this season were on display in Woodstock. Tillsonburg had taken a 3-0 lead out of the first period on a pair of Drew Hunter goals and a singlet courtesy of Keegan Diering, with assists to Clarke Lessif (2), Nunn, Landon Doddsley, David Lamers and Grade 9 rookie Lucas Thompson. Jacob Skanes and Nathan Beam responded for the Knights, cutting the gap to one with 11:28 remaining in the 15-minute second frame.

Thompson answered via a nifty two-on-one give-and-go breakout with Hunter. Thompson dropped the puck to Hunter, he recalled, driving onward toward the CASS net.

"And he fed me," said Thompson, whose marker restored a two-goal lead with 7:37 to play in the frame.

High school hockey represents a competitive step up for Thompson, who plays minor with the U15 South Oxford Storm.

"They are bigger, faster and more physical - a lot more physical," he said of the adjustment. "It's helped me a lot."

CASS's Tyson Clough answer just 15 seconds later, driving in off the left wing to pull the host team back

within a single goal.

But just over two minutes later, Nunn broke in on his left wing to restore Tillsonburg's two-goal margin and also Gemini momentum, on assists to Lessif and Lucas Morse.

"Walked down the left side of the ice and roofed it," said Nunn, who as well as playing for the Gemini, competes with the South Oxford Storm U18 squad, and as of December 9, had dressed for nine games with the Merchants.

"It got closer there, but we kept coming."

This year's Gemini roster is younger than it has been in recent seasons says Nunn.

"But our skill is there, just gotta get used to it," a process he had to go through himself. "I felt that in Grade 9 too."

Emerson Hodges extended Tillsonburg's lead to 6-3 before the end of the second, burying a one-timer into the open side of the net just as a Gemini power-play expired, set up cross-crease by Nunn.

Hunter Whittington, Lamers and Nunn rounded the 9-3 final with unanswered third-period goals, on assists to Diering (2), Thompson and Lamers.

"A solid game," Nunn summed up of a win which combined with a 4-1 TVRA opening victory over Aylmer East Elgin, gives Tillsonburg a 2-0 record on the young season. "Right now it's just game by game and see how it goes."

The Gemini were scheduled to close out pre-Christmas action with a Tuesday, December 16 road trip to Woodstock Huron Park, hosting St. Thomas St. Joe's Thursday, December 18 at 12 noon in the Memorial Arena.

"That will be a good test," said coach Derek Partlo of the latter outing.

The Gemini are still strong in high-end players said



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Gemini Lucas Morse (left) protects the puck deep in the Knights zone.

Partlo, although will be relying on younger skaters to fill in team depth.

"Just keep teaching and coaching them," he concluded of an anticipated season progression. "Just making sure the young guys are safe, teaching them how we want them to play and mixing them in with our older players."

GEMINI SCOREBOARD

Girls Curling

Friday, Dec. 5

Gemini 7, St. Mary's 5

Boys Curling

Friday, Dec. 5

Gemini 5, St. Mary's 4

Senior Boys Basketball

Monday, Dec. 8

Gemini 48, Woodstock St. Mary's 45

Junior Boys Basketball

Monday, Dec. 8

St. Mary's 53, Gemini 39



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Gemini Liam Nunn (left) cuts back toward the CASS net after swinging wide on a Knights defender.



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ReMax, Source pulling away as division leaders in Club Oxford

JEFF GWYN

Post Contributor

Clear division leaders are shaping up in Club Oxford, with ReMax on the top of A Division and Source for Sports in B Division.

Dec. 7

A Division

Apple Shack 4, Health Hut 3

Apple Shack was able to hold on for the win after a late push by Health Hut. They were able to get some scoring from different sources and buckled down defensively. Health Hut were a step behind to start, but got some chances as the game went on. They had some great pressure late, but couldn't get the tie.

Brandon Velda had two points for Apple Shack. Ryan Dayman had two goals for Health Hut.

ReMax 6, Fody's 0

ReMax kept the pedal down once they got on the board. They were able to break up some Fody's chances and kept them off their game. Fody's couldn't get things going, even

after some first-period chances. An off game for Fody's, but they will shake it off.

Brady Sutherland had two points for ReMax. Greg Buchner had the shutout for ReMax.

B Division

Glass 2, Royal LePage 0

Glass played a strong defensive game. They didn't let Royal LePage get any rebounds and capitalized on some limited chances to secure the victory. Royal LePage couldn't get many chances in close tonight and had zero puck luck. They played well defensively, but couldn't get the offense going.

Adam Matthews had two points for Glass. Nolan Collard had the shutout.

Jeff Prouse Mortgages 5, RND 1

Prouse Mortgages came out strong in this one. They had their speed going tonight and were getting plenty of shots on net. RND had trouble getting into the zone and played a bunch in their own end. A tough night, but they can bounce back.

Stephan Coulombe had two goals for Prouse Mortgages. Luke Scholten had the goal for RND.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

CURLING WINNERS

Tillsonburg Curling Club Triples League 1st Draw resulted in a four-way tie for four teams. Each team had four wins and one loss. Congratulations to Gary Hall, Samantha Lalonde, Cody Shepherd, Frank Jackson, Tamara Braun, Dan Hamm, Linda Durston, Paul Blouin, Dale Wright, Susan Goble Hall, Dennis McCarroll and Michelle Veit-Krossay.

CLUB OXFORD A DIVISION	GP	W	L	T	PTS
REMAX REALTY	14	10	2	2	22
FODY'S AUTOMOTIVE	14	8	6	0	16
THE APPLE SHACK	14	4	9	1	9
THE HEALTH HUT	14	3	8	3	9

CLUB OXFORD B DIVISION	GP	W	L	T	PTS
SOURCE FOR SPORTS	14	12	2	0	24
JEFF PROUSE MORTGAGES	14	6	4	4	16
TILLSONBURG GLASS	14	6	4	4	16
B-LINE TRUCKING	14	6	5	3	15
CARQUEST AUTO PARTS	14	5	5	4	14
ROYAL LEPAGE	14	3	7	4	10
RND CONSTRUCTION	14	3	7	4	10
AIRMOUNT FARMS	14	3	10	1	7

Airmount 5, B-Line 3

Airmount has been finding some chances lately and they were clicking on their passes tonight. A fast pace helped them get the win. B-Line was in this one all game, they just couldn't get the rebounds on their chances. A couple breakdowns defensively made for a tougher night.

JJ Harden had two goals for Airmount. Chris VanKasteren had two goals for B-Line.

Source 4, Carquest 1

After a slow start, Source was able to get their game going. They had some strong outlet passes and worked hard in front of the net all night. Carquest started good, but couldn't keep the momentum. They had trouble getting things going and were frustrated offensively.

Jason VanThuyne and Mike Oliveira had two points each for Source. Brad Henderson had the goal for Carquest.

Dec. 10

A Division

Apple Shack 6, Fody's 3

Apple Shack was able to find some offence in this one. They had some great chances all night. They kept Fody's to the outside all

night. Fody's couldn't find their momentum in the first. They felt the Apple Shack pressure early on. They had some chances in the second to make it a game.

Jesse Dunn had two goals for Apple Shack. Christian Clifford had three points for Fody's.

Health Hut 2, ReMax 2

Health Hut had a very solid three-quarters of a game, but some penalty trouble took their momentum away. A solid effort against the top team. ReMax looked to be fighting a tight Health Hut defence as they didn't take advantage of some early powerplays. They didn't give up and earned a tie with some late pressure.

Dave VanWyk had a goal for Health Hut. Dylan Ralf had two points for ReMax.

B Division

Source 4, Airmount 2

Source was able to force Airmount all night and had some great breakout passes. A solid game in the neutral zone limited the Airmount chances. Airmount looked a bit off in this one as they fought hard against a Source team pushing hard. Keeping it close against the top team.

Nate Bisschop had two goals for Source. Justin French had two goals for Airmount.

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MUSIC CORNER

Written in the cards: Ace of Swords finds its moment



BEN ANDRESS

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

There is something reassuring about a band that does not feel manufactured. Something that sounds more like a long conversation picking up where it left off than a project cobbled together in a rehearsal space. Ace of Swords is exactly that kind of band.

The Southern Ontario classic rock outfit is anchored by Elgin County's husband-and-wife duo

Tina Andress on vocals and Jeremy Andress on guitar. They are joined by Norfolk County bassist Al Lee and Oxford County drummer Jackson Crommiller. Ace of Swords may be new in name but the relationships behind it stretch back decades.

"The chemistry feels so natural and I think that is mostly because we have known each other forever," Jeremy explains. "Jackson, along with my brother Ben and I, used to play rockstars with broom guitars when we were little. Al was a high school teacher to us all, whom we looked up to, and so it just happens like magic when you are playing with people you have known and loved for so long."

Family, friends and a love of music is at the heart of Ace of Swords and not just in how they play, but in how the band came together in the first place. Tina credits Lee with set-

ting the wheels in motion. "Well, Al Lee was the catalyst for the band forming. He invited Jeremy and I to perform at a summer music festival as a duo, which is how Ace of Swords started out," Tina describes. "But even back then we were talking about the classic rock songs we performed needing some more power behind them, so it was kismet that our long-time friends and fellow musicians, Jackson and later Al, would then join Ace of Swords as we played the same pubs and music festivals."

What emerged is a band built around some of classic rock's deep cuts and the songs we all know from radio dial. It was a deliberate choice and one that audiences seem to appreciate.

"Tina picks all the songs. She has an uncanny knack for picking songs that are more rare or B-sides, ones that people know and love but maybe they have not

thought about in a while," Jeremy says. "After every show we get compliments on the set list, and that is all Tina. It takes more than a song just being one we like and think others will too, we have to test a song out and see if there is a way to play it in an Ace of Swords kind of way."

That process of testing and reshaping songs keeps the set lists exciting. No two shows are ever quite the same, and some songs carry more weight than others.

"We do a lot of songs and the set lists often switch up. Many songs feel special for different reasons," Jeremy explains. "I know that for both Tina and I, playing Blue Rodeo can get us both a little emotional because that is a band that we cannot think of without being reminded of a close friend we lost several years ago."

There is room for sentiment as well. When Tina is asked which song stands

out most, her answer comes without hesitation.

"The one that immediately jumps out to me is 'Green is the Colour' by Pink Floyd," Tina declares with a smile. "That song was the one Jeremy and I had as our first dance at our wedding."

While Ace of Swords is firmly established as a cover band, the idea of original material is not off the table.

"We have really spent the last couple of years establishing Ace of Swords as a deep-cut classic rock cover band and so that is what is expected of us now," Jeremy notes. "I'm often recording ideas to flesh out for our own songs. Doing completely original material is something Tina and I talk about, but the kind of stuff I write is rather outside of the classic rock realm and better suited to a separate project."

Even the band's name reflects that sense of inten-

tion and timing.

"The band name comes from the Tarot card 'Ace of Swords' which signifies a breakthrough," Tina reveals. "An eureka moment and turning an idea into reality. It turned up in a reading where the query was 'What should we name our band?' and it seemed quite fitting."

Ace of Swords takes the stage on Jan. 10th at Paddy's Underground for the venue's first concert of 2026. The evening features the perfect pairing with the group playing alongside another local cover band called The Deeper Cuts, which is a Tillsonburg blues band made up of employees from the local Long & McQuade music store. Doors open at 8 p.m. with a \$10 cover share for this all ages/licensed event. Tickets are available in advance at www.eventbrite.ca and the night of the show limited to availability.

UPCOMING SHOWS

DEC. 19 - MUSIC TRIVIA

The Copper Mug: No Cover – 8 p.m.

DEC. 22 - DAYGLO ABORTIONS W/ HELLAPHANT

Paddy's Underground: \$20 - 8pm - All Ages/Licensed

DEC. 27 - WHERE'S SHANE, SEGA SATURN THE CONSOLE & THE LEXINGTON CURE

The Copper Mug: \$10 – 8 p.m.

DEC. 31 - KID'S NOON YEAR'S EVE Party

THE COPPER MUG: \$10 – 2 P.M.

DEC. 31 - NEW YEAR'S EVE KARAOKE PARTY

The Copper Mug: \$10 – 6 p.m.

JAN. 10 - ACE OF SWORDS & THE DEEPER CUTS

Paddy's Underground: \$10 – 8 p.m. - All Ages/Licensed

JAN. 30 - THE PENSKE FILE, ONE WAY STREETS & FULL THROTTLE

Paddy's Underground: \$20 – 8 p.m. - All Ages/Licensed



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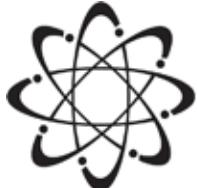
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KNIGHTLY NEWS

News from Monsignor O'Neil Catholic School

Welcome to "The Knightly News", the only school brave enough to report on the mysteries of the lost homework, the legends of the Lost and Found and the heroic quests of middle-school life. Our team of student writers are armed with pencils, curiosity, and maybe too many snacks as we uncover everything happening from grade 5 to 8. Prepare your armor—this September, October, November issue is packed with bold stories, Knightly discoveries, and just the right amount of chaos. Spirit days at O'Neil are lots of fun, here is all that we have celebrated!

The school year started with our Grade 6 students going to the static display at the London Airshow. Our annual Terry Fox Run was held on Sept. 25. All our staff and students walked or run to support cancer research. On Sept. 30, the school celebrated Truth and Reconciliation Day by wearing bright orange shirts. As everyone went outside all you could see was a field of orange as we showed that Every Child Matters.

"Homework may strike out, but our Blue Jays spirit is always a home run." On Friday, Oct. 24, staff and students wore their Jays attire or dressed in blue. There was a lot of chanting in celebration of the Blue Jays making it all the way to the World Series.

Why do mummies make great students? They're always wrapped up in their work. Halloween at O'Neil was full of fun! Students were welcome to dress in costumes or wear orange and black to school. There was a parade of costumes in the gym of the winners from each class. They were judged in the following categories: Cutest, Strongest, Funniest, Pair/Group, Most Original, and Most Unique. Everyone had wonderful costumes and it was an amazing Halloween at O'Neil.

