

The Paris Independent

Issue #254

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2026

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(EMMA BOWMAN PHOTO)

Le Petit Marché owner Emery Silva stands outside her downtown Paris business, where she says two years of Downtown Dig construction have resulted in a 40 to 50 per cent decline in sales during construction months. Speaking before the County of Brant's Administration and Operations Committee, Silva urged councillors to pause major construction in 2027 to give businesses time to recover. County staff confirmed a pause is planned, with details expected later this summer.

County to pause portion of Downtown Dig in 2027 as business owner delivers emotional plea

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

County of Brant staff say they are planning to pause major portions of the Downtown Dig construction project in 2027, providing a much-needed reprieve for downtown businesses that have endured two consecutive years of significant disruption.

While details of exactly which phases of construction will be postponed have not yet been finalized, staff told councillors the additional year will be used for planning and investigative work before major construction resumes in 2028.

The announcement came during the Administration and Operations Committee meeting on July 21, moments after downtown business owner Emery Silva delivered an emotional presentation detailing the financial and personal toll the prolonged construction has taken on her business and others in the downtown core.

Silva, owner of Bird & Bee Vintage and Le Petit Marche, urged council to move ahead with the proposed pause, arguing that busi-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



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Downtown construction to take a breather in 2027 to give businesses and tourism a chance to recover

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

nesses need time to recover before facing another major construction season.

Le Petit Marche is home to three businesses, numerous consigners and employs five staff members.

"I'm here to speak the major impact the construction in the downtown core has had on my business in the last two years. I understand that infrastructure improvement are necessary and I recognize that construction is something unavoidable but the reality for businesses operating through this prolonged construction has been extremely difficult."

Silva explained that for the decade before construction began, her business consistently matched or exceeded the previous year's revenue through steady growth and creative evolution.

That changed when construction started.

"Last year alone during the construction months, my business lost approximately \$74,000. This year we are on track to experience the same loss or a similar loss."

She shared annual sales data from 2024, 2025 and 2026 with councillors to illustrate the impact during construction months.

"We are experiencing approximately 40 to 50% drop in sales. In black and white this is what my business is actually experiencing. The reason I'm willing to share my business' personal finances with you today is because I know there are many other business owners who aren't standing here today and aren't talking (publicly) about how difficult the past two years have been for them."

Silva said someone needed to put real numbers behind the struggles many businesses are quietly experiencing.

"These are not just numbers on a spreadsheet. They represent the cumulative impact of reduced traffic, disrupted access, construction fatigue and ongoing uncertainty that businesses have had to absorb for an extended period of time."

While construction has played a major role, Silva acknowledged it is not the only factor affecting local businesses. She said the broader economy has also softened consumer spending, but the prolonged nature of the construction has compounded those challenges, creating an increasingly difficult environment for businesses to survive.

Silva contrasted the current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, when her business was forced to close for nine months over a two-year period.

Despite those closures, she said the business experienced record sales because travel restrictions encouraged people to explore destinations closer to home, making Paris a popular tourism destination.

"That taught me something about short periods of relief, that they can make a difference to a business and that is what our

downtown needs now."

She also said she believes Paris has lost some of its identity during the project.

"The Big dig branding and dust bowl atmosphere have overshadowed our identity as a town."

Silva reminded council that a construction pause had previously been alluded to during a council meeting last month when county staff were presenting mitigation efforts they took to support businesses during the downtown dig project.

"I'm here today that I along with many other businesses strongly support that pause."

Although she acknowledged some residents would prefer construction simply continue until completion, Silva argued a temporary break would allow businesses to rebuild, give residents a chance to enjoy the downtown again and help restore tourism momentum.

As an example of businesses investing in the community despite the challenges, Silva highlighted the recently completed Mechanic Street Glowup project, where she and her staff repainted four storefronts that had not been updated in more than 30 years.

"That's what small businesses do. We invest our time, creatively, our relationships and our hearts into the community where we live and work."

The most emotional moment of her presentation came when Silva revealed the personal sacrifices she has made to keep her business operating.

She told councillors she sold her home last year to offset business losses caused by construction and believed those proceeds would be enough to carry her through this year's project. She did not anticipate experiencing another year of similar financial losses.

"I'm asking for a pause because businesses need an opportunity to recover before they are pushed beyond the point of recovery."

General Manager of Operations Dave Mellor confirmed staff are planning to pause major construction next year, while continuing behind-the-scenes planning work.

"We are planning on taking a pause next year. We are still working through what a pause looks like in a sense of doing an additional year of planning and investigation works we want to do to work through it faster in future years."

Mellor said staff expect to return in August or September with additional details outlining what construction will look like in 2028 and 2029.

"We certainly recognize the impact this has had on people like yourself," he told Silva.

Mayor David Bailey thanked Silva for both her presentation and her efforts to improve the downtown during construction.

"Your story is a very special story to



(EMMA BOWMAN PHOTO)

Determined to bring colour back to downtown during the ongoing Downtown Dig, Le Petit Marché staff members Mia Leone (left), Hannah Black and owner Emery Silva repaint a storefront as part of the Mechanic Street Glowup project. Silva highlighted the volunteer beautification effort during a presentation to County of Brant councillors, saying small businesses continue investing their time, creativity and hearts into the community despite the financial challenges created by prolonged construction.

downtown Paris. You've put a lot of yourself into it. And what you've done for your neighbours to make the street look more full of life, thank-you for doing that."

Coun. Steve Howes also praised Silva for openly sharing her business' financial information.

"It was brave of you to share your information and it's very real. You brought in real information and that is something we don't always see.

I appreciate the effort you and others have put in."

Howes also recognized Silva's community beautification efforts, including both the Mechanic Street Glowup and the Paris

trellis installed on the side of her building.

While cautioning residents that construction in parts of the downtown will continue for several more years, Howes voiced his support for pausing the largest and most disruptive phases.

"I think it is worth emphasizing that parts of downtown will be under construction for years. I don't want to sugar coat in any way. But a pause on the big parts, the Mechanic Street part, I support that 100%."

During the discussion, Howes also asked when vehicles are expected to return to Grand River Street North. Mellor said staff are currently targeting early fall but continue to assess the timeline.



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Camp Phoenix sparks confidence in future firefighters

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

A week of learning, teamwork and personal growth came to a close Sunday as Camp Phoenix celebrated its fifth anniversary, sending another group of young women home with new skills, greater confidence and a firsthand look at careers in the fire service.

The free, immersive camp, held July 22-26 and wrapping up at the Cainsville Fire Hall, brought together young women aged 14 to 18 for hands-on firefighting experiences led by professional firefighters from across the Brantford Fire Department.

This year's camp marked an important milestone for the program, which has now graduated 80 participants since its launch in 2022.

"Camp Phoenix continues to inspire young women to consider careers in the fire service while building confidence, leadership, and lifelong connections," Fire Chief Darren Watson said when the application process opened up earlier this year. "Reaching our fifth year is a proud milestone, with 80 graduates already part of the Camp Phoenix alumni network, and we're excited to welcome a new group of campers in 2026."

Throughout the week, campers learned practical firefighting skills while developing leadership, teamwork and problem-solving abilities.

For Alpha Platoon camper Sadie M., the biggest takeaway was personal growth.

"The biggest skill I've learned at camp is the help with confidence and ability to face fears even when I am not comfortable with it," she said.

Ali E. of Delta Platoon said search and rescue training challenged her in new ways.

"A skill I learned is search and rescue. I had to learn to trust myself and to communicate really well with my partner, in a situation a lot of people would panic in!" she said.

For Camp Phoenix co-founder and firefighter Lisa Herbert, watching campers overcome challenges remains one of the program's greatest rewards.

"Many of the girls this year came with a high level of competitiveness balanced with comradery, which built

amazing platoons!" Herbert said. "Someone experienced claustrophobia when donning a face mask and going on air for the first time, but she pushed through and hasn't had a moment like that again this week! This camp really boosts their confidence in what they are capable of. It's not about being perfect or not being scared... it's about pushing past the fear into something new!"

Campers experienced a wide range of realistic emergency scenarios throughout the week, including search and rescue, defensive firefighting, auto extrication and self-rescue techniques.

Herbert said one of the highlights of this year's program was the addition of the Office of the Fire Marshal's Mobile Live Fire Training Unit.

"The biggest spectacle this year was having the Office of the Fire Marshal's Mobile Live Fire Training Unit on site. The girls got to complete 3 days of search & rescue tactics along with defensive firefighting skills... something we've never been able to offer before," she said. "We are so grateful to the OFM and the operators that came to spend the week with us!"

The camp also featured investigators from the Office of the Fire Marshal for a controlled burn exercise, while 1200 Degrees assisted with auto extrication training. Campers also forced doors open, learned self-rescue techniques, navigated a maze while blind, practised low-profile manoeuvres and learned wire entanglement techniques.

The week concluded with the PhoenixFit Challenge, live demonstrations for family and friends, lunch and a formal graduation ceremony.

"It's the coming together of so many skills they learned throughout the week and a chance to show off those skills to their loved ones," Herbert said. "Then we cap it all off with lunch and a formal graduation service. It really is the icing on the cake at the end of an incredible week, and the campers never want to go home after that!"

The impact of Camp Phoenix is already extending beyond the camp itself.

One graduate from the inaugural 2022 camp was hired by Milton Fire last year after returning to Camp Phoenix in several leadership roles. Alicia G. served as a Leader in Training in 2023, co-emceed the camp in 2024 alongside

fellow alumna Bethany R., and returned again this year as an assistant instructor.

Herbert said many former campers have also enrolled in pre-service firefighter and fire technology post-secondary programs.

This year's Camp Phoenix was organized by firefighters Ken Sibbick, Jenna Lawrence, DJ Linkert, Alicia Poullos, Bob Mercer and Herbert, with support from numerous firefighters and instructors who volunteered their time throughout the week.



(COUNTY OF BRANT PHOTO)

Camp Phoenix participants wasted no time getting into action on the opening day of the week-long camp, learning hose rolls, hose deployments and hose stream operations while taking part in friendly competitions. Campers also toured the Office of the Fire Marshal's Mobile Live Fire Training Unit, learned about bunker gear and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), and received a firsthand introduction to the firefighting skills they would build on throughout the week.



(COUNTY OF BRANT PHOTOS)

County of Brant firefighters demonstrate the science of fire behaviour during a live burn exercise at Camp Phoenix, giving campers a firsthand look at fire dynamics and fire investigation. Following the controlled burn, participants examined the scene to learn how investigators determine a fire's origin and cause as part of the week-long immersive camp for aspiring female firefighters.

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Financé par le gouvernement du Canada



Brett Kissel, Lindsay Ell returning to headline Paris Fair country concert

PARIS INDEPENDENT STAFF

Two familiar faces will return to the Paris Fair stage this Labour Day weekend as Canadian country music stars Brett Kissel and Lindsay Ell headline the Sunday Night Country Concert.

The Paris Agricultural Society announced Friday that Kissel will headline the Sept. 6 concert during the 168th Paris Fair, with Ell opening what organizers are billing as a showcase of Canadian country music. Neither artist is a stranger to Paris Fair audiences. Kissel previously performed at the fair as a rising country star before becoming one of Canada's biggest names in the genre, while Ell has also taken the Paris Fair stage in past years.

Kissel has since become one of Canada's most decorated country performers, earning multiple JUNO Awards and Canadian Country Music Association Awards, along with Gold and Platinum-certified albums and numerous chart-topping singles. Known for his high-energy live performances and strong connection with audiences, he remains one of the country's most in-demand touring artists.

Ell has built an international reputation as an accomplished singer, songwriter and guitarist. Her blend of country and rock influences, combined with her acclaimed guitar skills, has earned her a loyal fan



(MICHELLE MALVASO PHOTO)

Canadian country star Brett Kissel performs before a packed crowd during his 2024 appearance at the Paris Fair. Kissel will return to the grandstand stage as the headliner for the Sunday Night Country Concert on Sept. 6 during the 168th Paris Fair, with fellow Canadian country artist Lindsay Ell joining the lineup for an evening celebrating homegrown country music.

base and hits including Criminal, Waiting on You and Right on Time.

"We're thrilled to welcome both Brett and Lindsay back to the Paris Fair," said Amy Warner, General Manager of the Paris Agricultural Society. "They've both created great memories with our audiences in the past, and we're excited to bring two

outstanding Canadian artists together for what promises to be an incredible Sunday night at the Fair."

The Sunday Night Country Concert is included with regular fair admission, giving visitors access not only to the concert but also to the fair's agricultural exhibits, livestock shows, midway rides, food vendors,

family attractions and competitions.

The 168th Paris Fair runs Sept. 3 to 7 at the Paris Fairgrounds. Get your general admission tickets at a 50% discounted rate between July 27 to July 30. Tickets are good for one-day, any day. Visit www.parisfairgrounds.com and use promo code SUMMERFUN.

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Discovering what the promenade has to offer

GEORGE LE GRESLEY

Paris Independent Contributor

I'll admit it — I never really felt motivated to visit the Promenade.

Like many people, I've driven past it countless times on my way out of town but my concentration is always on keeping pace with the car in front of me.

That changed last Monday.

I attended one of the "Concerts on the Promenade," featuring singer and harpist Lisa Warren of Stoney Creek. My motivation? Lisa happens to be my goddaughter.

Years ago, Lisa decided she wanted to learn the harp. With surprisingly few formal lessons, she developed into an accomplished musician, eventually recording original meditative music that can now be found on YouTube and Spotify.

If you've ever relaxed to calming harp music at a spa, there's a good chance you've heard something similar to Lisa's work. Today, she performs at weddings, private events and public concerts, blending new age, pop, adult contemporary, children's music and her own original compositions into performances that are both relaxing

and engaging.

If you're curious, search "Lisa Warren Music" on your favourite streaming platform.

But the concert also introduced me to something else — the Promenade itself.

I realized the concerts are only one part of a much larger lineup of activities taking place throughout the summer. Music Mondays bring live entertainment downtown, while Wellness Wednesdays feature yoga and Zumba. There's line dancing, and even "Adult Recess," designed to remind us that

having fun isn't something we should leave behind with childhood.

Whether you're looking for live music, a little exercise, or simply an excuse to spend some time downtown, there really is something for everyone.

Sometimes it takes a personal reason to discover what's been happening in your own backyard. To learn more about upcoming Promenade activities, visit <https://www.brant.ca/news-and-project-updates/the-downtown-dig/downtown-paris-promenade/>



County moves to cut town parking permit fees

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

Downtown Paris residents could soon pay less for reserved municipal parking after the County of Brant's Administration and Operations Committee endorsed changes to the Paris Business Improvement Area (BIA) residential parking permit program on July 21.

The recommendation, which still requires final approval from county council on July 28, would make the pilot program permanent while reducing permit fees and introducing an annual permit option.

If approved, monthly permit fees would drop from \$120 to \$80, quarterly permits would decrease from \$360 to \$240, and a new annual permit would be available for \$960. All fees would be prorated daily and subject to HST.

The pilot program was introduced in June 2025 to provide designated overnight parking for eligible residents living within the downtown BIA. It was expanded earlier this year to allow owners of residential properties within the BIA to purchase permits for qualifying units.

Greg Bergeron, the County's director of enforcement and regulatory services, said staff are recommending the current version of the program continue, despite limited participation during its first year.

Coun. John MacAlpine asked how many downtown properties could potentially qualify for the permits.

Bergeron said approximately 80 residential properties may be eligible, although many already have private parking.