On Nov. 11, O'Neil took the day to remember all the past and present servicemen and servicewoman who fought for our freedom. All students made a donation and were given a poppy to wear close to their hearts. Students sent postcards to veterans and wrote a message on paper poppies which were put on display at the Nursing homes in Tillsonburg. There was also a Remembrance Day assembly where a moment of silence took place.

On Friday, Nov. 2t, we had Pink Shirt Day to celebrate Bully Prevention Week!

Next, up is O'Neil's sports. On Oct. 2, the Grade 7/8 students travelled to Regina Mundi for the Cross Country Meet. They all participated in the 1K run and can't wait to go back next year. While the Grade 7/8 students were at the Cross Country Meet, our Grade 5/6 students stayed at school to run their own 1k.

Our junior girls' and boys' soccer teams were getting ready for their big tournaments being held on Nov. 4 and 5 at the BMO Soccer Fields in London. It was un-ball-lievable! The girls put up a good fight and came close to winning. The boys fought hard and ended up the champions in their tournament. We thank Ms. Gerrie and Ms. Legacy for coaching the teams.

An intermediate intramural volleyball tournament took place during lunch. For the tour-

nement four teams were made, USA, Poland, France, and Canada. The final playoff game took place Nov. 20th. The final teams that battled it off for the win were USA and France. Both teams did a great job but France came out with the win. Go France GO!!!! Talking about volleyball, our intermediate girls' and boys' teams have been doing very well in their seasons. Both teams had a tournament on Nov. 21. They both fought very hard and the boys finished in third place, but the girls however were undefeated and won first place for our school. Both teams did a great job in the tournament and will keep fighting until the season is over. We thank Mrs. Keller and Ms. Catunto for coaching the teams. Finally for this month, intermediate mixed hockey team tryouts are taking place at the arena in preparation for an upcoming one-day tournament being held at the Carling Arena in London on Dec. 4. Results to follow at a later date.

This year we have added something new to our school..... a student parliament!!! There were elections held and a great team of students were elected to the various positions.

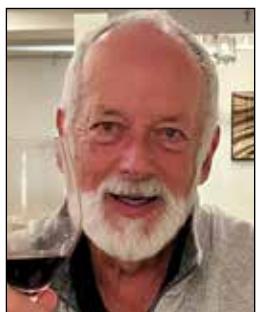
The Prime Minister is Connelly S., Deputy Prime Minister is Teniola F. and Manason K. is the Secretary. The Ministers of Communications are Aaliyah D., Ellia G., Lizzie M., and Sarah S. They have been busy putting pictures up on the bulletin boards, and are in charge of writing their first "Knightly News" article for the newspaper. The Ministers of Faith are Iola C., Kaydence A., Nia D., and Rosalee M. They have started reciting Bible verses every Monday and Friday over the PA and have helped Mrs. Martz package up cans of corn, cereal boxes and packages of gravy for the St. Vincent de Paul/Salvation Army Food Drive. The School Spirit Ministers are Lena G., Teniayo F., Lola M., Ava S., and Brynn W. They will be very busy for the month of December organizing Christmas Spirit Days. We are so proud of all the elected student parliament members!! They are doing a great job and are coming up with big ideas. Every month there will be a monthly student parliament challenge, juniors vs juniors and intermediates vs intermediates.

Our first challenge was in the month of November. It was a rock, paper, scissors challenge. Each student was given a bracelet (which was worth one point) and students could challenge other students with a game of rock, paper, scissors at recess, whoever won would get the other student's bracelet. Teachers also participated too, but they had a necklace which was worth five points. Needless to say, the students were out to challenge the teachers for their necklace. The class with the most points won a new outside ball for their class. In the end Mrs. Kamenar's class came out with the win in the junior division with 53 points and Mrs. Keller's intermediate class won with 78 points. More challenges are coming soon!

Yours in faith,
Msgr. O'Neil School – Ministers of Communication

Merry Christmas Everyone
Aaliyah, Ellia, Lizzie & Sarah

Can't wait to see old friends on stage in 2026



OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO!

PAUL KNOWLES

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

About 20 years ago, I discovered that CBC Radio was promoting community-based readings of Charles Dickens' wonderful story, "A Christmas Carol". The idea was initiated by CBC radio news anchor Judy Maddren. CBC would provide scripts, posters, and a volunteer reader for such an event, if local organizers did the rest.

I liked the idea, and so did some others in the community of New Hamburg. So we contacted CBC Radio, got the supplies, and started to recruit the other four readers we would need, as well as some musicians.

The way it worked was, the story was read in five "staves" by five separate readers, with musical interludes between each stave. Charles Dickens himself had converted and abridged his novel for live presentation, and had been the first one to do such a reading, in 1853.

I emceed our first one a century and a half later. Although we didn't present such an event every year, we did do at least 10, in New Hamburg, Fullarton, and London, and I got to emcee each one, sharing the stage with fabulous readers.

And what, you are by now asking, has this to do with travel?

Okay, maybe it's a bit of a nostalgic stretch, but stay with me. To digress for a moment (it will all come together, I promise), I am a big fan of the Stratford Festival, and I think it is important to write

about Stratford – both the Festival itself and the rest of the community, a day-trip destination we are very lucky to be close to.

So, I was interested to receive the full menu of plays being mounted at the Festival in 2026, including a list of all of the actors appearing on Stratford stages, next season.

The playbill looks great, by the way. Check it out on the Festival website (stratfordfestival.ca). I can't wait to see Midsummer Night's Dream, Guys and Dolls, the return of Something Rotten, The Importance of Being Ernest, and much more. It will be a superb season.

And the reason I link 2026 Stratford with my fond memories of Dickens' readings? Well, that first year, as we stumbled our way through a process we had never done before, we realized that our proximity to Stratford might mean we could do something special. So we naively reached out to some wonderful actors who were appearing on the Stratford stage at that time. First to say "yes" was the amazing Brian Tree, showing amazing trust in us. Brian not only came to read the fifth and final stage (which he did for us several more times over the years), he also brought with him Thom Marriot, a terrific actor, hugely impressive as the Ghost of Christmas Present. And we were off and running.

Subsequent Dickens events saw the returns of both Brian and Thom, and a revolving cast of Stratford greats. The readings were so well performed that in 2010, when Judy Maddren herself came to read, she told me it was the finest she had ever attended. After CBC Radio stopped sponsoring the readings, we continued, with five first-rate, volunteer actors every time.

And so, as I read the details about the 2026 Festival Season, I was thrilled that half a dozen of "our" actors will be on stage in Stratford next year. These are folks who volunteered their time and talent for our readings, and never, ever took



(DAVID HOU PHOTO)

Sara Topham as Hermoine (front-right) and André Sills as Polixenes (front-left) with members of the company in The Winter's Tale. Stratford Festival 2025. Photo: David Hou

it for granted. They brought their full passion and commitment, every time.

Sara Topham (in our Dickens in 2008, 2011, 2017) will be busy this year: she is Titania in one of my favourite Shakespeare comedies, "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; she plays Cath in "The King James Bible Play"; and Sara is also "Movement Director" in "The Hobbit".

Steve Ross (2017) – who knocked it out of the park in previous seasons in *La Cage aux Folles*, and "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" – will play Shylock in the much-anticipated return of "Something Rotten" and Nicely-Nicely Johnson in "Guys and Dolls", where he gets to bring down the house with "Sit Down, You're Rocking the Boat."

Rod Beattie (2014) – famed for his Wingfield Farm one-actor plays, but also well known for his work in classical theatre – is back on the Stratford stage playing Antonio in "Saturday, Sunday Monday".

Stratford icon Lucy Peacock (2006) plays Miss Prism in "The Importance of Being Ernest", and Linda Loman in "Death of a Salesman" where she will share the stage with another of "our" alumni – Tom McCamus (2009). Tom is the tragic protagonist, Willy Loman, and will also appear as Estragon in "Waiting for Godot." And finally, Tom McCamus' wife, Chick Reid, who joined us for a Dickens' reading (2009), appears in "Death of a Salesman", and as Brabantia in "Othello".

So, forgive me for wallowing in nostalgia, but I, for one, can't wait to see these generous and talented people on stage, once again, in the best theatre in Canada, in a city which I think is the number one day-trip destination in southern Ontario.

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



Steve Ross as Shylock in Something Rotten! Stratford Festival 2024. (ANN BAGGLEY PHOTO)



(DARIANE SANCHE PHOTO)

From left: Lucy Peacock as Linda Loman and Tom McCamus as Willy Loman in Death of a Salesman. Stratford Festival 2026.

RIDDLES

I'm hung by the chimney and filled with surprise. What am I?
Stocking

I'm green and pointy and wear lights like jewelry. What am I?
Christmas tree

I'm wrapped up tight with paper and bow; shake me gently to guess what's below. What am I?
Present

I'm a sweet striped stick, red and white; I show up most in wintertime. What am I?
Candy cane

I'm made of snow but I'm not a cloud; I wear a carrot nose and stand out proud. What am I?
Snowman

I fly at night on Christmas Eve, with a red nose you can't unsee. What am I?
Rudolph

I'm warm and cozy, you drink me with cheer; I'm often topped with marshmallows here. What am I?
Hot chocolate

I'm kissed at midnight, green above your head; I bring you luck (or so it's said). What am I?
Mistletoe

I drop from the sky at midnight, but I'm not rain. What am I?
Confetti

I sparkle and pop and light up the night when the year turns new. What am I?
Fireworks

I'm a promise you make when the year begins, but many forget me before it ends. What am I?
New Year's resolution

SUDOKU

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

Level: Beginner

Solutions on Page 18

PET OF THE WEEK



RUBY

Ruby is a fox-red lab who "chewed" her way into our hearts. A lovable girl who is an energetic companion to humans and cats alike!

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

WORD SEARCH

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

M	R	O	V	T	K	C	H	E	E	R	S	F	U	Q	F	R	M	K	B
D	C	U	D	Q	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	L	Q	E	Q	Q	W
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NEWYEAR

COUNTDOWN

CELEBRATION

MIDNIGHT

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CALENDAR

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December 25: 12:00 p.m.

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If for some reason you will be dining alone on December 25th please come and share a free Christmas Dinner with us! Individuals and families are welcome.

MUSIC JAM AT THE TILLSONBURG LEGION

Saturday, December 27: 1 p.m.-4 p.m.
featuring Ken Lighheart and the Northshore Ramblers. Only \$7 admission. Cash bar available. All Welcome.

**TILLSONBURG LEGION
PRESIDENT'S LEVEE
Thursday, January 1: 1-5 p.m.**
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MESSY CHURCH SAILS INTO THE NEW YEAR WITH THE THEME- MANY SHIPS

January 3: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Enjoy the warmth and fun of crafts, snacks, music and stories with a sit down meal together. Children must be accompanied by an adult.
St. Paul's United Church 88 Bidwell St. Tillsonburg.

IN 2026 IT'S YOUR FIX! INGERSOLL COUNTRY MUSIC JAMBOREE

meeting every other Friday 1-4 p.m. at Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St. S. Ingersoll. Join us, walk ins welcome. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Perform, listen, dance & enjoy! **January 16 & 30, February**

13 & 27, March 6 & 20, April 10 & 17, May 1, 15 & 29, June 5 & 19.

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Saturday January 17

Advance tickets \$15 at the Tillsonburg Legion, \$20 at the door. Doors open at 6pm. Dance from 7pm to 10pm. Cash bar. All Welcome! For more info call 519-842-5281.

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Looking for something to do in the evening or something new to try? Modern square dancing is a great way to learn something new, have fun, meet new friends, relieve stress, and get some exercise! At Thames Valley Dance Club, we dance on Monday nights from 7 - 9 p.m. All you need is comfortable shoes and casual clothing. No experience or partner is required and anyone over the age of 12 is welcome (children from 12-15 with an adult, please). The 2025-2026 season has started at the Ingersoll Pipe Band Hall, 108 Wonham St. S. Ingersoll. The first night is free, and after that the cost is \$7.50 per person each Monday, paid monthly at the start of the month. For more information, contact Julie at 519-535-3314. Hope to see you on Sept 8th at the Ingersoll Pipe Band Hall!

INTERESTED IN BRIDGE?

Join us every Friday at the Tillsonburg Duplicate Bridge Club at 1 p.m. at The Senior Centre. Don't have a partner? Come anyway and we will match you up with someone. For more information, visit their

Facebook page: TburgBridge.

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.

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WHEN: 2nd Tuesday of every month

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

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

INGERSOLL

WHEN: 4th Tuesday of every month

WHERE: Ingersoll Public Library 130 Oxford St., Ingersoll

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

WOODSTOCK

WHEN: 3rd Saturday of every month

WHERE: Sakura House Hospice 715180 Oxford Rd.4, Woodstock

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

MEMBERS GENERAL MEETING

1st Wednesday of every month

Starting at 7 pm

Not a member contact us to join The Wagner Memorial Teeterville Legion Branch 526. 3890 Teeterville Road,

Teeterville, Ontario. For More Information Call, the Legion 519-443-5588 <https://www.teetervillelegionbranch526.ca>

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The Wagner Memorial, Teeterville Legion Branch 526

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BIRTHDAY

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birthday**



153 BRANCH

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Leighton Ronson**

From your Comrades
at the Tillsonburg Legion

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. The North Pole
2. Nine
3. An old silk hat
4. Hansel and Gretel
5. Bah! Humbug!
6. Cindy Lou Who
7. Candy, candy canes, candy corns, & syrup
8. Milky white
9. In a manger
10. Boxing Day

SUDOKU

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

CLASSIFIEDS

TREES

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

WANTED

In search of vintage stereo equipment pre 80s. Receivers, amps, speakers, records etc. Preston - 519 770 7366 - prestonsoutar@gmail.com

OBITUARY

RÉGINE C. ROSS



Régine Clementine Ross was born on February 23, 1925 in Tielt, Belgium to Aime and Marcella Houtteman. She immigrated to Canada in 1954 with her first husband and eldest daughter Yonna. Régine moved to Tillsonburg in 1956 and opened up a dress making and fur store on Brock St, Tillsonburg until 1967. From there, Régine went to teachers' college and began teaching at Delhi High School. She went from Delhi High School to Valley Heights Secondary School where she was part of the opening of Valley Heights. Régine finished her teaching career at Simcoe Composite High School. While she was teaching at Delhi, she met the love of her life Doug Ross who also was teaching there. They were married in 1970.