"Part of this exercise was to get a better idea of demand," he said. "Right now, it is low but we expect that to change in the coming years."

The County currently offers 20 residential permit spaces, 10 in the municipal parking lot behind the cenotaph and 10 in the lot beside the former OPP station, now Municipal Lot 11 near Wincey Mills.

Bergeron said only six permits have been issued to date, leaving 14 spaces available.

Coun. Steve Howes questioned why demand has remained so low.

Bergeron attributed the limited uptake to several factors, including the ongoing downtown reconstruction project.

"I think there is a couple of things compounding issue with uptake," he said. "Number one is construction. We think it had something to do with the low uptake. Secondly, I think the price may have been a little high, although we did a market analysis and the price we came up with was fair."

He said lowering the fees reflects feedback received through social media and discussions with the Downtown Paris BIA that the permits need to be more affordable.

MacAlpine also questioned whether the availability of free 24-hour parking in other municipal lots has discouraged residents from purchasing permits.

Bergeron agreed that some residents choose the free option, while others value having a guaranteed parking space.

"Some don't want to pay when there is 24-hour lots however some residents want to know they have a dedicated spot no matter what," he said.

According to the staff report, only one permit has been issued to a resident since the pilot launched, while five permits were purchased by a downtown property owner to reserve spaces for residential units being marketed for sale. The report notes construction in the downtown core likely affected demand, while public feedback also questioned the need to pay for parking when free municipal parking remains available elsewhere. Staff said reducing permit costs responds to concerns that the existing rates have been a barrier to participation. The report also indicates the County's preliminary downtown parking needs assessment found the existing parking system is operating at or near capacity during peak periods. Staff plan to continue evaluating long-term parking solutions, including enforcement practices, technology, paid parking models and future infrastructure, with broader community engagement expected to begin in mid-to-late 2027.

Letter to the Editor

Letter highlights little-known facts behind first long-distance call

To The Editor:

I have to say how much I enjoyed Chris Whelan's beautifully written article regarding the commemorating plaque honoring the location of the first long distance phone call on August 10, 1876 right here in Paris.

There are a couple of little-known facts regarding this momentous occasion which I would like to highlight. Even though our town is only 8 miles from Brantford, the call that started in Brantford, had to go to Toronto where the Dominion Telegraph's primary batteries were, then back to Paris --136 miles. So, it truly was a long-distance

communication. Secondly, the famous phone call was a one-way conversation ---from the telegraph office on Colbourne St. in Brantford to the Dominion Telegraph location in Paris, at the rear of Robert Whyte's boot store. That historic evening, Bell used the 2 telegraph lines available, one to receive the conversations from Brantford, and the other to communicate that he had indeed heard their voices talking and singing.

I'm sure there will be much more said in the weeks ahead, and it will be interesting reading and learning about this momentous occasion - what a night!

Wayne Wilkinson | Paris

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We met in Paris - A local love story for the ages

RACHELLE ROUSSEAU

Rousseau Rares Vintage

Every town has stories woven into its history. Stories that give a community its heart.

While renovating the apartment above one of our downtown shops, we discovered something unexpected. A loose fireplace tile. On the back was a handwritten love note dated 1944. For more than 80 years, those words lay hidden under that tile. Shop owners, tenants, families, guests... generations of people passed through that space without ever knowing a small piece of someone's story had been waiting to be discovered.

It made me stop and wonder. Who wrote it? Did they ever get to continue their story? Did they spend their lives here in Paris? Did they walk these same streets together, wave to neighbours, or browse these shops that still stand today? Maybe we'll never know. But maybe that's what makes towns like Paris so special.

Every building holds stories. Every storefront has witnessed first jobs, family businesses, celebrations, heartbreaks, new beginnings and countless ordinary days that become the memories that shape our town's story. We don't see all these stories, but they're what gives downtown Paris its character.

These stories are still being written every day. Some begin with a first date. Some begin with an artist finding the courage

to open a studio. Some begin with a shop owner taking a chance on a dream. Some begin with a child remembering a treat by the river with their grandparents.

Those moments are what inspired a new series we're calling We Met in Paris.

Every one of us has a moment when Paris became part of our story. Storytelling keeps the ripples moving long after the moment has passed. It keeps memories alive, reminds us that every generation adds another chapter to the story of Paris, and inspires others to create stories of their own. That's how our shared history continues to grow.

As someone who spends a lot of time downtown, I've noticed something special. Visitors often tell us they wish they had a downtown like ours. They talk about the slower pace, the friendly faces, and how one stop somehow turns into an afternoon. They're feeling the stories that flow through our downtown.

Maybe you met your spouse here. Maybe you found your favourite bookstore, your favourite café, or your lifelong best friend. Or maybe your story is much simpler. Maybe it's just the familiar smile from the shop owner who remembers your order before you've even asked.

Those are the stories that give our downtown its heart.

That little note we found beneath the tile survived for more than 80 years because someone took the time to write it down. It makes me wonder how many other stories



are waiting to be discovered.

Over the coming weeks, we'd love to tell some of them through our new We Met in Paris series. You can reach out to the Downtown Paris BIA, send us a message

on social media, write a handwritten story and stop by my shop and say hello.

If Paris has woven itself into your story, I'd be honoured to hear it, and even more honoured to share it.

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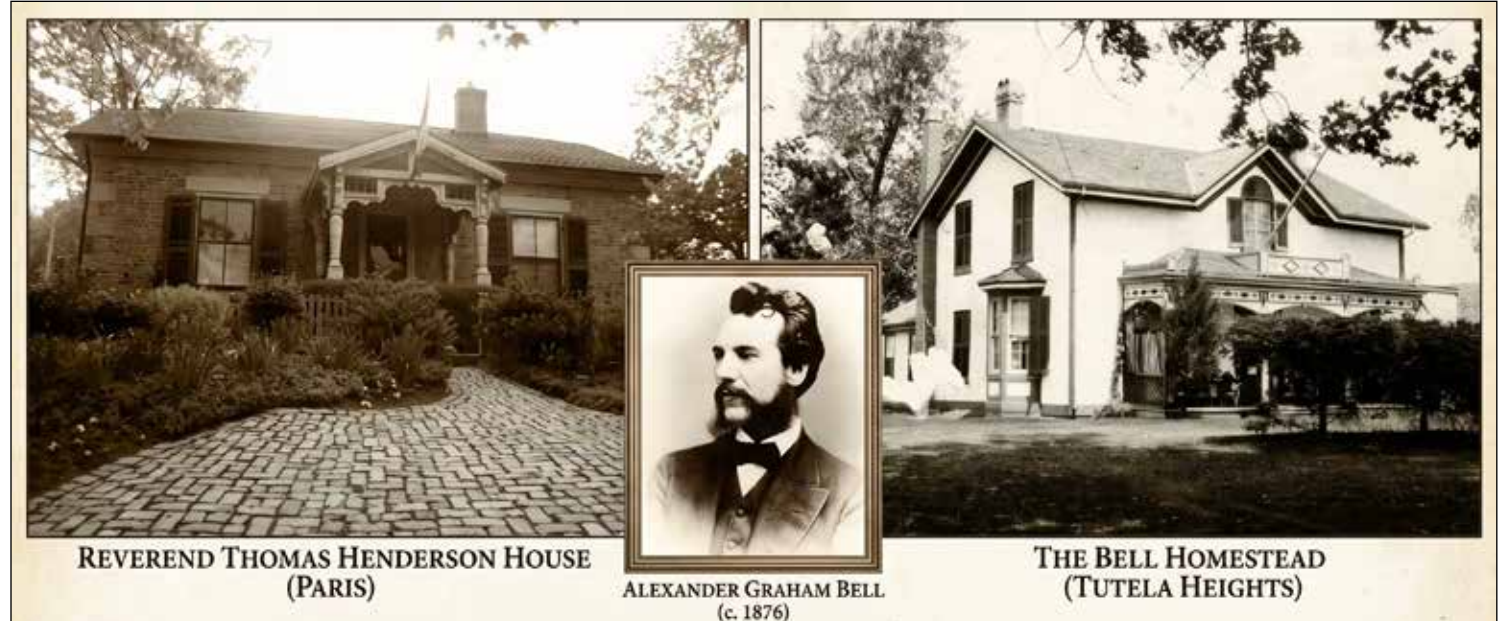
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HISTORIC PARIS

PARIS PAST: The skepticism, the science, and the long road to the world's first long distance telephone call to Paris, Ontario



By Chris Whelan



As we flip our calendars to the final days of July, we are rapidly approaching a monumental milestone in our local history. In less than two weeks, on August 10th, we will mark exactly 150 years since Paris became the focal point of a technological miracle: the world's first successful long-distance telephone call.

But to truly appreciate the magnitude of what happened that summer evening in 1876, we first need to understand the

tremendous skepticism that surrounded a young Alexander Graham Bell, and exactly why our town was chosen to prove the doubters wrong.

Our town offered the perfect logistical solution, but it also held a deeply personal

significance for the inventor. In August of 1870, the Bell family emigrated to Canada from Scotland. At the urging of their close friend, Reverend Thomas Henderson, they traveled by train to Paris, Ontario. The Bell family lived at Reverend Henderson's house upon their arrival, staying there before eventually purchasing their farm at Tutela Heights near Brantford. This foundational stay at Reverend Henderson's home is exactly why Bell had an immediate and lasting connection to Paris and its people.

It was at that very family home at Tutela Heights, on July 26, 1874, that Bell first conceived the technical concept of the telephone. Yet, having the breakthrough idea was only half the battle; proving it to the world was another.

In the 1870s, the telegraph was the undisputed king of long-distance communication. It was reliable, profitable, and entrenched in daily commerce. When Bell began proposing his "talking telegraph"—a device that could transmit the actual human voice over a wire—the scientific and business communities largely scoffed. Titans of industry, including the massive Western Union, viewed the concept as an entertaining but utterly impractical parlor trick. Why would anyone want to strain to listen to a faint, distorted voice when a trained operator could tap out a crisp, easily decipherable Morse code message?

Bell knew that laboratory demonstrations and short-distance tests would never be enough to convince a cynical world. He needed a grand, undeniable public exhibition. He had to prove that human speech could survive a journey over existing commercial telegraph lines and across separate municipalities. He required a receiver station far enough away from his family's home at Tutela Heights to eliminate any doubt of a hoax, yet connected to a robust, established telegraph network. When he needed a reliable community for the most important test of his life, he turned to the

town that first welcomed his family to Canada.

Nestled right in our downtown core was the Dominion Telegraph Company office. At the time, this vital communications hub was conveniently housed inside Robert Whyte's Boot and Shoe Store. It provided exactly what Bell's ambitious experiment required: a secure, indoor location with direct access to the main telegraph lines, and an eager local operator who could facilitate the complex connection.

By late July and early August of 1876, the pieces were beginning to fall into place. Bell began coordinating with telegraph officials, requesting temporary control over their commercial lines for his audacious test. It was a massive gamble. The equipment was temperamental, the acoustic receivers were crude, and the sheer electrical resistance of a long-distance wire threatened to swallow the fragile audio signals entirely.

If the experiment failed, Bell risked public humiliation and the total dismissal of his life's work. But if it succeeded, Robert Whyte's modest shoe store on Grand River Street North would instantly become the epicenter of a global revolution in human connection.

The stage was set, but the technical hurdles were only just beginning.

Next Week in Paris Past: Join us in our early August editions as we dive into Bell's journey to making history in Paris on August 10th and the incredible logistical nightmare of the test itself—and explore why Bell's historic call from Brantford to Paris ultimately had to be routed through 93 kilometres of wire all the way to Toronto just to make a sound 150 years ago.

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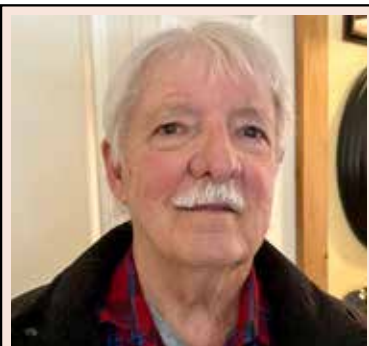
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THEN AND NOW: #43 Grand River St. N. Part III: Preserving 164 years of tradition



By Wayne Wilkinson
Paris Historian / Artist

In Parts I and II, we chronicled the early history of John M. Hall's House of Quality Linen, tracing the journey from 1862, when a young Thomas Hall arrived from Scotland to open a dry goods business in Paris, to 1891, when his son, John Milner Hall, followed in his footsteps by launching his own store in the heart of downtown.

Following John Milner Hall's passing in 1946, many might wonder how this local treasure managed to survive through the changing decades.

The secret to its longevity actually began a year earlier. In 1945, at the age of 77, John M. sold the business to his trusted, long-time employee and friend, William Granton, satisfied that his 55-year-old enterprise would remain in caring and capable hands. Following William's untimely death in 1963, the store came under the tutelage of his

brother, Fred Granton.

It's worth noting that hardware stores had been a constant neighbour to Hall's since 1900. When Paris Hardware (seen in photos from 1955) finally closed its doors in 1965, Fred Granton purchased the adjacent space, doubling the size of Hall's to the expansive footprint we see today.

For decades, no matter where you stood on Grand River Street, you could spot Hall's stunningly beautiful overhead sign, a striking symbol of a thriving downtown staple. Sadly, that iconic fixture was taken down in the 1970s when town council deemed overhanging signs a public safety hazard, aligning with a wave of similar municipal sign bans right across the province.

The year 1972 heralded another major milestone as William Granton's son,

John, took the reins. Yet through it all, nothing changed. The store retained the exact same high-quality products, the wonderful tradition of displaying goods on tables out on the sidewalk, and a complete rejection of modern barcodes in favor of hand-written price labels on every single item. Preserving these time-honoured practices established by John Milner Hall is precisely why this enormously popular destination still thrives today.

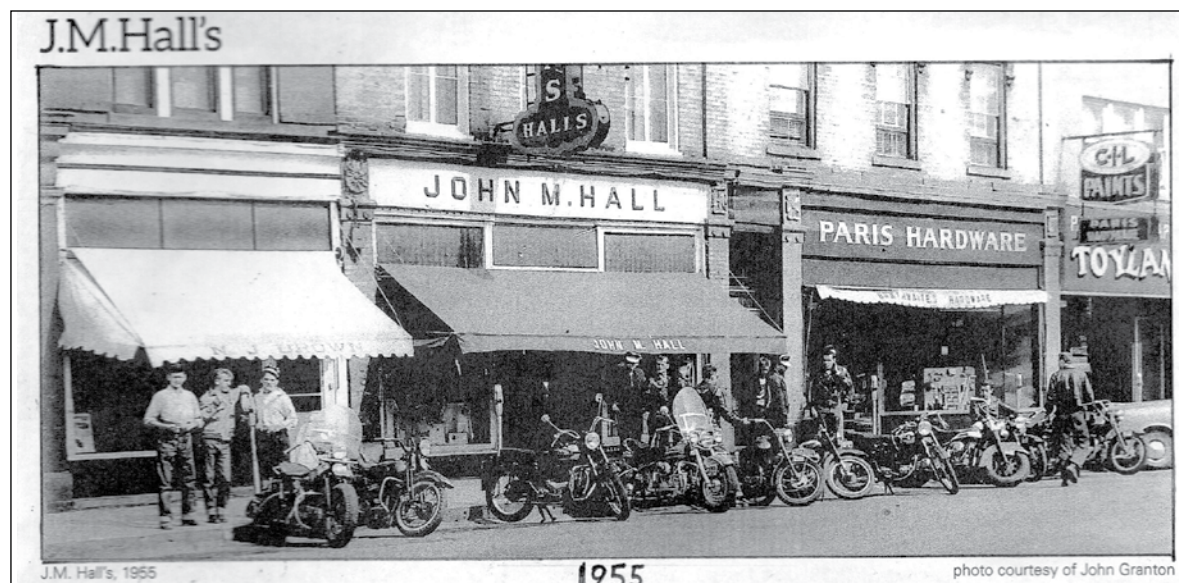
So come along with me and step through those two weather-worn doors and take a walk across the

creaking wooden floors. As you take in the vintage displays, you are experiencing 164 years of Thomas Hall's living legacy.