She is survived by her loving husband Doug. Régine was a kind and generous mother to Yonna (Stephen) DiLella, Lorraine (Jim) Hagen, René Luypaert, Alan Ross and Kevin (Lynn) Ross. Cherished Bobonne (grandmother) to Corrina (Dave), Aaron (Kelly), Danielle and Jeffrey (Tara). Great grandmother to Judah, Levi and Caleb. Régine was an aunt to many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by many loving family members and dear friends.

She was an active member of the Tillsonburg Canadian Cancer Society, the Tillsonburg Curling Club and the Tillsonburg Heritage Society. The family wishes to thank the amazing staff at Woodingford Lodge and Dr. Roth for all their care.

As per Régine's wishes, cremation has taken place. Memorial donations to the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital Foundation may be made directly online with the charity or by contacting Ostrander's Funeral Home (519-842-5221) who have been entrusted by the family.

Condolences and memories may be shared at www.ostrandersfuneralhome.com

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Merry Markdown

EVENT

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Christmas memories and tales from Tillsonburg residents

COMPILED BY ROBIN KRAFFT

Post Contributor

Oh, Christmas Tree

When The Post asked me to share a quick Christmas story, my mind went immediately to a tale that lives in infamy in our family—one that still brings us to tears laughing every year. I also submit this fully aware that my dad may disown me when he reads it.

It all began on a cold and bitter December day when Dad called my sister and I with an urgent request to help bring in a Christmas tree he had cut to surprise our mom. That phrase alone should have been our warning. We arrived to find a tree the size of a small county—easily 10 feet wide—straddling the back of his truck like it was trying to escape.

Getting it through the patio door was, unsurprisingly, a lost cause. Dad, in peak form, bellowed reminding us that we were “farm girls” and to put some muscle into it. After several futile attempts (and much eyerolling), we wrapped the tree in a bedsheets, heaved, shoved, and eventually wedged it inside. Miraculously, we got it upright in his very sturdy, very hand-welded tree stand, centered in the bay window like a prize heifer at the fair.

For reasons known only to him, Dad stationed himself behind the tree—pressed between branches and window—while barking orders for us to cut loose the sheet. We obeyed. The branches exploded outward like a jack-in-the-box on steroids, pinning him flat against the glass. Before we could even process what was happening, the homemade stand snapped, the entire tree toppled forward, Dad shot free like a champagne cork, and a one-foot gouge was carved into the hardwood floor.

Frantically, before Mom was to return home, the tree was dragged to the back of the farm, a rug was strategically deployed over the new “feature” in the flooring, and all evidence vanished as if nothing had ever happened.

The floor scar remains today as a gentle reminder of one family rule that stands unchallenged: Dad is never allowed to pick the Christmas tree.

Merry Christmas to all, and Best Wishes in the New Year.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy

Secret Santa

Shelley Heaslip shared her favourite childhood Christmas memory, circa 1966. Her mom, Ernaleen, asked her if she wanted to be secret Santas together.

I was excited. How would we do

that? She explained there was a family just on the outskirts of our town who were down on their luck and there were no presents or even a Christmas dinner for them that year. She asked me to go through my toys and pick out two dolls and some books for the two little girls. I didn't have a lot of toys either and I loved my dolls. My books were also precious to me. I loved to read. Why did I have to give up my toys? Then I thought about those two little girls who wouldn't be getting anything for Christmas, and I begrudgingly picked out two dolls and some books for them.

Mom and I wrapped them in pretty paper and tucked them into a box, with all the makings of a nice ham dinner for the family. Mom told me how proud she was of me for giving the little girls some of my toys and how happy they would be when they opened the gifts. That made me happy and warm inside.

We got up early the next morning while it was still dark and headed out to their little house. I waited in the car while Mom put the box on their step. She hurried back to the car and we sped off. I asked why she didn't knock on the door and Mom explained we couldn't be secret Santas if they knew who we were.

It was exciting to be a secret Santa, and it really made me feel good. That is one of my most favourite memories.”

A Clementine Toe

Dorothy Hrischenko shops at garage sales all year long and starts wrapping gifts in June.

“My basement is covered in wrapping paper, boxes and bows,” she said. “I love Christmas. I have two daughters and I give them dozens of gifts, but nothing expensive. It gives me such joy. I’m still wrapping!”

One of her traditions is to always put a clementine in the toe of their stockings. When her daughters were younger, they would put a normal size stocking out and it would be replaced with a huge one.

“Gifting is my language of love, but also making things for friends is really important to me,” Hrischenko said. “I guess I’m bilingual!”

When They Were Small

In 2009, when my kids were 25, 20 and 16, my daughter (the eldest) organized with her brothers to give myself and their dad an old-fashioned Christmas. My daughter wasn’t living at home, but she arrived here for 6 a.m. in her pjs, and with her brothers woke us up like they did when they were little by running into our room and

shouting Santa came! Santa came!

I was so surprised and I laughed. My daughter said they wanted to bring us a Christmas like when they were small. They were all in their jammies. We got up and went downstairs, and they acted like they were little again, all excited that Santa came.

We opened our stockings and opened gifts like when they were little. We had such a wonderful, magical, old fashioned Christmas that year, and with them planning it made it so very special.

I love Christmas so much, everything about it, but being with family means the most to me.

Cathie Lyn Ryan

Baby Reindeer

Lily was about a year and half old when she was working on weaning off her bottle. We talked about Santa that year and baby reindeer. She worried they didn’t have bottles and offered to give her bottles to the babies.

We set out her bottle on Christmas Eve (with the milk and cookies) and left a note for Santa to take it to the baby reindeer.

He left a note back thanking her for her kindness and took the bottle with him. She knew that this meant she had no more bottles and didn’t ask for another bottle after that night.

Michelle Wegg

Age of Majority

I turned 19 on Christmas Day, 1999. Yes, it really is my birthday. When you turn 19, it is custom for friends and family to take you out to enjoy a legal drink. Having a birthday on Christmas hampers this tradition because nearly everything is closed and family and friends are occupied with their families and friends. Nonetheless, I could not celebrate enthusiastically that year because I had to work the next day. I had returned for a semester at Glendale and had a couple of part time jobs at the time. I worked at the convenience store Pantry Mart and at the Silver Dollar, dollar store in the Norfolk Mall.

So, after a night of sober Christmas reflection, I went to work at the Silver Dollar the following day, Boxing Day. Remember, these were the days when the Norfolk Mall was a full, walk through, multiple-unit experience. Its halls were decorated, and seasonal music was still being played throughout. When I arrived, I was met with a long queue of day-after-Christmas shoppers waiting outside the locked caged store door. Nearly every storefront had a line-up. It was a pleasant shift wishing people a happy Christmas, and explaining that no, there

were no Boxing Day discounts at the dollar store where all product was already priced at \$1 or less. And that is how I spent the first day of the milestone of being a 19-year-old. But do not fret, I had a rousing night celebrating with friends ushering in the new year; this time not feeling that well for my Jan. 1 morning shift at Pantry Mart.

Jason Pankratz

A Small Christmas Miracle Gift

My father, Jim Spencer, had passed away three months earlier, in September of 2013. On Christmas Eve that year, my family gathered at my home, feeling his absence more deeply than ever. We missed him terribly. My mom tried to comfort us by saying, “Dad is around us. He visited me today,” and she went on to describe how a bright red cardinal had landed on her back step and looked into the house.

Then, at 9 p.m. on Christmas Eve, I received an unexpected message from a woman I knew. She told me that her sister-in-law now lived in our old house on Mabee’s Side Road—the home where my family had lived many years ago. They had found a Mason’s ring in the gully behind the house, with the date April 1975 engraved inside. My mother immediately recognized the significance: April 1975 was the year my father had served as Worshipful Master for the Masons, and he had lost that ring about 20 years earlier in the yard of that house.

This angel of a woman explained that despite the mud and snow, the ring had been sitting there, almost miraculously, right on top—waiting to be found. That Christmas, we didn’t have my father’s physical presence, but receiving his ring felt like a small Christmas miracle, a reminder that he was still with us. I still wear that ring whenever I need my dad and the strong, calm leadership he carried with him.

Kelly Spencer

A Bottle of Beer

When I was a kid, in the early 1970’s, we would hang our homemade felt stockings on the mantle, hoping for a visit from Santa; Mom, Dad, my brother, our dog, and I. We would get such a kick that my mom received something nice, like perfume or bath salts. Dave and I received a few necessities like socks and maybe a chocolate bar, and our dog would get a treat. And every single year, poor dad would only get a bottle of beer and an orange!

CJ Frederick

CONTINUED TO PAGE B2

Christmas memories and tales from Tillsonburg residents

CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1



Langrell Family Farm Christmas

Christmas has always been about family and Christmas pudding for me. As a child, I remember my mom's Christmas pudding being the only thing served at Christmas time. My grandma showed my mom how to make it, and for years, we had steamed cakes made with potatoes and carrots. The brown sugar sauce always complemented the moist, warm cake.

A few years ago, my mom showed me how to make this special pudding. Now, when we all gather on Boxing Day, I make the pudding that holds so many special memories for me.

Carol Nant

A Tillsonburg Christmas

Where Portuguese heart meets Canadian home

Life's journey brought us to the peaceful shores of Lake Lisgar in Tillsonburg, where my husband and I celebrate Christmas in a gentle blend of our Portuguese heritage and our Canadian home.

Because our children and grandchildren live outside town, our family gathers on Dec. 23rd—our own special Christmas Eve. The little ones love knowing that Santa always makes his first stop in Tillsonburg.

Our dining table glows with a 50-year-old red embroidered cloth used only for Christmas, fine china, festive décor, and joyful Canadian carols playing in the background.

CONTINUED TO PAGE B3

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Christmas memories and tales from Tillsonburg residents

CONTINUED FROM PAGE B2

Nearby, the Christmas tree shimmers, and a century-old nativity set connects us with generations before us.

At the heart of the meal is Bacalhau—salted cod prepared the traditional way, baked with olive oil, bay leaf, garlic, and slow-roasted potatoes and vegetables. We share it with Portuguese corn bread, wheat bread, and a good Portuguese wine.

Dessert is a celebration of its own. All the treats are homemade: chocolate mousse, condensed-milk mousse, Aletria, King Cake, Azores Fruit Cake, and Orange Roll—delicacies that delight both children and adults. Later in the night, we enjoy Bola, a hearty meat bread, with a small glass of Port or Canadian eggnog.

We leave the table set overnight so Jesus, the angels, and Santa can enjoy a sweet treat.

On the quiet morning of Dec. 24, we gather to open the gifts Santa left under the tree. With music playing and children's laughter filling the house, we snack on tangerines, pineapple, nuts, and dried fruit, and sip café au lait or simple Canadian coffee.

In the evening, some of us continue a cherished Christian tradition—attending Midnight Mass, or Missa do Galo, the "Rooster Mass," named after the legend of a rooster crowing at the moment of Christ's birth.

This simple, tender celebration is the heart of our family—where Portuguese roots meet the warmth of our life in Tillsonburg, and where love, memory, and togetherness shine brighter with every passing year.

Virginia Sousa

Each Christmas Held the Same Love

My childhood home, where my family was whole, held my most memorable memories. My brother and I would stay up as late as always to catch San-

ta. In the morning, we'd rush down the stairs to the dining room table to find our individual plastic canvas Christmas trees, each marked for the days of December. Behind the 25th door, there was always a folded note that sent us on a quest to discover our presents.

Our tree was filled with homemade ornaments and twinkling lights that sang. I would view the snow world my mom set up every year; skiing kids down a fluffy felt hill, magnetic ice skaters and dancers with music in the background and I would look into lit ceramic homes. Our stockings were always the first to open, and they ended with fresh mandarin oranges. We would visit with my nana, where we shared more gifts and sang Christmas carols from red-and-green cushioned music books. At the end of the night, supper was served on Chelsea China, and chocolate Santas were an all-night treat. We would make the day last by staying up late and watching a Christmas movie.

Megan McKiernan

Christmas in July

Walter Slingerland described how thrilled he and his family were to visit the house in Cleveland that was used as the setting for their favourite Christmas movie during a summer vacation.

The classic holiday film "A Christmas Story" (1983) takes place over the last few days before Christmas in the early 1940s. The producers were looking for a house before they began shooting the film.

"They wanted that neighborhood," Slingerland said. "They went to a restaurant nearby when they were looking for a house. One of them commented that they wished they could have that house and it just happened that the owner was there, and they rented it to shoot the movie."

The vintage fire truck and the family car that was used in the movie were also on site. Slingerland

added that the house has been completely restored to look the way it did in scenes from the movie.

"We stood in the same spot where the father stood in the movie, looking in the window with the (iconic) leg lamp," he said. "It's our favorite Christmas movie and we watch it every year, but it has to at least be December!"

Silent Night

As an 11-year-old, I can remember celebrating our first Christmas in Australia in an immigration camp. It was very, very hot and not at all what we were used to in Holland.

On Christmas Eve the people from the camp, all different nationalities, sang carols by candlelight, everyone in their own language, except we all sang Silent Night all together. I still get goosebumps thinking of how beautiful it sounded.

Miriam Schernekau

The Naughty Christmas Pony

Our dairy farm had cows tied into stanchions. Our children helped milk those cows every morning. One memorable year, father bought a pony at the Norwich sales barn. He got it for the cost of the saddle and his name was Stormy. On Christmas Eve, father tied Stormy into one of the stanchions. What a surprise for daughter Lisa. That animal was trouble number one! Lisa still has a scar on her leg.

Mignonne Trepanier

Papa's Stuffing

My dad used to make the stuffing for the turkey every year. When my daughter was just a baby she started "helping". I have pics of her sitting on the kitchen table helping Papa break up bread for the stuffing; one of my greatest memories.

Cheryl Bailey

CONTINUED TO PAGE B4

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& HAPPY NEW YEAR

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Christmas memories and tales from Tillsonburg residents

CONTINUED FROM PAGE B3

The End of an Era

When we were little, the whole Anderson clan would get together at Aunt Marion's house, all the aunts and uncles and cousins. She had a finished basement with a big fireplace and a little kitchen and shag carpeting.

My grandmother, Mary Anderson, was known for her sausage rolls. Her pastry was flaky, delicious, golden, just beautiful. Adults were served first, then the kids. After that, Santa would come. Each and every one of us would get gifts. Grandma Anderson

would make flannelette pajamas and nightgowns (with lace on the cuffs) for every child, no matter how old. I received a flannelette nightgown every year right up until I was engaged. When Grandma Anderson passed, I realized that was an era that is gone.

I'll be remembered for my scrapbooks and my cards. I love doing it. There's something special in knowing that someone went to the mailbox and sent a card to you, and now you're holding it in your hands. It's still part of my thing that I do for Christmas.

Nancy Pühr



CHRISSY'S CATERING



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Remember recycling during the holidays

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Christmas is a time of joy, and the excitement on children's faces with opening new gifts, but, with it comes waste of many different types.

Most obvious is gift wrap and excess packaging. Wrapping paper can be recycled, but foil-based wrapping paper should be put in the garbage. All ribbons and bows should be removed. Consider saving these and reusing next year.

In Tillsonburg, electronics can be recycled through the bin across from the Station Arts Centre. All sorts of electronic items can be recycled, including televisions, computer monitors, electronic toys and stereos. LED Christmas lights can be recycled, as can light fixtures, but light bulbs cannot be. Items can be left on a table beside the bin, or there are volunteers on site on Saturday mornings.

Proceeds from the recycling are split between the Station Arts Centre and programs supported by St. Paul's United Church, including the Helping Hand Food Bank, Upper Deck Youth Centre and Community Kitchen.

Batteries can be recycled at several locations in Tillsonburg. Batteries should not be disposed of in household waste. Batteries can also be recycled at the hazard waste depot at the Oxford County Waste Management Facility.

Bulky Styrofoam, which is often used in packaging electronics and gifts, can be recycled for free at the Tillsonburg Transfer Station.

Waste collection date planned for Christmas day, such as in the Township of Norwich, will be rescheduled for Saturday, Dec. 27.



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(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Floyd Marshall, left, and Paul Belcher are two of the volunteers accepting electronics for recycling in town. The bin for recycling is across from the Station Arts Centre.



*Season's greetings, and
best wishes for the New Year.*

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LETTERS TO Santa



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Dear Santa,
How are you? I am excited for Christmas, and my wish is for people to be nice. I want a Snakes and Ladder game. I have been good. I helped my mom with the dishes. I will leave you milk and cookies.
Sincerely,
Madelyn

Dear Santa,
Santa, I hope you can get me a Stitch stuffy, art supplies, and maybe a new tablet. I hope I am on the Nice List. I am kind, too. I help my mom do the dishes. I like you too, Santa.
From,
Lily H.

Dear Santa,
A good choice I have made is to listen to my mom and dad. I wish that you get lots of milk. I wish that all the kids in the world have presents. A question I have for you, Santa, is how do you eat all the cookies? What I really want for Christmas is Lego. I hope you have a good Christmas.
From,
Kaylob

Dear Santa,
To be on the nice list, I have learned to do things by myself. I would like farm toys, stem toys, a toy phone, and outside balls. I have also listened to my teacher to be on the nice list. What do you feed the reindeer? I will leave cookies and milk for you. I cooperate with my buddy when we do any buddies. I wish that my siblings have a great Christmas.
Thanks,
Nolan

Dear Santa,
My name is Carter. Some things I would want for Christmas are a toy phone, a shape sorter, and rainbow stacking rings. I'm also

learning to do lots of things on my own. I have an older brother and a younger sister. I will leave cookies out with milk and put carrots out for the reindeer.

From,
Carter

Dear Santa,
How are you doing? Can I please have action figures? I hope you are having a great day. I hope you aren't tired from all the work you do. I hope for some Lego, Minecraft figures, and Roblox figures. I have been good because I helped my mom with the dishes and tried to be nice to my brother.

From,
Mason

Dear Santa,
My name is Aubrey, and I would really like to get Stitch clothes for Christmas because I got them last year. I really liked them! And lastly, I would really like to have some Bluey makeup because I have been wishing for it forever. Santa, how do you get around so fast? How does your reindeer fly, Santa? I want everyone to get presents this year! Be safe! Sincerely,
Aubrey

Dear Santa,
I've been really good this year. I think I deserve to be on the nice list because I helped my neighbor out, and I gave her food from my garden. Can I please get a music kit without a recorder? And I am also wondering how old you are and how many reindeer do you have? Is it boring waiting around for Christmas to come? I hope you've been having a good time in the North Pole, and I want to wish you a Merry Christmas.
From,
Lily W.

Dear Santa,
One good choice I have made to be on the nice list is that I helped my friend at recess. This is what I want for Christmas: a VR set to play I am a Cat. The second thing I would like is Minecraft. I have a question. How does the sleigh move so fast? I will leave out milk and cookies.
From,
Kalee

Dear Santa,
Hi Santa. My name is Luna. Thank you for giving me lots of presents. I should be on the Nice List because I help people. Now, I want a Labubu because my friend has one and I don't. Next, I would like a pair of slippers because I can't find mine. I have a question. How old are you?

From,
Luna

Dear Santa,

Hi, I am Ronan. I want a Lego set with glow in dark wheels and crab arms, and it is a truck. I am on the good list because I didn't push and I talk kindly to everyone. I really hope for the Lego truck, and to spend time with my family over the break. Good luck with the presents!

From,
Ronan

Dear Santa,

Do you remember me from the mall? I miss you very much. I don't believe in fake Santas, and I love all the presents. I believe in all real Santas. I am on the nice list because I gave Dad one of my necklaces, I do my work fast and do well on Lexia. I also stay focused in class and raise my hand and not shout. I want a 3D solar system puzzle that has all the planets and dwarf planets as well as the moons. I also want a smart piano that is big and I want to have a smart guitar. I hope you are going to give me the best smart piano.

Thank you for putting me on the nice list and reading my letter.
From,
Damien

Dear Santa,

My name is Mia. I am on the nice list because I clean my room. I am also kind to my friends and my animals. This year I want candy and slime. My favourite candy is Starburst gummies and the regular ones. I hope I have a good Christmas this year. How old are you, Santa? Thank you for bringing my elf. I hope they come before December 15th.

From,
Mia

Dear Santa,

I am Grego. I helped my brother this year by helping him build something. I ask my mom what time it is and then I hug her every day. This makes her happy! I want a Star Wars action figure and a stuffed animal. I wish for peace in the world! How old are you, Santa? I think you are 100 years old because you are very, very old! Have fun with your reindeer at the beach in Florida after Christmas!

From,
Grego

Letter 15

Dear Santa,
Hi, I'm Ruby and I give warm hugs like Olaf. I am seven years old. I have a question for you. How old are you? I have another question for you. How do you get around without your star, and can you actually make an axolotl? I've been doing my math and am really nice. I would like a toy motorcycle that has a real engine and that you can ride. Bye, Santa. I hope you have a good Christmas.
From,
Ruby

Letter 16

Dear Santa,
I am Devyn. I have a dog and 2 cats. For Christmas I would like slime and some charms. I've worked hard on my reading. I've learned how to make a fox out of paper, and I get a squishy from the prize box when I finish a level. My teacher is the best. My elf is the best and thank you for giving kids elves. My elf got into my backpack, and it wanted to come with me to school to see all my friends. I will leave out milk and cookies for you when you come. Goodbye, Santa. I hope you have a great night with the elves.
From,
Devyn

Mrs. Vince's Grade 2 class

Dear Santa,
My name is Nova. I am 7 years old and I live in Tillsonburg. This

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year I have been good and kind. One extra nice thing I did this year was I went to the movie theatre and sat quiet. This year I would be really happy if you could bring me dolls and a painting set. You are the best because you bring me lots of presents! Merry Christmas.

Love from,
Nova

Dear Santa,
My name is Rowan and I am seven years old. I live in Tillsonburg. This year I have been bad, but if you don't give me presents I will be sad. One extra nice thing I did this year was I helped my mom. This year I would be really happy if you could bring me a Nerf gun kit. You are the best!!!! Merry Christmas and thank you for gifts.

From,
Rowan

Dear Santa,
My name is William. I am 7 years old and I live in Tillsonburg. This year I have been really good. One extra nice thing I did this year was I help my mom wash dishes and do laundry sometimes.

This year I would be really happy if you could bring me a hover board and a good powerful Nerf gun. Also, Santa can you wake me up at night so I can go to the North Pole? Merry Christmas!

Love,
William

Dear Santa,
My name is Paisley. I am 7 years old. I live in Tillsonburg. This year I have been trying my best. One extra nice thing I did this year was washing the dishes at church.

This year I would be really happy if you could bring me a Taba squishy cat please and Pokémon cards.

We have a small tree so don't put too many toys please.

Merry Christmas!

Love,
Paisley

Dear Santa,
My name is Scarlett and I am 6 years old. I live in Tillsonburg.

This year I have been good and kind. One extra nice thing I did this year was I help my mom with food and help feed my pet dog Sheila.

This year I would be really happy if you could bring me a Make-up kit, a Labubu doll, and nail kit

I hope to see you at Walmart. I want to sit on your lap!

Merry Christmas!

Love, Scarlett

Dear Santa,
My name is Emma and I am 7 years old. This year I have been good and kind.

One extra nice thing I did this year was I played with my sister. I would be really happy if you could bring me a blue watch.

You are the best Santa! I liked to see you at Walmart to take a picture on your lap.

Merry Christmas and I wish you happy holidays!

From, Emma

Dear Santa,
My name is Lilah. I am 7 years old and I live in Tillsonburg. This year I have been good. One extra nice thing I did this year was going to the Santa Claus parade and I was in it as a shepherd. I was saying "Merry Christmas Everyone Jesus loves you!" This year I would be really happy if you could

bring me a talking Stitch. You are special!! Merry Christmas Santa Claus. With love, Lilah

Dear Santa,
My name is Lilly. I am seven years old and I live in Tillsonburg. This year I have been trying my best. One extra nice thing I did this year was I help in my church. This year I would be really happy if you could bring me a Goop Tube fidget. You are the best. I love you Santa. You are the best Santa ever! Merry Christmas Santa.

Love, Lilly

Dear Santa,
My name is Dwij and I am 7 years old. I live in Tillsonburg in a building. This year I have been hardworking and caring. One extra nice thing I did this year was being kind to all friends. I would be really happy if you could bring me a watch, a good type Nerf gun. Can you please give me presents? Please don't put me on the naughty list. Have a good delivery.

Merry Christmas! Thank you for gifts.

Love, Dwij

Dear Santa,
My name is Theo and I am 7 years old. I live in Tillsonburg. This year I have been good. One extra nice thing I did this year was kiss my mom. This year I would be really happy if you could bring me a mini gun with lots of ammo. I love you Santa because you give me a lot of presents!

Merry Christmas!

From,

Theo

Dear Santa,
My name is Luke T. I am 7 years old and I live in Tillsonburg. This year I have been good. One extra nice thing I did this year was feeding my pet cat Miles. I would be really happy if you could bring me Games like Super Mario Galaxy 1 & 2 And New trains, one named after my sister Millie and Ulfstead Castle and thick marker. You are so kind because you give presents to everyone. That's good!

Merry Christmas

From, Luke

Dear Santa,
My name is Bryce. I am 7 years old. I live in Tillsonburg. This year I have been good. I was being nice by helping a person when they were sad. I would be really happy if you could bring me PS5, Un-speakable Mystery Box and Challenge Tank. I miss you and I really want to see you to say hi.

Merry Christmas!

From,

Bryce

Dear Santa,
My name is Chloe Ann. I am 7 years old and I live in Tillsonburg. This year I have been working hard. One extra nice thing I did was helping a friend from a bully. This year I would be really happy if you could bring a real life baby doll, Stitch stuffy and School play set.

I hope you are happy because of the Christmas spirit.

Merry Christmas!

Santa love

From,

Chloe



ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Mrs. Mitchell's Grade 2 Class

Dear Santa,
How are you? How do the elves fly? How is everyone doing? I hope you have a great Christmas! Have a happy holiday. I want cookies Makery! And Mini verse!

From Brooke XOXO

Hi Santa Claus,
Even though I like your sleigh haven't seen it. I love Christmas! May I please have a drone and a pupye. I got a lexia certificater I went to a hockey game on Sunday.

Love Reid

Dear Santa,
How are you? How are your elves too? I bet the elves are tired from working hard every year. How are the reindeer? And how is chippy? Can I have a PS5 for Christmas and a red truck?

From James

Dear Santa
How are you? Please bring my Mom and Dad something special. How is Mrs. Claus? We are going on a trip in December. My reindeer got me nerds for my birthday. Thankyou for getting me for Christmas my car garage. Thank you for the sticky slugs last Christmas.

Love Gordon

Dear Santa,
How do you like your cookies? How are you? I really like my presents from last year. I would like owl books for Christmas.

From Rachel

Dear Santa
How are the elves doing? How is Mrs. Claus? Thank you for the Gabycat lego and the doll house, can I please have a lot of Avengers.

Love Camilla

Dear Santa,
How are you? How do the elves fly? Thankyou for the pokemon toy, I love it! Thankyou for the books, I love it them, too! Can I have press start books for Christmas please? Can I have dogman books for Christmas please?

Love Oliver

Dear Santa,
Do the reindeer really have powers? Why do you wear red and white? I like cookies. Can the elves eat? I have some presents please?

From Benny

Dear Santa

How are you doing? How do you get to every house in 1 night? I like the remote control car I got last year. I like the dominos I got last year too! Can I have a hoverboard and a newer remote car?