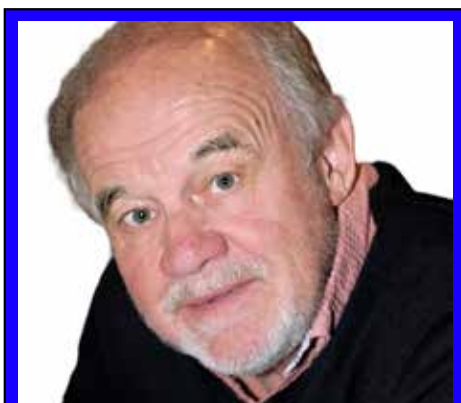
Just as sure as the Grand River keeps flowing past the rear windows of this historic gem, the John M. Hall tradition of quality

goods lives on, and on.

Some information obtained from the archives at the Paris Museum & Historical Society.



LIVING RETIRED: 'The Dishwasher Rack-It'



By Gary Chalk
*Non-Pulitzer Prize
Winning Columnist*

Living Retired

side down filled with water, when I take them out the water splashes all over the dry dishes on the lower rack."

Jan and I also can't get our heads wrapped around pre-rinsing dirty dishes before we load them into the dishwasher. What I do know is our dishwasher begins with sparkling clean dishes! And still the silverware comes out with spots. How can that be?

Kitchen dishwashers became popularized on Leaver It To Beaver when Ward got a loan from Mr. Rutherford at the bank for a dishwasher for June. Otherwise, June would be too busy doing the dishes in the sink to change into her fancy dress and pearl necklace to serve Ward, Wally, and Beaver dinner every night. And you never saw June and Ward having a spat over pre-rinsing when Wally was out parking

cars at the country club, and The Beaver was visiting Gus at the fire hall.

Back to the first world problem of kitchen dishwashers. Jan and I disagree on the best method to unload the dishes. I open the door and pull the bottom rack out. Then — when I get up from the floor after tripping over the open dishwasher door because my glasses were all steamed up — I remove the cutlery and place them in the drawer. Once the bottom rack is empty, I pull the top rack out and put away the glasses and stuff. Seems pretty straight forward to me. Jan takes a different approach...

She slides the rack out and begins to remove dishes, but they don't make it to the cupboard. Instead, she sits them on the counter.

"Jan. Why are doing it that way? You're introducing unnecessary steps."

"Gary. The guy who can't get his dirty dishes from the dinner table to the sink? Who uses a spoon to scrape the bottom of the roasting pan? Now you're the expert emptying our dishwasher?"

Jan was on a roll...

"Gary, I appreciate you helping with the dishwasher. You put the dishes in. You

press Start and an hour later you take them out. It is not worthy of a Nobel Peace Prize!"

When I load the dishwasher there is always a surprise when I unload. "Oh, look Jan! We have a piece of twisted driftwood you can display with your collection." "GARY! Please tell me you didn't put our new mahogany charcuterie board in the dishwasher!"

My sister, Dianne — I am using her real name because it is important for you intelligent dishwasher-savvy Living Retired readers to make sure she doesn't put the dishes in your dishwasher at your next dinner party. One time Dianne squirted half a bottle of Dawn UltraClean liquid dishwashing soap in her dishwasher. She appeared from a cloud of billion of bubbles at her front door.

So, you see, dishwasher disasters run in the family.

Living Retired is written weekly by Gary Chalk and published throughout Canada and USA. Gary is a popular keynote speaker at service clubs, corporate events, and retirement parties. Contact Gchalk@me.com

Retired couples concur that a successful marriage is based on lasting love, true trust, and agreeing how to load the dishwasher.

"Jan. You did it again. You placed the knives and forks upside down. They'll never come out clean."

"And Gary how many times have I told you not to put the dirty Tupperware containers in the top rack? They end up up-

Crime trending downward in Brant County, OPP reports

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

Property crime is trending downward in the County of Brant in 2026, a sign local OPP officials attribute to targeted enforcement, proactive crime prevention and stronger community engagement.

The positive outlook was shared as the County of Brant OPP Detachment Board presented its 2025 Annual Report to the Administration and Operations Committee on July 21. The report highlighted policing initiatives and statistical trends from 2025, while Inspector Jason McTaggart also provided councillors with an update on crime trends seen during the first half of 2026.

Before the presentation, Board Chair Jennifer Haley pointed to one success story from the Brant OPP Youth Academy.

"We have a cadet in the detachment that is a graduate of the youth academy so that program is paying out dividends," said Haley.

She also reminded councillors to encourage residents to report concerns directly to police.

"If you do have constituents calling you for various issues in community please ensure they call the non-emergency OPP line. If they don't call it in we don't know about it." She shared the phone number with councillors: 1-888-310-1122.

McTaggart presented an overview of the report, noting recent crime trends have been encouraging.

"I'm proud to say over the last few months, including the most recent report I'll be giving to the board next week, we are seeing a downward trend in property crime. So that's a positive on our end as well."

The annual report notes that while property crime increased slightly in 2025 to 679 occurrences from 656 the previous year, it remained well below the 827 incidents recorded in 2023. Overall the numbers in the last three months of this year are trending downward. Break and enters declined for a third consecutive year, falling from 104 incidents in 2023 to 67 in 2025, while mischief offences also decreased. The report attributes those improvements to targeted patrols, community education and focused enforcement in identified problem areas.

Coun. John Bell said the report paints a

much different picture than what is often portrayed on social media.

"I'm pleased to see we have reduction overall in crime statistics, which being an optimist, I see that as very positive. It runs a little counter to commentary you see on social media that states the county is becoming less safe. Can you comment on that," asked Bell.

McTaggart responded, "Individuals sometimes have perceptions that are misinformed. But as you can see from our report that is not the case here in Brant County. We are doing our very best and we are seeing positive outcomes."

Bell also questioned a reported 15 per cent decline in frontline policing hours since 2023 while noting the County's population has grown by roughly five per cent over the same period.

"I'm sure there's something behind those statistics."

McTaggart explained the apparent reduction reflects changes in how officer activity is recorded rather than a reduction in policing services.

"Absolutely so you may see a reduction in those traditional frontline hours I can sure you that is not the case. Our current service delivery model provides us with opportunity to capture what we are doing more efficiently so those frontline hours are being capture a different way."

Coun. David Miller asked which crimes continue to present the greatest challenge locally.

McTaggart said property crime and fraud remain the most common concerns but noted recent improvements in both areas.

"Traditionally it is property crime and frauds. But I am pleased to say over last few months we are seeing a decrease in both due to work of the detachment's community street crimes unit." He stated the community safety nights and increased senior education sessions that media officer and auxiliary unit hosts, particularly those one on ones with the community, are helping.

The annual report echoes that assessment, noting fraud remained one of the most prevalent property offences in 2025 with 179 reported occurrences. Police have responded through specialized investigations, digital evidence-gathering tools, public education campaigns and partner-

ships with provincial and federal agencies.

The report also outlines several other positive policing trends from 2025, including:

- Violent crime decreased by more than 21 per cent, dropping from 242 incidents in 2024 to 191 in 2025.
- Assaults and firearm-related offences declined from 112 to 94 incidents.
- Sexual offences fell from 36 to 28 occurrences.
- Failure-to-comply offences decreased by 19 per cent.
- Victim service referrals increased to 878, with a higher percentage of victims accepting support services.
- Traffic safety also remained a major focus.