Your friend Logan

Dear Santa

How many cookies do you eat on Christmas? How do you know everyone's address? I loved my nail kit and my jibits. For this Christmas can I have golden and rainbow pokemom cards? And a stitch that can talk and move.

Love Hayden J.

Dear Santa

How are you? How do you like your cookies? This Christmas I would like a sting bracelet kit. Fidgeit girl. And a notebook. I do dance and I love it!

Love Vera

Dear Santa

How are you? How old are you? I would like a remote control fish please. I would like a fishing show for Mrs. Mitchell HEHE

Love Easton

Dear Santa

How are you? Why is your name Santa? How do you know everyone's address? How does randeer fly? Can I have a remote control heli-copter and a remote control car. I love dto drive my bike.

From Ryan

Mrs. Raake and Mrs. Maters Kindergarten Class

Dear Santa

How are you? Is Mrs. Claus baking you any cookies? I have been a very good boy this year. For Christmas I would love it if you could bring me a phone, a tablet, a stanley cup a labubu and a black phone case. Thank you so much Santal! I will leave some cookies and milk for you.

Love Hunter

MERRY
Christmas
 AND HAPPY NEW YEAR



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ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Christmas.
From Harrison

Dear Santa

Hi! I am Addie. How are you doing this year? I am 8 years old. Are you excited for Christmas? I am. For Christmas I want a standing duck gribit, a candy cane laneige and a hole box of have a seat labibus. Please and thank you. Hope you have a good Christmas.

From Addison

Dear Santa

My name is Emerson. How are the elves doing? I hope it snows. I will leave you cookies and milk. I will leave the reindeer carrots. Can I please have a taba squishe kit tiny. My favourite part of Christmas is the tree and the lights to. I hope you have a good Christmas.

From Emerson

Dear Santa

I want to know how my old elves are doing?

How are the reindeer doing? How are my old Elf on the Shelf? I am going to send you the book back now. I am going to tell you what I want. I want a phone case and a stitch stuffy and a stitch costume for Milow. Good bye From Aliran

Dear Santa

I hope you have a great time at the north pole. I hope you bring some presents and I hope I see you on the December 24. I want a car and mllior toy and wolf plushy and stuffed animal and hippopotamus stuffed.

From Michael

Dear Santa

Hows Blitzen the reindeer? For Christmas I want a reindeer. (IM ZipporRAH and I am 8 years old) and my favourite colour is red like your suit. I will leave Blitzen a treat.

From Zipporah

Dear Santa

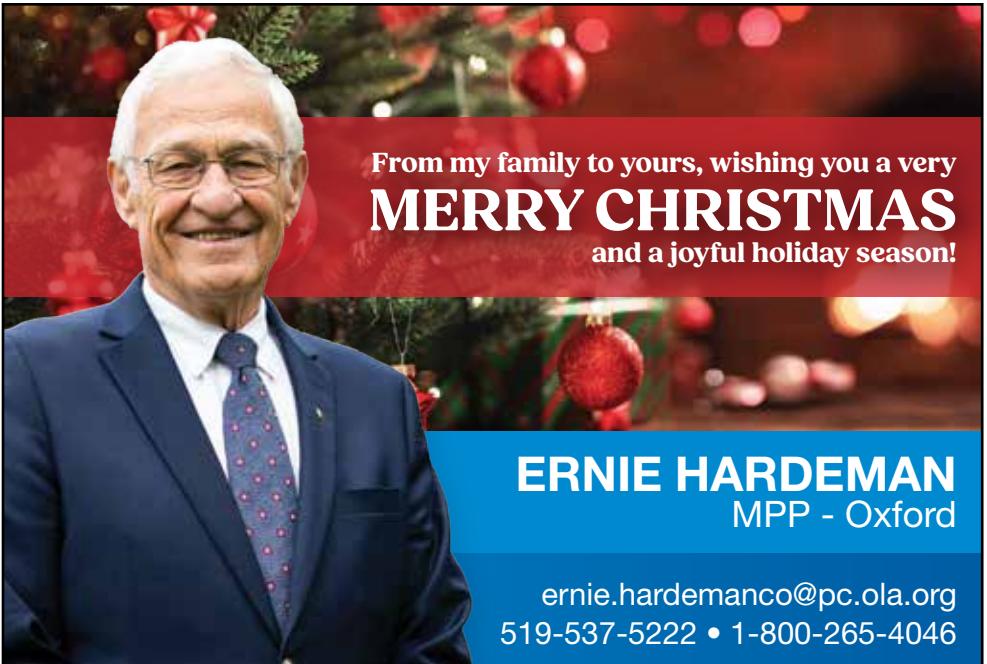
I hope you are having fun. Hows Mrs.Claus Thankyou for getting a elf. And for Christmas I want lots of toys and a bene bay char. I have a question does mrs. claus make the candy that goes in the stockings I will leave yo some trechs. I hope you still like choklet cookies and milk. I will see you soon. Have a good Christmas

From Blake



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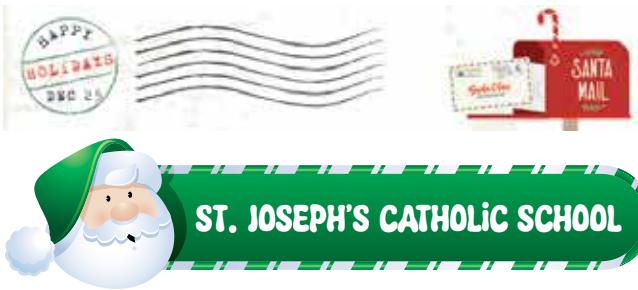


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ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Dear Santa

How are you doing? I hope the reindeers are good this year. Can I please get a laheige lip gloss? A pink jar and a mirror that lights up please and thank you and skincare please. How is Mrs. Claus? I love Christmas.

From Hayden C.

Dear Santa

How are you guys doing? I hope your doing great! Please bring baby elves to me. I want airpods, plushies, stickers, summer Fridays lip balm, laneige lip balm/lip gloss, and a lava lamp. I will save you lots of cookies. Merry Christmas

From Kristine

Dear Santa

My name is Gwen I am 8 years old. For Christmas I would really want magic 8 ball, kinetic sand unicorn Academy and my little pony Sun Moon Queen ponys and a Minecraft Bee. How is Mrs. Claus.

From Gwen

Dear Santa

How are the elves? Probably tired. I want Ric tarantula and pluse pluse passle pieves and a lava lamp. That is all I want for Christmas. Keep warm Santa.

From Patrick

Dear Santa

How are you doing? How are your reindeers? The biggest thing I want for Christmas is an electric tooth brush. The second thing is a hockey back up stick. The last thing is a mystery stick mini! I hope you have a good Christmas

From Connor

Dear Santa

My name is Javier and I am 8 years old. My best friend's name is Monte our favourite thing to do together is spending time. I am in grade 3 and during Christmas break I want to eat bananas. I can't wait for you to come and visit me on Christmas Eve! I will spend time with my family. My favourite reindeer is Rudolph. And I'll leave



him some carrots as a treat. I hope you have a safe ride from the North Pole and I'll see you soon, Santa!

From Javi

Dear Santa

How old are you? I think you are 200 years old. I will give you cookies and milk for Christmas. May I have Brain rot lego and Spimeasovi please!

From Matte

Dear Santa

How was your day? Also Santa Please don't give me coal. Can I have something for Christmas which is a plushy. It is a game called roblox but I am just too excited to have the plushy! Santa I might have to wait for Christmas. Also Christmas is almost here so I have to be so ready for Christmas out. Hope it snows in Tillsonburg. Sometimes snows Bye Santa see you next Christmas.

From Mia

Dear Santa

My name is Kariston. I am 8 years old Please don't give us coal. How old are the reindeers? How is Mrs. Claus doing? I am really happy can I please have a rainbow elf for Christmas please for my present you are really nice and can have a spinning chair, can I please have it too thanks.

From Kariston

Ms. Poredos Grade 2 Class

Dear Santa

My name is Isabella. I am 7 years old. I am in grade 2. I love cats they are my favourite animal. I was very good this year. My favourite way to help other people is by standing up for them. This year I am asking for a sketch book (and colour pens), a furby (Christmas small one), and a arctic fox plushie. I have three questions. What do you feed the reindeer? How do you deliver over one billion gifts in one night?

From Isabella

Dear Santa

My name is Cleo. I am 7 years old. I am in grade Tow. I like swimming. I was good this year. My favourite way to help others is helping my mom cook. I am asking for a Haley plushy. Robuxe and a borble dream house. How is Rodolf? How are the elves?

From Cleo



Dear Santa

My name is Cohen I am seven years old I am in grade two. I like soccer. I was good this year. My favourite way to help others is helping people up. this year I am asking for a race track, cars, and soccer nets. Santa what are the reindeers names? Santa what does the north pole feel like?

From Cohen

Dear Santa

My name is John. I am seven years old. I am good this year. My favourite way to help others is washing the dishes. This year I am asking for logo. How do you deliver presents so many home how do you travel to the north pole all the way to here?

From John

Dear Santa

My name is Ayden. I am 7 years old 2025 I am in grade 2. I like hockey. I was good this year. My favourite way to help there is by cleaning up. This year I am asking for remote cohtfoe boat. Nerf gun, pokemon. What is all of your reindeer called? Is Rudolf ok?

From Ayden

Dear Santa

My name is Norah. I seven years old. I am in grade two. I like hockey. I was so nice this year my favourite way to help others is helping mom and dad. This year I am asking for a hockey Barbie doll, a pixixe and a toy ball. How is Rudolf? How is Mrs. Claus?

From Norah

Dear Santa

My name is Chantel. I am 7 years old. I am in grade two. I like to dance and sing. I was good this year. I am making my bed. This year I am asking for a new ipad case. A phone, and new barebies. Is it cold in the north pole? Is Mrs. Claus nice?

From Chantel

Dear Santa

My name is Kenzie. I am 7 years old. I am in Grade two. I lik swimmin lessone. I was good this year. My favourite way to help others is hugging. This year I am asking for clothes. Barbie clothes, and laboo boo. Is snowflake going to come back? How is Rudolf and the reindeers?

From Kenzie

happy holidays

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Ms. Phillips Grade 3 Class

Dear Santa
Hi Santa how are you? And your elves? I have been kinda good just a little fight's with my sister because she is kinda annoying. I hope to see you soon at Christmas.
From Owen

Dear Santa
This year for Christmas I Want a furby and music box and a magic potion and a cook book. I hope you are doing well.
From Zoe

Dear Santa
Hi Santa my name is Mia and I been very kind I was wondering if you can give me a puppy dog because they are so cute and a vanity too please. Bye Santa have a good day.
From Mia

Dear Santa
I have been very. Good this year so can I have a full case of mr. beast labs worms and can I also have a big sniffer from Minecraft.
From TJ

Dear Santa
Hello my name is Brandy are you happy that it is close to Christmas I am really happy that you are glad to see me soon are you because I am also, I am kind and I love you are one of my fafourite holiday people in the world to Santa
From Brandy

Dear Santa
Hi my name is Taylor First I want ugg but I want them to be the ultra mines but in tane. Next I want scinckrare from glowresupe next I want a stuft dear next I want a wite stanley next I want a callher for my dog oreo I want it to be red and white next I want a phone but the apple 17 pro and a appl wache but I want my phone to be grae and 8 dolrs from by appcards
From Taylor

Dear Santa
Hi Santa my name is Nicholas and I been a good kid and I relly wont the hamster Bizy and 15 puppies and 15 cats and is buneys and a brother 12 vibeyo games and my own T.V and my own game conseil.
From Nicholas

Dear Santa
How are you doing Santa My name is London I have been a really good girl this year. I have a younger brother first thing I want for Christmas is a 3D pen second thing I wont is a summer Fridays it is lip gloss and blush and perfume. Three things I want is a iphone 16 and bubble skincare.
From London

Dear Santa
My name is Ethan and I been good this year and here is my Christmas wish list. 1. VR headset 2. 3-D printer 3. Robot 4. Lego Minecraft 5. Lego airplane 6. PS Fiv 7. Romote control car 8. Computer 9. Lego 10. A big brother 11. Roblox gift card 12. Joey 13. Elf on the shelf 14. Scooter
From Ethan

Dear Santa
How are you doing today? Hi My name is Emma I have been a really good girl and to have a good Christmas is I want some things 3D printer stanley that is pink. Summer Friday's which is lip gloss and blush and perfume. Iphone 16 sharck squishamello
From Emma

Ms. Carroll Grade 1 Class

Dear Santa
My name is Kinley. I am 6 years old. I like crafts. One thing I want is paint Thank you for all you do!
From Kinley

Dear Santa
My name is jaymee I am 6 years old. I like colouring. One thing I want for Christmas is a LOL doll. Thank you for all you do!
From Jaymee

Dear Santa
My name is Torie I am 6 years old I like crafts. One thing I want for Christmas is a makeup stand with Makeup
Thank you for all you do!
From Torie

Dear Santa
My name is Xander. I am 6 years old I like baseball. For Christmas I want a new remote controller. Thank you
From Xander

Dear Santa
My name is John, I am 6 years old I like Dines. For Christmas I want a semi truck. Thank you for all you do!
From John

Dear Santa
My name is Indy. I am 6 years old. I like baby dolls. For Christmas I want 2 unicorn. Surprise Thank you for all you do.
From Indy

Dear Santa
My name is Shawn. I am 6 years old. I like soccer. One thing I want for Christmas is a remote control car. Thankyou for all you do!
From Shawn

Dear Santa
My name is Rohwyn. I am 6 years old. I like stitch games. For Christmas I want a stitch computer. Thankyou for all you do!
From Rohwyn

Dear Santa
My name is Clare. I like makeup. For Christmas I want a makeup stand. Thankyou for all you do!
From Clare

Dear Santa
My name is Payton. I am 6 years old. I like to play doctors. One thing I want is for Christmas is a doctors bag. Thankyou for all you do!
From Payton

Dear Santa
My name is Connor. I am 6 years old. I like Pokemon. One thing I want for Christmas is a nurf gun please.
From Connor



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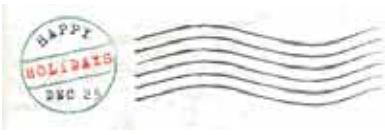


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ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Dear Santa

My name is Freddie. I am 6 years old. I like videos. One thing I want for Christmas is a Nintendo switch please.

From Freddie

Dear Santa

My name is Jack. I am 6 years old. I like pokemon video games. For Christmas I want cards please Thankyou

From Jack

Mr. Hennessey's Grade 3 Class

Dear Santa

How are you and Mrs. Clause? How are the reindeer? Has Sparkle been good? Do you celebrate other holidays? Are the reindeer almost ready to fly? I'm so excited for Christmas! Thankyou for bringing me and Audrey a elf pet! We are so happy with Rory!

This year for Christmas I would like slime, a miny Angel stanley topers, a 3-D drawing pen and a clear phone case with stitch and Angle on it. I also would like a stitch blanket, grinch slippers, bath boms, Christmas ballons, giant candy, light blue lululemon fanny pack, slipper uggs, appel watch, leather jacket and a taba squishy making kit. How many presents do you deliver? I also want paint pens.

Merry Christmas

From Hattie

Dear Santa

How are you doing? How are my Elfs are they being cheeky? How is Mrs. Clause? How are the reindeer? How many cookies do you eat in a year? What I want this year for Christmas is a nail kit that Evelyn, canopy, make-up, giant jelly cat clear phone case, jewelry, cat halter and leash, lululemon pink palm puff hoodie, blue, wighte fox hoodie wight stanley, light pink, blanket, grinch slipper, bath boms, balloons, giant candy, 3-D pen, uggs, Apple watch, slime, leather jacket and a taba squishy kit and paint pens. Merry Christmas

From Andie

Dear Santa

I am so excited for Christmas how are you and Mrs. Clause doing? Whats your favourite part of Christmas? I want the Nintendo switch? Edition of Super Mario Imborle and lego mario sets. How many elves do you have? How are the Elves doing? How are the reindeer? How are the presents made?

From Cody

Dear Santa

I want a Canadian Care Bear for Christmas. How do you deliver presents in 1 night? How are the reindeers? I want a jelly cat plushy. How are presents made? I want my dog to get better. I want a giant bear for Christmas.

From Mia

Dear Santa

How are the reindeer? How is my elf? How old are you? Do you get any presents? How cheeky are you? For Christmas I would like summer Fridays birthday cake, pink Stanley cup, a pink blanket, Lululemons! Can I also have a pink nike

t-shirt and a purple one too! New uggs that are those slippers. A new lunch pale that's Adidas please. New spikes that brite pink and orange a clade bead bracelet kit, a pink palm puff hoodie white or blue, a white FC hoodie that's white please. I would also like a giant Jelly cat the brown bunny please. Can I also have a bunch of slime a fake nail kit with nail glue, 3-D drawing pen, Merry Christmas Santa

From Maielle

Dear Santa

How are the elves doing? Are they bea having for Christmas can I please have a play station ples and mosoqunes and play station portal and pupee or a kittin and a because my old cat died or I think and my dog has no dogs to play with him and Jurassic World set.

From Marner

Dear Santa

I am so excited for Christmas! What are you doing today? How do you go to all of the homes in one night? I like you as santa because you give us presents and you celebrate Jesus birthday! I like presents because they're new to experience and that you give them to me. What I would like for Christmas is a new stuffy that looks like me, a new doll that can be an arti for jack in my doll housea surprise for me, a crucifix that stands up thankyou Santa

From Artie

Dear Santa Can I have an Elf pet? How old are you? How is Frosty? How are the reindeer? Can I have a sticht computer, pinsettestick. How are the elves behaving? How are you Santa? I love you Santa! My birthday is before Christ-

mas. How is Miss Clause? You are the Best. How much snow do you have at the North Pole? Can I have a fox stuffy? I love Christmas.

From Spence

Dear Santa

How are the elves and reindeer can I get a lego plane and lego brick, game card bat Minecraft. How are you and How are the presents can I get a VR, dirt bike and water botel a book, slime and flashlight and Iphone 15

From Luke

Dear Santa

To Santa how are your reindeer doing. How old are you Santa? Can I please have a pc? Please give my mom a jod. Can I pleas have a normal bed for Christmas? Can I please have a now elf pet for Christmas? How is clacuse and you doing? Can I please have a VR for Christmas. Cen I please have a TV please?

From

Brantley

Dear Santa

My name is Jack. I think you have seen me do some bad things, and some good things, but I think you will give me presents. I'm so excited for Christmas! I can't wait! So, here are some thing I want to have for Christmas: A collection of Jurassic world, a new winter hat, some lego, some toys, and... I think that's it. Now, here are some questions I need to ask you: How old are you? What are the elves doing right now? How-oop! I need to go now! Bye Santa!

From Jack

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Happy holidays from the staff at the Post! We'll be taking a break for the holidays and will not be publishing on December 25th. Our next issue will be published January 1st, 2026. Thank you to all our readers, contributors, and advertisers that make our paper what it is!

Christmas Kringle time!

5 Awesome flavours on special till Christmas Eve
Almond, Apple, Cherry, Pecan and Raspberry

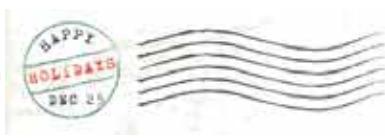
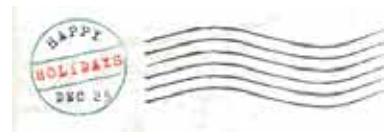
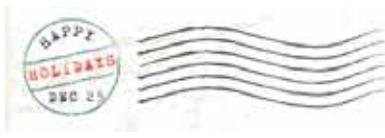
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ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Dear Santa

How are you and the elves doing? How many elves do you have at the North Pole? What I would like for Christmas is for my Mom and Dad to get back together, a computer, ringette mini sticks, Jewelry, new marks, pink pom puff hoody, doll clothes, becker rashons for my room. My favorite season is Christmas.

From Olivia

Dear North Pole

I have been good and bad. How are the reindeer and the elf's how are you and Mrs. Claus. For Christmas I want a pool part. Star Wars lego, a mister mini stick, a doggers blue hat, a bo bishet jersey, a nother goile mask, New goile pads I or ready did my santa list but this at school.

From Rowan

Dear Santa

How are the Reindeer doing. How are you doing? Are the elves being naughty? Do you know how many cookies you eat in a year? Can I have a hoverboard for Christmas? How is Mrs. Clause? Do you celebrate different holidays? At the North Pole? Can I have new lululemon baggy pants! Can you please help me to not get my teeth to hurt when I have to go to the Dentist? Can I please have an elf pet?

From Lillian

Dear Santa
I like lego skeletons. I want a blue hat. I like candy canes. I am excited for Christmas!

From Link

Mrs. Donais Grade 1 Class

Dear Santa

Hi my name is stella, I am six years old my favourite food is pasta Mrs. Clous? How is Rudolph? Christmas tree up. I will bake cookie for you.

For Christmas I would like magnetic blocks.

From Stella

Dear Santa

Hi my name is Hannah I have a Dog do you like your elfs? My pars opin thaere gifis and thar sow Happy for crismis I wont slime.

From Hanna

Dear Santa

Hi my name is Elijah. I am 6 years old. My favourite food is spaghetti. What is rudolphs names do you like cookies? For Christmas I would like lego

From Elijah

Dear Santa

Hi my name is Emily I am 6 years old and my birthday is October 27, How are the elves for Christmas I dress in matching pajamas for Christmas I would like a jagini and clicdes

From Emily

Dear Santa

Hi my name is Matthew I am 6 years old. I

love hockey. I have a baby brother named Benjamin. I love Christmas. I also like baseball and soccer. My best friend is Archer. How is Rodolph? How are you? How is Mrs. Claus? How are the elves? Are you ready for Christmas? It is by baby brother's first Christmas. I am so excited for Christmas. I am so excited for you to come! For Christmas I would like to a robot dog a lego walle a goalie mini stick equipment and a Minecraft lego set.

From Matthew

Dear Santa

Hi my name is Barret. I am 6 years old. I like fries. How is it going at the northpole? How old are you? I am excited for Christmas. I would like a truck and lego.

From Barret

Dear Santa

Hi my name is Archer. And my favourite sport is baseball. My favourite reshcent is mick donls and my birthday is joon 4. How do your ron deer fly? How is roodof doing. How old are you. Santa. I am going to leve out cucees that has your fas on it. And I will leve out milk out for you. For Christmas I would like a logo set that is a hlck bustr and a irmon bustr.

From Archer

Dear Santa

Hi my name is Eleanor. I am 6 years old. My favourite. Animal is a snow leopard. My Mom love me. I like you Santa. I love my Mom and Dad. How are the elves? How old are you? I will leave out milk and cookies.

From Eleanor

I am so excited to see the elves. I love you Santa. For Christmas I would like a stich stuffy.

From Eleanor

Dear Santa

Hi my name is Aamanda. My favourite colour is pink my favit food is chicken. I love my mom I also love my dad. I love paint. What is your favourite colour. Wuy you favit I will leave you some cookies aad milk for Christmas. I would like a barbie

From Aamanda

Dear Santa

Hi my name is Amelia. I like to do art. I am 6 years old. I love my sisters How is Mis claus? Do you like cookies I am excited for elf on a shelf and to have Christmas love and Christmas joy. For Christmas I would like a pink hover board and a kpop demon. Hanter stuff

From Amelia

Dear Santa

My name is rowan I am 6 years old my birthday is on July 23rd. How are you doing? How are the elves doing. I already set my Christmas tree up I want a calendar.

From Rowan

Dear Santa

Hi my name is Archer. I some times go fishing. I do watch tv. How is Mrs. Claus? Every Christmas I wear the same pajamas. I also will leave cookies and carrots. For Christmas I want like a dinosor bitsec.

From Archer



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ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Dear Santa

Hi my name is Liv. I am 6 years old. I have a sister that is 11 years old. I play hockey. I love the sun in summer. How is Miss claus? How old are you? I am excited to take a picture with you at the mall. I put stocking up on Christmas. I wear matching pjs on Christmas. For Christmas I would like a 3D printed dragon a toy monkey that talks a 3D printer k pop demon hunters girls. I love you Santa
From Liv

Dear Santa

Hi my name is Jordan. I am 6 years old. I saw you at the party. Me and my dad made a Christmas tree. For Christmas I would like a police car.
From Jorden

Dear Santa

Hi my name is Laura. My birthday is on April 11th. My favourite sport is swimming I am 6 years old? How old are you. How is Mrs. Claus doing? How is Rudolph and the rest of them? I wear matching pajamas with my family. I am excited for elves to come. For Christmas I would like a make elastic kit and a phone.
From Laura

Mrs. Graham's Grade 2 Class

Dear Santa

I hope you are well! I love Christmas because we get to set up the Christmas tree. How many elves do you have? How do you make the toy so fast? For Christmas could I please have a quad Thank you Santa for the presents.
From Colt

Dear Santa

How era you I love Christmas becoes all of the byowtafall Christmas lights How many elves do you have. How many toys do you make in a year.
From Colton

Dear Santa

I hope you are well. I love Christmas because I get to spend time with my friends I wonder how mrs. claus is doing I wonder how many elves you have? Can I please have a Iphone 17 pro, a big brother and a bb gun and Ronaldo jersey.
From Landon

Dear Santa

I hope you have a merry Christmas. I love Christmas because I get to spend time with my family. How is the moose on the loose? How are the reindeer. Could I please have a peacock or a little tv. Thankyou for the presents! Have a merry Christmas
From Ali

Dear Santa

Hi Santa how have you been? I love Christmas because I get to spend time with my family. I wonder how many elves do you have? How is Mrs. Claus? For Christmas could I please have a pet fish and a Iphone 17 pro max. or a robox thank you for all the presents. Merry Christmas
From Jaxon

Dear Santa

How are you? I love Christmas because I love the snow. How are your reindeers? How is Miss Claus? For Christmas could I please have a pet alive bird or study book. Thankyou Santa for sending presents. Merry Christmas.
From Charlie

Dear Santa

How are you? I love Christmas because it is jesus's birthday. It is a Holy day. Santa how is Mrs.Claus? and how are the reindeers? For Christmas could I please hae new Nike shoes? New skipping rope ro a new phone. Thankyou Santa for the presents.
From Mariam

Dear Santa

I hope you are well. I love Christmas because we get presents. How do your reindeer fly? Why do you live at the North Pole? For Christmas could I please have 1000 robux and a notebook. Thankyou Santa Claus for the presents.
From Jillian

Dear Santa

How are you? I love Christmas because you get presents. How many reindeers do you have? How is Mrs.Claus? For Christmas can I please have a drone or the lego titanic. Thank you Santa for the presents.
Merry Christmas.

From Lennon

Dear Santa

How are you? I love Christmas because I get to spend time with my family. How many elves do you have. How many Raphaels houses do you deriver to? For Christmas could I have a small drone so it can fit in my pocit? Thank you for the presents
From Raphael



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SOUTH RIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Grade 2 - Mrs. Wright:

Dear Santa,

My name is Anna, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is a Twister so I could play with my family, and at my birthday party I could play with it. What I need most for Christmas is a fluffy sweater so that way in the winter I could be warm. A piece of clothing I would love is a Santa sweater, so when it is close to Christmas, I could be jolly. A book that I would love to read is Geronimo Stilton: I am too fond of my fur.

Love, Anna.

Dear Santa,

My name is Willow, and I am 6 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is a doll, a giant teddy bear, and a dollhouse. What I need most for Christmas is love and friends. A piece of clothing I would love is pants and a sweater. A book that I would is a Robert Munsch book and a Santa book.

Love, Willow.

Dear Santa,

My name is Silas, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is virtual reality goggles. What I need most for Christmas is a new backpack. A piece of clothing I would love is an invisible cloak. A book that I would love is all the Pokémon books in the world.

Love, Silas.

Dear Santa,

My name is Sauasrud, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is an electric Nerf gun, moon-ball, electric scooter, and water food. What I need most for Christmas is an electric scooter, water, food, and an electric Nerf gun. A piece of clothing I would love is a shirt and a sweater. A book that I would love is Dog Man.