According to the report, officers laid 4,691 Highway Traffic Act charges and 205 Criminal Code traffic charges in 2025 while concentrating enforcement on speeding, impaired driving, distracted driving and seatbelt compliance. Despite an increase in impaired driving charges and alcohol-related collisions, the detachment reported zero alcohol- or drug-related fatal collisions during the year.

Coun. Jennifer Kyle asked about the return of police programming in schools after a period when officers were no longer regularly present.

"You mentioned the program that's in the school and I know there was a period of

time a couple years ago where the police programs were not allowed to be in the schools but now they're back so I'm wondering what the reception has been from local schools to that program."

McTaggart said the reception has been overwhelmingly positive.

"Our school resource officer PC Vitalis has always had an open invitation at the GEDSB and his engagement with the student is invaluable in my opinion. Month over month he provides a report to me that I share with the board on those programs and activities he's delivering in the school. And again, it's overwhelmingly successful from a relationship building piece from the school itself and the impact we are seeing from Constable Vitalis."

He added the officer's presence is helping address issues before they escalate, highlighting an extreme payoff in youth engagement and support.

"He's able to mitigate some youth related matters that could end up in the criminal justice system." The annual report highlights youth engagement as one of the detachment's strategic priorities. The Brant OPP Youth Academy enrolled more than 20 high school students in 2025, while the detachment also celebrated the return of its School Resource Officer through the Grand Erie District School Board's Police Resource Outreach Supporting Education (PROSE) program.

Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Who won the 2026 FIFA World Cup? | 6. What is the chemical symbol for Carbon Monoxide? |
| 2. What does WWE stand for? | 7. What does CEO stand for? |
| 3. What was the name of Dorothy's dog in Wizard of Oz? | 8. Who shot JFK? |
| 4. What is the national flower of Japan? | 9. What is the only mammal capable of true flight? |
| 5. What was the main language spoken in the Roman Empire? | 10. What is the world's largest commercial passenger plane? |

This week's answers are found on pg. 18

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County not ready to allow bring-your-own alcohol to public events

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

County of Brant staff are recommending the municipality not opt into a new provincial framework that would allow people to bring their own alcoholic beverages to certain outdoor public events, citing concerns over liability, public safety and enforcement.

The recommendation was presented to the Administration and Operations Committee on July 21 following recent amendments to Ontario's Liquor Licence and Control Act, which give municipalities the option of permitting bring-your-own alcohol (BYOA) at designated outdoor cultural and community events through a local bylaw. Participation is voluntary, and municipalities that choose to participate must establish their own approval process and designate eligible events.

Instead, staff are recommending the County maintain its current municipal alcohol policy, which requires organizers to obtain Special Occasion Permits and limits alcohol consumption to controlled, licensed areas.

The report notes the provincial changes, which came into effect April 30, are intended to support tourism, reduce costs for event attendees and provide greater flexibility for event organizers. However, staff

concluded the risks outweigh the potential benefits for the County.

Among the concerns outlined in the report are increased insurance and liability exposure, additional demands on bylaw enforcement, parks staff, legal services and emergency responders, as well as the absence of new enforcement powers for municipalities.

Unlike licensed beer gardens, BYOA events would not include many of the existing safeguards such as Smart Serve-trained servers, standardized drink sizes or the ability to refuse service to intoxicated patrons, staff said. They warned the change could increase the risk of over-consumption, underage drinking, disorderly behaviour and impaired driving while placing greater responsibility on municipalities to manage those risks.

The report also noted that six of the 18 County events held on municipal property currently include licensed alcohol sales, many of which serve as important fundraising opportunities for community organizations. Staff cautioned that allowing attendees to bring their own alcohol could reduce revenue generated through beer gardens and licensed beverage sales, affecting charities and service clubs that rely on those proceeds.

Grand Erie Public Health also provided input during the review, advising that in-

creased availability and accessibility of alcohol has consistently been linked to higher consumption, greater alcohol-related harms and the normalization of alcohol use among youth. Public health officials encouraged municipalities to carefully consider legal, safety and enforcement implications before adopting a BYOA framework.

During committee discussion, Coun. Jennifer Kyle asked whether independently operated agri-tourism events held on private property could eventually qualify if the County chose to adopt the framework.

"If some day we were to go down this route, what qualifies as a municipally designated cultural or community event?" Kyle asked. "For example if you have someone who has an independently operated Agri-tourism event, it's on their private property would they ever qualify under this new legislation?"

Director of Economic Development and Tourism Zach Gable said the legislation appears to focus on public property.

"I think as I understand it this only applies to public property so if they are holding an event on private property I cannot comment," he said. "I think it is giving municipalities the license to come up with that definition of what is a cultural activity."

Coun. David Miller said he supported staff's cautious approach.

"I like the approach in the report," Miller said, adding he would like to see how other municipalities implement the legislation before Brant considers making any changes.

Coun. Ella Haley questioned whether the framework could apply to community halls, where requests are sometimes made to allow guests to bring their own alcohol.

"I think with this it is more geared towards how events operate in the county," Gable responded, noting the legislation is intended to apply to events falling under the County's special events policy. He added he did not believe private functions held in public community halls would qualify.

Staff also noted that people wishing to bring their own alcohol to private functions currently have an established process available that includes obtaining the appropriate Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario permits, insurance and Smart Serve requirements.

The committee received the report for information only. Staff will continue monitoring how other Ontario municipalities implement the legislation and will report back should future circumstances warrant reconsideration.



RE-ELECT JOHN BELL IN WARD 3



I was first elected as Councillor for Ward 3 in 2018 (re-elected in 2022) and seek re-election once again in October.

For those of you who do not know me the County has been home to my wife, Audrey, and I since 2009. We have lived in Wards 1, 2 and 3 and have family in Ward 4— we know the County well. I am an engineer by training and education and have extensive experience in project management and business planning (from 30+ years in private industry).

I have served as Chair and Vice Chair of various Council Committees and the Board of Health. As a part of my role as a County Councillor I serve on the Joint Social Services Committee, the Library Board, the Committee of Management of John Noble Home, the Board of Health (GEPH) and the Board of Brant Municipal Enterprises. Outside of Council I have been a Board member of the PrimaCare FHT here in Paris for the last decade.

In this campaign I will not go door to door but I would very much like to hear from you. I invite anyone who would like to speak with me or share their issue/concerns/thoughts to contact me and I will happily meet them in the coffee shop or just take a walk to talk. If you would like to learn more about me, or wish to contact me, please go to my FB page - or e-mail me - or call/text me - or go to my website (see below for details). If you would like to show your support by placing a sign on your property I will ensure you get one (after Labour Day).

"I will continue to actively represent my Ward 3 residents on their local issues and continue to advocate for a number of County wide issues I feel are important to our community."

These issues form the focus of my 2026 platform together with the successful build of a new main branch library and advocacy for a new Brant/Brantford Hospital."

MY PRIORITIES



Financial planning and due diligence



Holding developers to account



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Continued improvement in community health and wellbeing



Timely infrastructure planning and execution



Revitalisation of downtown Paris

The Paris Independent SPORTS



Sponsored by Paris Canadian Tire

Fourth-seeded Predators stun top teams to capture U9 softball title

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The Paris Predators U9 Team 2 proved that playoff seedings don't always tell the whole story.

After finishing the regular season with a 5-6-1 record, the fourth-seeded Predators put together an impressive championship run at the South Oxford Softball League B Division year-end tournament in Princeton on July 17-18, knocking off the tournament's top three seeds to claim the title.

The championship capped a season of steady growth for a young team that embraced every challenge.