Love, Sauasrud.

Dear Santa,

My name is Ada, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is a stuffy because they are stuffy because they are soft and sweet. What I need most for Christmas is a coat because I don't have one that is warm enough. A piece of clothing I would love is dresses because they are pretty. A book I would love to read is Geronimo Stilton because it's my favourite book.

Love Ada

Dear Santa,

My name is Hudson, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is a PS5 to play Mario Kart with my dad. What I need most for Christmas is a Chromebook so I can go on Kahoot. A piece of clothing I would love most is the Grinch t-shirt because I like the Grinch. A book I would love to read is a fishing book because I love fishing.

Love, Hudson.

Dear Santa,

My name is Gavin, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is a PlayStation so I could play the new game. What I need most for Christmas is food so I can stay alive. A piece of clothing I would love is a sweater, so that I would be warm. A book that I would love to read is Diary of a Wimpy Kid.

Love, Gavin.

Dear Santa,

My name is Marley, and I am 6 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is a brand new water bottle. What I need most for Christmas is watermelon. A piece of clothing I would love is Love Everything clothing. A book that I would love to read is I Need a Hug and Christmas books that are funny.

Love, Marley.

Dear Santa,

My name is Jasper, and I am six years old. What I would love most for Christmas is dirt bikes so that I can prac-

tice. What I need most for Christmas is water and food. A piece of clothing I would love is glow-in-the-dark PJs. A book that I would love to read is a funny book.

Love, Jasper.

Dear Santa,

My name is Max, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is a creeper toy because I think it is fun. What I need most for Christmas is iPhone 17 because I need to play Block Blast. A piece of clothing I would love is a green creeper shirt. A book that I would love to read is the 6-7 book.

Love, Max.

Dear Santa,

My name is Isaiah, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is a Nintendo game because I don't have that much. What I need most for Christmas are pants because most of mine have holes in them. A piece of clothing I would love is fuzzy PJs because I want to be comfortable. A book that I would love to read is a Dog Man book because I like them.

Love, Isaiah.

Dear Santa,

My name is Isaiah, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is a toy car that has a remote. What I need most for Christmas is a new blanket. A piece of clothing I would love is new pants. A book that I would love to read is Pig the Pug.

Love, Isaiah.

Dear Santa,

My name is Georgia, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is some more stuffies that are dogs and some leashes so that I can fake walk them. What I need most for Christmas is more cherry yogurt and a new backpack. A piece of clothing I would love is a sweater that is purple with a zipper and pockets, because I don't have very many. A book that I would love to read is a book that is real and about different kinds of animals. Love, Georgia.

Merry Christmas!

Holiday Hours

December 24th - Closed

December 25th - Closed

December 26th - Closed

December 27th - Closed

December 28th - Closed

December 29th - Open

December 30th - Open

December 31st - 7:30am - noon

Jan. 1st - Closed

Jan. 2nd - Open



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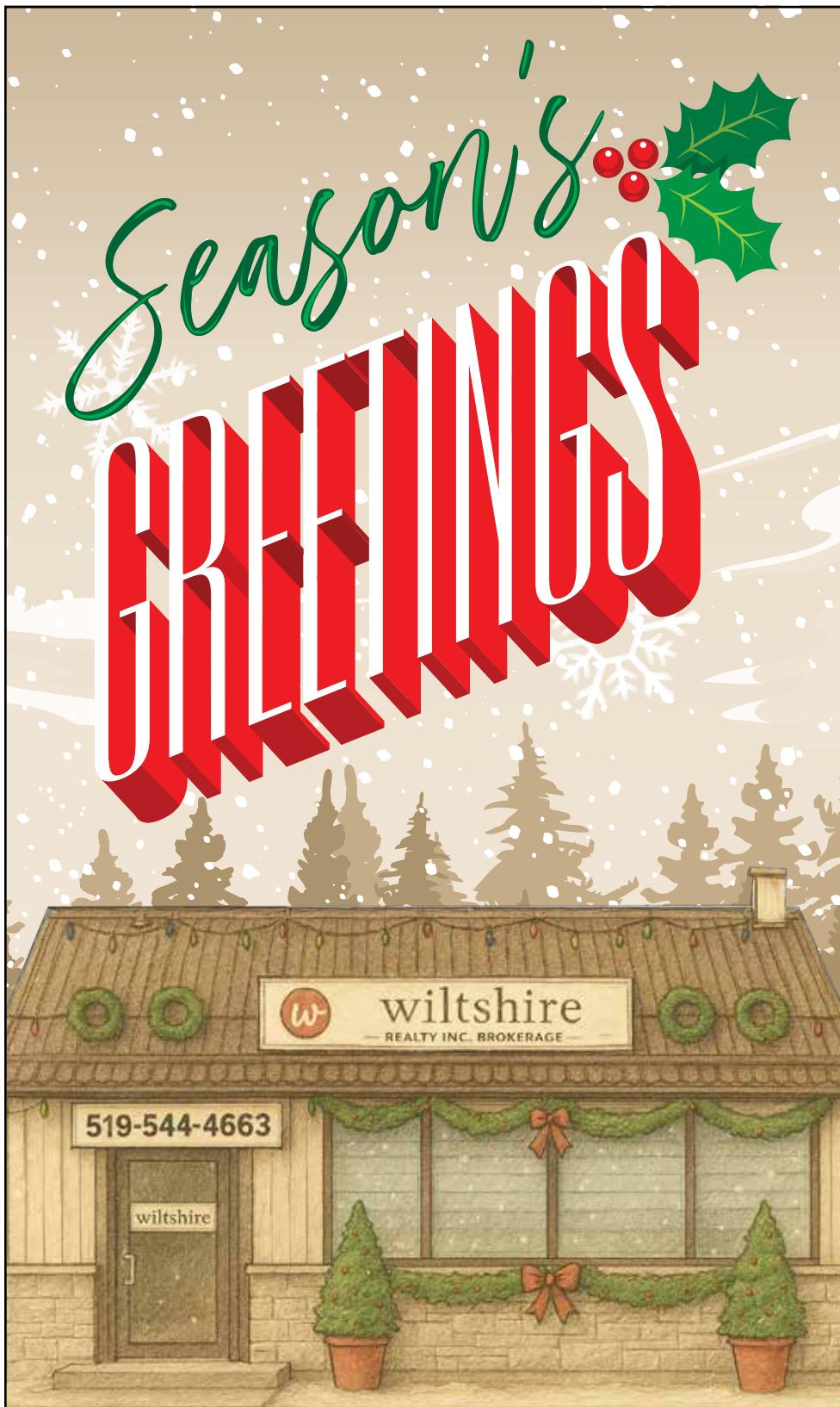
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SOUTH RIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Dear Santa,

My name is Fred, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is stuffies because I want them. What I need most for Christmas is clothes because I need them. A piece of clothing I would love is a sweater because I barely have any of them. A book that I would love to read is Three Cheers for Skid Steer.

Love, Fred.

Dear Santa,

My name is Carly, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is stuffies because I want them. What I need most for Christmas is clothes because I need them. A piece of clothing I would love is shirts because I need shirts. A book that I would love to read is the Dog Man books because I like Dog Man books.

Love, Carly.

Dear Santa,

My name is Jamee, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is Hyper Sonic because I want a stuffie. What I need most for Christmas is food because I need to eat. A piece of clothing I would love is a Hyper Sonic sweater because I love sweaters with zippers. A book that I would love to read is Pig the Pug because I like it.

Love, Jamee.

Dear Santa,

My name is Aarshi, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is a Posca marker because I love art. What I need most for Christmas is the iPhone 12 Pro Max because my mom has one too!. A piece of clothing I would love is a pink LOL doll because I love LOL dolls. A book that I would love to read is Dog Man because it's funny.

Love, Aarshi.

Dear Santa,

My name is Elijah, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is the PS5 because I get bored. What I need most for Christmas is a phone because I need to call my mom and dad. A piece of clothing I would love is 6-7 shirts because my shirts I do not like. A book that I would love to read is 6-7 books because I have baby books.

Love, Elijah.

Dear Santa,

My name is Finley, and I am 7 years old. What I would love most for Christmas is a Nintendo Switch. What I need most for Christmas is a Labubu. A piece of clothing I would love is jeans. A book that I would love to read is Pig the Pug.

Love, Finley.

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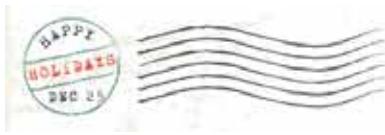
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MERRY CHRISTMAS

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a Very Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year!



SOUTH RIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Grade 2 - Mrs. Hill:

Dear Santa,
My name is Viktoria. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been a helpful student. What I would love most for Christmas is, Rainbow high dolls and a 7 year old makeup kit. A colouring book, princess dress and princess shows. A crayons water bottle, stickers, and a rainbow corn and colour stashin and that is it. My Christmas wish for the world is that everyone gets a home and a family.
Sincerely, Viktoria.

Dear Santa,
My name is Emilia. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been fantastic. What I would love most for Christmas is, a labubu, robux and clothes. My Christmas wish for the world is all pets get a home.
Sincerely, Emilia.

Dear Santa,
My name is Khadija. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been fabulous. What I would love most for Christmas is a dog and a cat. My Christmas wish for the world is everyone to be good and be nice.
Sincerely, Khadija

Dear Santa,
My name is Wes. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been super good. What I would love most for Christmas is a laptop, quad, and fifty thousand robux. My Christmas wish for the world is everyone gets adopted.
Sincerely, Wes.

Dear Santa,
My name is Jaxon. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This

year, I have been super good. What I would love most for Christmas is PS5, VR, and quad bike. My Christmas wish for the world is my mom and dad to not have to work so hard.

Sincerely, Jaxon.

Dear Santa,
My name is Harvey. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been fabulous. What I would love most for Christmas is markers for the classroom, and whiteboard markers for the classroom. My Christmas wish for the world is for everybody to love.
Sincerely, Harvey.

Dear Santa,
My name is Nithwin. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been super good. What I would love most for Christmas is a cyber truck, a hoverboard, and a snowman which walks. My Christmas wish for the world is everyone is kind to everyone.
Sincerely, Nithwin.

Dear Santa,
My name is Sophia. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been incredible. What I would love most for Christmas is a BabyAlive doll, a magic mixer and a mermaid barbie doll. My Christmas wish for the world is for everyone to be safe.
Sincerely, Sophia.

Dear Santa,
My name is Gavin. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been awesome. What I would love most for Christmas is a robot. What I really want is a new drone that has a camera and a volcano kit. My Christmas wish for the world is everyone has a home.
Sincerely, Gavin.

Dear Mrs. Hill,
My name is Ryan. This Christmas I am 7 years old. I have been a nice student this year. I have learned a lot. My holiday wish for the world is for everybody to be kind.

Sincerely, Ryan.

Dear Santa,
My name is Quinn. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been nice. What I would love most for Christmas is a DJ Furby, a doctor kit, and slippers. My Christmas wish for the world is that every pet gets adopted.
Sincerely, Quinn.

Dear Santa,
My name is Isaac. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been nice. What I would love most for Christmas is a new dragon toy, a Gary stuffy, and a robot toy. My Christmas wish for the world is all pets get a home.
Sincerely, Isaac.

Dear Santa,
My name is Noah. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been amazing. What I would love most for Christmas is hockey, Sonic, yoyo, and a Fortnite sniper rifle. My Christmas wish for the world is all pets to get adopted.
Sincerely, Noah.

Dear Santa,
My name is Arthur. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been nice. What I would love most for Christmas is a Nerf gun, pet garter snake, and a costume. My Christmas wish for the world is everyone gets to be who they want to be.
Sincerely, Arthur.

Dear Santa,
My name is Erica. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been amazing. What I would love most for Christmas is kitten vanity makeup, and every kitten to have a home, 100 kittens, kitten shoes, and a big cat stuffy. My Christmas wish for the world is for people to have homes, and no wars, and clean water for all.
Sincerely, Erica.

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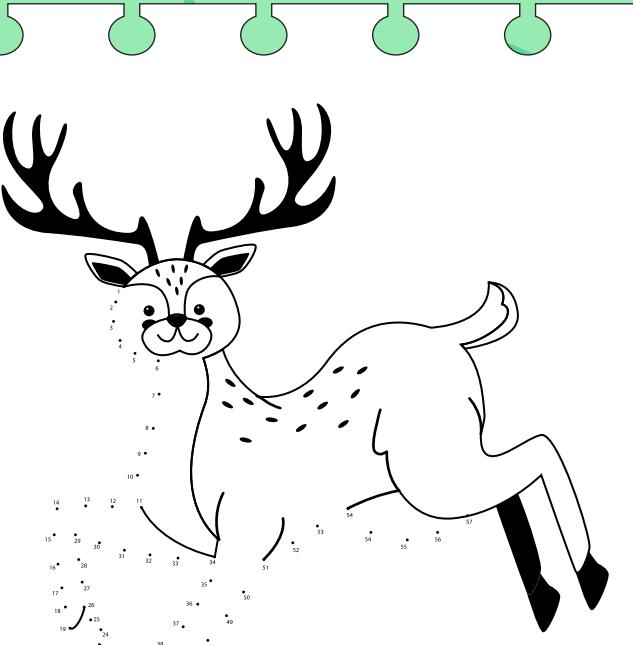
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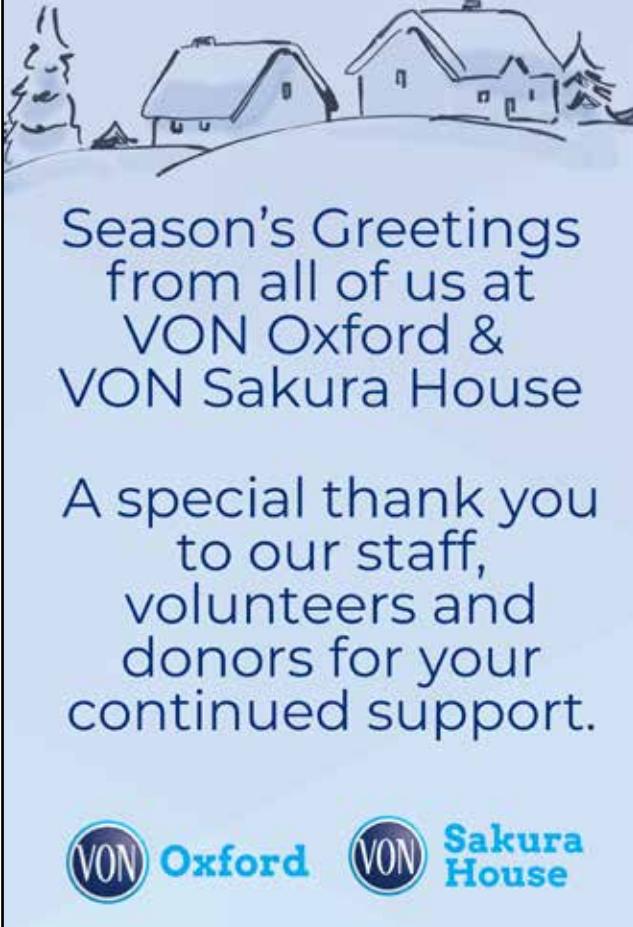
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MERRY CHRISTMAS



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SOUTH RIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Dear Santa,
My name is Samantha. This Christmas I am 6 years old. This year, I have been fabulous. What I would love most for Christmas is a big soft blanket, snowboard, and snowshoes. My Christmas wish for the world is all pets to get a home.
Sincerely, Samantha.