"Along with all players and coaches in The Paris Minor Softball Association, the goal is to help players improve their skills while understanding how to play the game properly in a positive and supportive atmosphere," said head coach Nathan O'Connor.

"Softball is a game riddled with failure which is why its successes are so well celebrated and cheered by the family and friends in attendance. Each failure provides immediate reflection of improvement."

The Predators showed flashes of their potential throughout the regular season. One of the biggest moments came at Lions Park when Paris rallied from a 5-1 deficit in the final inning against the Princeton-Drumbo-Plattsville Lightning. The team put together a good rally to overcome a four run deficit going into the last inning. Only down by one, with two outs, and the winning run on second base and down to the game's final strike, Gus Cairns lined a walk-off double to secure a dramatic 6-5 victory. Later in the season, Colby Darville delivered another walk-off moment, driving in the winning run with a single in a 4-3 victory over Burford.

Those late-game heroics carried into the playoffs. Paris opened the tournament with a 3-1 win over fifth-seeded Burgessville. Nolan Maertens highlighted the offence with an RBI double, while Teddy Grandby and Linus Sanger each added RBI singles.

The Predators followed that with their biggest upset of the tournament, edging top-seeded Innerkip 6-5 behind RBI doubles from Emmett Paleczny, Rowan Velez and Oliver Lehman.

Their confidence continued to build in the semifinals against second-seeded Embro. Paris erupted for 15 hits in a 9-5 victory, with Jase Heinrichs leading the offence by going 2-for-2 with an RBI double.

The win earned the Predators a rematch with Embro in the championship game.

Paris found itself trailing 5-4 after the opening inning but responded with a dominant defensive performance, holding Embro scoreless the rest of the way while pulling away for an 8-5 championship victory.

At the top of the lineup, Easton Zaltusky, Brian Carr, Gus Cairns and Isaiah O'Connor combined to go a perfect 8-for-8 at the plate with three doubles, providing the offensive spark throughout the final.

Carr also shouldered the pitching duties throughout the tournament, throwing eight innings while working closely with catcher Zaltusky.

O'Connor praised the pair's communication behind the plate, noting their effective mound visits, constant encouragement and strong defensive leadership. Sanger also provided solid work behind the plate during the tournament.

Although unable to play in the year-end tournament, Axel Raslack remained an important member of the team during his first season of softball.

Reflecting on the season, O'Connor de-



Members of the team include, in no particular order, Gus Cairns, Bryan Carr, Colby Darville, Teddy Granby, Jase Heinrichs, Oliver Lehmann, Nolan Maertens, Isaiah O'Connor, Emmett Paleczny, Axel Raslack, Linus Sanger, Rowan Velez and Easton Zaltusky. Coaches include Nathan O'Connor, James Cairns, Ryan Darville, Amanda O'Connor and Tanya Heinrichs (scorekeeper).

scribed the group in a single word.

"To sum up the team in one word is really tough, they were: Tenacious."

He also credited the players for creating an environment that made coaching especially rewarding.

"With this group I learned to appreciate our opponents for the game, the umpires that make the tough calls, the community that develops around supporting the team and most importantly, the differing personalities that shine through each player in their softball-filled childhood."

Assistant coach James Cairns said the championship was the result of months of dedication.

"The boys worked hard all season, made

great improvements, and supported each other through thick and thin."

He also praised O'Connor's leadership throughout the season.

"Nathan brings a unique combination of intelligence, skill, teaching-ability, sportsmanship, positivity and fun to the coaching role. We are so lucky to have a leader like him helping our boys develop their softball abilities and sportsmanship. A great day for Paris sports!"

O'Connor also recognized Nathan Smith, Mark Robinson and the Paris Youth Softball Association executive for the countless hours they dedicate behind the scenes to ensure local children have the opportunity to play the sport.

Late victory caps season of growth for Paris Predators U11 Team 2

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The Paris Predators U11 Team 2 may have finished the season with just one win, but their coaches say the team's growth and resilience made the year a success.

The co-ed squad, made up primarily of boys with two girls on the roster, earned its first and only victory of the season in its second-last playoff game, a fitting reward for a group that steadily improved from opening day to the final out.

While the standings did not reflect the team's progress, coach Pat Gilbert said the Predators were far more competitive than

their record suggested.

"We had so many one-, two-, and three-run losses that it always felt like we were right there," Gilbert said. "As the season went on, you could really see the team improve, and by the back half of the year we were competing with everyone."

Gilbert went on to share some of the team's standout successes.

"The biggest success, though, was watching the kids develop. Every single player took big strides as a ballplayer, but even more importantly, as a teammate," he said. "They were supportive of one another all season, stayed positive through the tough losses, and became a genuinely fun

group to coach."

The Predators produced several memorable performances during their final games.

Addy Robinson was named the team's Player of the Tournament after choosing to miss a family trip to see the Toronto Blue Jays so she could compete alongside her teammates. Her commitment was recognized with the team's Player of the Tournament award — and an oversized Paris Predators hat. Brennan Deane turned in one of the tournament's most impressive offensive performances by hitting for the cycle, while Finnley Folsetter powered a home run. Maxen Smith delivered a clutch go-ahead double to the outfield in the Pred-

ators' playoff victory.

On the mound, Marcus Tavares, Blake Dinsmore and Drew Carr combined for a series of dominant pitching performances, piling up strikeouts to keep Paris in games.

For Gilbert, one of the most memorable moments came when his son, Thomas Gilbert, made his pitching debut and recorded his first career strikeout. The season concluded with a playoff win, but more importantly, with a team that had grown in confidence, skill and sportsmanship.

"It was a memorable season with a great group of kids who never quit, kept improving, and genuinely enjoyed cheering each other on," said Gilbert.

Paris U9 Team 1 rallies to semifinal finish at South Oxford championships

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The Paris Predators U9 Team 1 finished the season with a determined semifinal run at the South Oxford Softball Championships, battling through five games before falling just short of a berth in the championship final. It was a remarkable end to the year that had fans cheering on the edge of their seats.

After opening the tournament with a narrow 1-0 loss to Ayr, Paris responded with three straight victories to earn a place in the semifinals, where the team mounted a late comeback before falling 4-3 to Embro.

In the game against Ayr, Colin Becker, Gabriel McGee, Nicholas Shantz and Blair Norris all collected base hits, while Brody Norris drove a deep fly ball to left field in the final inning that appeared destined to score the tying run before an outstanding catch by the Ayr outfielder preserved the shutout. Luke Coverdale and Brody Norris shared pitching duties, with Jack Milton and McGee handling the catching responsibilities.

Facing elimination after weather forced schedule changes, Paris travelled to Hickson needing a victory to keep its season alive. Strong hitting from Blair Norris, McGee, Lucas Pooley, Brody Norris, Coverdale, Luke Larion and Jack Milton fueled an 8-3 victory, while Coverdale and Larion combined to limit Hickson to three runs over three innings.

Paris carried that momentum into Sunday's matchup against Innerkip. After both teams scored twice in the opening inning, Blair Norris, McGee, Brody Norris, Coverdale and Larion sparked a three-run second



The Paris Predators U9 Team 1 capped off its season with an impressive semifinal finish at the South Oxford Softball Championships, winning three straight elimination games before falling 4-3 to Embro in a hard-fought semifinal. Absent from the tournament but contributing to the team's success this season was Archie Benson and Clayton Mayne.

inning. Brody Norris struck out the side in the bottom half before Pooley, making his first pitching appearance of the tournament, closed out the 5-3 victory with a strong final inning.

The quarterfinals featured a rematch with Ayr, and Paris earned redemption with a 3-0 shutout. Blair Norris, Pooley, Brody Norris and Larion all contributed offensively in the opening inning, while Brody Norris and Pooley combined for eight strikeouts and allowed just three hits.