Dear Santa,
My name is Caleb. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been awesome. What I would love most for Christmas is an xbox, motor bike and pokemon. My Christmas wish for the world is everyone feels safe and loved.
Sincerely, Caleb.

Dear Santa,
My name is Dee. This Christmas I am

7 years old. This year, I have been nice. What I would love most for Christmas is Pokemon cards, a labubu and a race car. My Christmas wish for the world is every pet gets adopted.
Sincerely, Dee.

Dear Santa,
My name is Hadia. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been nice. What I would love most for Christmas is a Hat-chamal, labubu, and a Christmas puppy. My Christmas wish for the world is everyone to have fun.
Sincerely, Hadia.

Dear Santa,
My name is Zack. This Christmas I am 7 years old. This year, I have been super good. What I would love most for Christmas is a nerf gun and some lego. My Christmas wish for the world is everyone to have fun.
Sincerely, Zack.



COUNTRY-STYLE CHRISTMAS

The Dereham Centre Hall Board held its annual Christmas in the Village on Dec. 29 with horse-drawn rides, a chili lunch, cookie decorating, children's face painting (by Mrs. Sarah Face Painting), hot apple cider, tea, coffee, baked goods, and a visit from Santa.

(ROISIN GAUNT PHOTO)



Volunteer decorators make Christmas magic at Annandale NHS

ROBIN KRAFFT

Post Contributor

Thanks to numerous dedicated volunteers, Annandale House is fully adorned for Christmas visitors, and the festive decor can be enjoyed until Jan. 6.

Bonnie Sitts decorated three rooms on the third floor this year, and she brought her passion for crafting and history together to develop a theme for each room. This is the fourth year she's been decorating Annandale's rooms for Christmas.

Last year's room provided the inspiration for her 2025 teddy bear theme in the Tower Room. Choosing a theme is just a starting point, after which she begins planning, researching and collecting, a year in advance. The room features 50 teddy bears that she found, borrowed or was gifted over the course of the year, as well as a colourful hooked rug which she made. Bonnie is resourceful, and she combs yard sales and second-hand stores to find treasures.

"If the teddy bear spoke to me, they came home," Sitts said. "I also save my garbage, you never know what you're going to be able to do with something!"

In the Tillson Room, the theme is Currier and Ives and sleighs. Currier and Ives was an early 1900s printing company. Bonnie's grandmother used to enjoy making things with greeting cards and her collection inspired Bonnie to do the same. The room features information about the origin of the iconic Jingle Bells song, and the one-horse open sleigh.

Sitts is a member of the Women's Institute and a lifetime member of Tillsonburg Historical Society, both giving and attending historical talks.

"I learn a lot from the guest speakers," she said. "I'm a lifelong learner. When I researched the history of the song Jingle Bells, I decided to include sleighs and things that you would need for a sleigh ride."

The room features a 1917 piece of sheet music that belonged to her grandmother, fur coats that might have been worn for warmth, crocheted blankets, and her crowning glory: the Vanderbilt blanket that she made in 1978.



Volunteer decorator Bonnie Sitts in the Tower Room at Annandale NHS. Bonnie chose a teddy bear theme for the room, which features 50 teddy bears.

"I saw it in a craft book with the story and I decided to make it," Sitts said. "It was on display at the Tillsonburg and Aylmer Fairs and I won the grand champion ribbon. I used an afghan stitch and there are 154 squares and 13 flower motifs."

Bonnie brought in additional information to add to the display because so many people were inquiring about the blanket.

She was also responsible for decorating the School Room this year, using a family puzzles and games theme. She made 100 kits to give away for children to make their own Christmas ornament out of a tangram, a card cut in seven pieces.

"Work every day like a job," Sitts advised. "Keep busy; retirement is just a word in the dictionary. I got involved with the fair as a volunteer at 13 years old. When you get involved early as a volunteer, it gets in your blood."

Like Bonnie, Mary Jane Kekes is already thinking about next year's themes.

Mary Jane has been involved with Annandale house for several years, and along with being a volunteer decorator, she catered this summer's Anniversary Tea and has planned a special (sold out) Pioneer Christmas Tea. There are many surprises in store for attendees.

"This is my gift to Annandale House and the staff," Kekes said. "The girls are lots of fun, but they work hard. The staff is so amazing, and I just love them so much."

Mary Jane was born in Tillsonburg, and was a school teacher here for 33 years at Ralph Street, South Ridge and Rotary Westmount. She is also an experienced seamstress, and throughout those years she created many costumes for school plays.

She decorated two Victorian-themed rooms this year. The Sewing Room on the third floor was dedicated to her mother, Mary Kekes.

"My mom had a dress shop where the Bulk Barn is now," Kekes said. "There are three wedding dresses that my mom made on display in the room, from 1947, 1951 and 1952."

One dress was already in the collection, and the others were borrowed from families. Also on display is a vintage covered-button maker that Mary Jane used to use to make covered buttons for her



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Mary Jane Kekes greeted visitors to Annandale House's open house with a Victorian dress on in the room she decorated. Kekes collected dolls and adopted them out to new owners during the open house.

mother.

"My brother Joe used to make them, but when I got old enough he said it's your turn," Kekes said.

Kekes wore a Victorian dress for the open house, made for her by her friend Suzanne Buehner. Under the dress, the swish of the crinoline that she had worn under her own wedding dress could be heard. She has plans to make a matching bonnet. Suzanne collaborated with Mary Jane to decorate the Sewing Room.

"I gave her all the stuff, and she put it all together," Kekes explained. "She's an amazing dress designer and we both make costumes for the Tillsonburg Theater. I've made hundreds of costumes."

She also decorated the Victorian Room on the second floor using a Dickens theme. Last year she created a candy cane room and one visitor, Kathy Upper, mentioned that she had an entire Dickens village and Mary Jane asked if she would like to team up for this year.

"It all started with the Dickens carolers and kind of exploded," Kekes laughed. "I found an old baby

buggy with a parasol on it and I started collecting dolls. I was thrifting all year and I had over 100, with all donations to go to Annandale House. Over 40 dolls were adopted during the open house weekend."

Mary Jane found lots of end tables and coffee tables in thrift stores, which she and Kathy used to make the snowy mountain for their village. The room also includes her considerable collection of tea pots.

"I have about 200 teapots, but they wouldn't all fit," Kekes said. "There are about 150 there. I started packing them up and boxing them in October."

Volunteer decorators started their work at the beginning of November, giving them three weeks to complete the task, and they needed every minute to execute their ideas.

"You have to have a vision and be able to explain it," Kekes said. "I've known Suzanne for years, but I just met Kathy and we hit it off. She's just a gem to work with. I've been so lucky, they were both so good and so creative."

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The lasting impact of garden gifts



IT'S STILL JUST DIRT

SUE HEALEY

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

At the end of the year, when the shadows and snowdrifts gather to cover the garden, I spend the long evenings sorting through the photographs I've taken over the year. Most are of the gardens that surround my home. This sifting of images fills the time that would be spent outside, given better weather and light.

As I flick through them, I see that many of the trees and plants that catch my eye and camera, the ones I admire most, have been gifts to me. They have come as tokens of celebration, markers of days gone-by or as rescues from gardens lost, or in transit. And sometimes, they have come simply as a way to share a bit beauty. Each plant is cherished and sparks a memory of the giver, a gentle nudge to remember. Their presence enriches both the soil and the spirit, creating a garden that is not only visually appealing but deeply meaningful. This blend of individual

contributions ensures the garden remains a place of beauty, remembrance, and ongoing growth.

This year, my lens has been caught by a poppy that has roamed my garden for as long as I've tilled its soil. Collected as seed long ago in my parents' meadow garden, it reminds me of them both, my mother's flamboyant energy, my father's quiet grace. Papaver rhoeas, commonly referred to as the field poppy due to its liking of disturbed ground, is an easy to grow annual with many variations. Mine is fully double, although highly variable from year to year in petal count and colour, and always a showstopper. Swan-necked stems over silvery green, jagged leaves appear in early spring, each topped with shapely buds that split in spectacular fashion: a multitude of frilled, silken petals,



Geranium.

(SUE HEALEY PHOTO)

in shades from deep crimson to pale pink unfurl over the season. Blossoms last only day or two, but even that loss is dramatic; like a feather boa, shrugged off the shoulders of an 80s-era soap-opera star. Blooming continues through most of summer and provides striking contrast to green, silver, or white backgrounds. Plump seedheads dry to papery husks that spill their minuscule contents at the slightest touch and set next year's crop. They persist through the winter days, providing a perch for frost or snow, or tiny bird.

In the far corner of the garden, grows another gift that I treasure. This one, a Geum, is a low growing member of the rose family. It came to me decades ago and has been an all-season favourite from the beginning. Early blooming, and in my favourite colour, Geum is a perennial to bridge the gap between spring bulbs and the bounty of June. The rich orange blossoms open over a series of days, and as they age, fade to pale apricot. New and old blooms are present together, resulting in a two-tone effect that softens the brazen orange. Seedheads are hairy and round, darkening to black as they dry before shattering in the wind. The pleated leaves are semi-evergreen and provide an unusual texture to the front of the early winter border. Geum comes in various warm shades of red, orange, cream and yellow and prefers full sun with well drained but moist soil.

Almost as early as the Geums, and as varied in tone as the poppies, are the perennial



Poppy seedhead. (SUE HEALEY PHOTO)

geraniums that reside in the garden. Of the dozens of varieties available, I grow only a few and most of those from a last-minute rescue for my mother-in-law. They are as cool and steadfast as the woman herself.

CONTINUED TO PAGE B21

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The lasting impact of garden gifts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE B20

Each surviving plant is a luminescent shade of violet, some sky blue, others with a touch of pink. Unfazed by drought or pest, this unassuming perennial is a hardworking addition to most gardens. Blooming from early summer to frost, with leaves that often display rich autumn colour, they are also easy to care for. A place in full to partial sun, a spring sheering and topping of compost will ensure this perennial thrives. Mound forming, with lobed leaves that can also vary in size and cut, perennial geraniums are excellent at the front of the border. Five petaled flowers range in colours from blue to white

and pink with blue flowered varieties showing the most range. Each one is a worthy addition to the garden.

There are other gifts too, the yellow garden is filled with largess of friends and family. Primrose and false fuchsia, yarrow, and calendula line the border along the fence. Roses fill the garden with perfume and the memory of family scattered across the nation. The faded petals of a daylily under the lime green leaves of sumac bring memories of winter days bent over velvet and corduroy. Every gifted plant holds a special significance, weaving together memories of the



Primrose.

(SUE HEALEY PHOTO)



(SUE HEALEY PHOTO)

Geum.

giver and moments in time. As the seasons change, these treasures offer colour, texture, and life to the landscape, enriching both the visual appeal and emotional depth of the garden and making each day spent among them more meaningful and rewarding.

Garden gifts come in many forms, and The Tillsonburg Horticultural Society has several to offer. Members enjoyed the annual Christmas potluck in early December and

look forward to a year filled with the latest information, exciting trips and tours and the joy of society. Regular meetings will resume on Jan. 7, 2026, with Heather Jerrard and her presentation "Weird and Wonderful Plants".

January 7, 2025, 7:30pm
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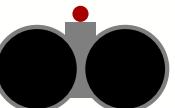
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Seniors Singing Seasonally



The Tillsonburg Senior Centre Singers presented their annual concert on Nov. 25, presenting a variety of seasonal music to the audience.

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

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Holiday Craft Market



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Glendale High School's gymnasium was the site of the school's Best Buddies Holiday Market on Nov. 29. The event featured more than 25 vendors. Best Buddies Club is where students with, and without, intellectual disabilities build amazing friendships and create a more connected community.



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holiday season and
a happy new year!



Breakfast with Santa

(ROBIN KRAFFT PHOTOS)



The 18th annual Kinettes Breakfast with Santa, on Dec. 6 at the Lions Auditorium, was a big success. The crowd enjoyed breakfast, meeting Santa, and live music. For every toy donation for local charities, participants received a ballot for a chance to win a prize.



Sebastian Verbrugge enjoyed his pancakes at the Tillsonburg Kinettes 18th annual Breakfast with Santa. The event is their biggest fundraiser of the year and was held on Dec. 6 at the Lions Auditorium.



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Holiday Splendour

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTOS)

Annandale National Historic Site is dressed up in its seasonal finest, with volunteers decorating every room in a different theme. From teddy bears and dolls to old-fashioned Christmas, each room is unique. Annandale National Historic Site is open daily until Dec. 23, and is then open again on Dec. 28.



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