That win advanced Paris to the semifinals against Embro. After falling behind 4-0, the Predators refused to quit. Eldon Hanna, making his first appearance of the tournament at the plate, opened the final inning with a base hit before Blair Norris, McGee, Brody Norris and Coverdale followed with hits of their own. Paris scored

three runs and brought the tying and go-ahead runs into scoring position before Embro recorded the game's final out to secure a 4-3 victory.

Coach Jon Milton said the team's success throughout the weekend came from playing together.

"The boys came together and truly showed the definition of team this past weekend which helped them turn strong performances into wins when they needed it most," he said. "The comradery both on and off the field, tick-tack-toe defensive plays, strong bats and intelligent base running was nothing less than joyous to watch for the coaching staff, friends/family, and their fellow teammates."

Milton said the biggest improvement throughout the season came in the players' understanding of the game.

"The most growth was observed through the players' development of their softball intelligence," he said. "At the beginning of the season, the focus was throwing the ball to 1st base to get the batter out. From there, the players then began to observe defensive plays as either being a force out or tagging the runner, which helped them hold back the offence of the opposing team. Lastly, the boys were able to execute the 'easy out' philosophy in times of trouble to turn the tempo of the game around as well as close out innings when it was needed most to hold the score."

Asked to describe the season in a single word, Milton chose "exciting."

"From their first practice in May to their last game of the tournament, the overall progression of; ability, knowledge, skills, and most importantly, teamwork was exciting to observe as a coach, parent, and fan of softball," he said. "The development from each individual player as well as the team as a whole, put faces on the smiles of everyone and I hope that this season is one (1) of the seasons that these players look back to when they are adults and remember the fun that the game of softball provided."

Milton said coaching the team also reinforced an important lesson about youth sports.

"This team taught me as a coach that you 'just don't know,'" he said. "The excitement and unpredictability of softball and sports in general at this age, truly kept myself, fellow coaches, parents, and everyone at the diamond on the edge of their seats throughout the season."

He added that the experience strengthened his belief that enjoyment should always remain at the heart of youth athletics.

Resilient Paris U13 squad battles through Binbrook tournament with short-handed lineup

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

Full disclosure before you read on: I had the best seat in the house for this one. I coach this group alongside Heather Dunlop-Witt, so rather than pretending to be an impartial observer, I figured I'd use a little of the sports page's valuable real estate to share the weekend from the perspective of someone lucky enough to be in the dugout. A short-handed roster didn't stop the Paris Youth Softball U13 girls from putting together one of their strongest tournaments of the season, battling through four close round-robin games before earning a semifinal berth at the Binbrook Stampede Tournament July 24-26.

With several regular players away on vacation, Paris leaned on U11 players Addy Robinson, Ali Hall and Ellie Poland, who stepped into an older age bracket without hesitation and made meaningful contributions throughout the tournament.

Paris opened the tournament with an ex-

citing 8-8 tie against Binbrook Red. Offensively, Avery Peterson came through in the clutch, ripping a timely double to score the tying run. It proved to be one of the biggest hits of the game as the contest reached its time limit shortly after her drive to centre field. Each game featured a most valuable player selected by the opposing team. Kaylee Carr earned MVP honours after delivering another steady performance on the mound.

Game 2 matched Paris against Ancaster. The teams traded runs through much of the game before Ancaster used a five-run final inning to pull away for a 12-6 victory.

Despite the loss, it marked one of Paris' strongest offensive performances of the season. Several players who had been searching for their first hits found success at the plate, putting the ball in play with confidence.

Lead-off batter Olivia Turnbull earned MVP after finishing 2-for-3 with multiple RBIs.

Robinson made a highlight-reel catch in



Pictured left to right, back row, Reagan Deane, Addison Korslick, Addy Robinson, Brynlee Ross, Avery Peterson, Ellie Boland, Ali Hall, Kennedy Rusnak. Middle row, Lucy Witt, Olivia Turnbull, Alice Mclagan. Front row, Kaylee Carr.

centre field. Hall and Poland each recorded hits while displaying smart, aggressive baserunning.

Carr added another solid single, while Poland also made one of the defensive

Team's development shines through at Binbrook tournament

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

plays of the weekend behind the plate, applying a perfect tag to retire a runner attempting to score an extra run at home.

Paris continued its string of close games with a 9-6 loss to Binbrook Blue.

After a scoreless opening inning, Paris erupted for five runs in the second, only to see Binbrook answer with five of its own. The lead changed hands throughout the game in another evenly matched contest.

Carr and Reagan Deane shared the pitching duties, while Addison Korslick earned MVP honours after leading the offence with a double, a single and several timely RBIs.

Peterson stayed hot at the plate, collecting another double while driving in a run.

Paris closed round-robin play with an important win, edging Stoney Creek 5-4 in another game that came down to the final at-bat.

Deane made her debut behind the plate and quickly looked comfortable in the

catching role, preventing runners from stealing home while nearly throwing out another attempting to advance to third.

Lucy Witt overcame taking a hard-hit ball while pitching, returned to finish the inning, then shifted to shortstop where she turned one of the tournament's best defensive plays by catching a fly ball before racing back to second base to complete an inning-ending double play. Witt earned MVP honours.

Korslick also came up with a key defensive play at first base, making a quick-reaction catch on a line drive to halt a Stoney Creek rally.

After allowing four runs in the opening inning, Paris held Stoney Creek scoreless the rest of the way.

The 1-1-2 record was enough to send Paris into the semifinals thanks to a superior run differential.

Waiting for them was top-seeded Copetown, fresh off a commanding 14-2 victory in its final round-robin game.

Paris responded with one of its strongest

overall performances of the weekend.

Every player battled at the plate, forcing Copetown's pitchers to work deep into counts while showing patience and discipline that resulted in key walks and timely hits.

Alice McLagan played several smart at-bats, battling off quality pitches while laying off balls outside the strike zone to earn a spot on the bases during some critical moments.

Brynlee Ross, recently making the switch to batting left-handed, collected her first hit of the season.

Kennedy Rusnak enjoyed her best offensive game of the year, recording two solid singles while driving in a pair of crucial runs. Deane made another defensive highlight by sprinting down the first-base foul line to haul in a difficult catch, ending a Copetown rally. She also anchored the infield at shortstop with smart positioning and consistent defensive awareness while backing up teammates throughout the game. She was selected as the game's

MVP.

Although the tournament ended in the semifinals, the weekend showcased how much the team has grown over the course of the season.

The three U11 call-ups played with confidence against older competition, while several first-year U13 players delivered timely hits in pressure situations.

Paris also continued to receive steady performances from its pitching staff. Carr, Witt and Deane combined to provide consistent innings throughout the tournament, giving the team an opportunity to compete in every game.

Perhaps most encouraging was the continued growth away from the scoreboard. As the season has progressed, players have developed greater confidence and formed new friendships.

Paris wraps up its regular season July 29 before opening the Flamborough Minor Softball Association playoffs on Aug. 4.

County advances updated noise bylaw framework following public feedback

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

A proposed update to the County of Brant's Noise Control Bylaw is one step closer to adoption after an engagement summary outlining public feedback was received as a consent item by the Administration and Operations Committee on July 21.

The report, which will now move to council for approval, summarizes feedback collected during a month-long public engagement campaign held in May. The findings will help guide council's consideration of revisions to the bylaw, which is expected to adopt a hybrid approach combining qualitative assessments of unreasonable noise with quantitative decibel limits for recurring issues such as amplified sound and certain residential equipment.

According to the report, participants were not calling for either significantly stricter regulations or unrestricted flexibility. Instead, staff found there was broad support for a practical approach that protects residents from recurring disturbances while recognizing that some noise is a normal part of community life.

The County received 234 survey responses

during the engagement, including 210 from residents, four from business owners and 12 from individuals who identified as both residents and business owners. Eight responses from individuals outside the County of Brant were excluded from the analysis.

Among residents, noise was identified as a meaningful community issue. Nearly 44 per cent reported experiencing disruptive noise daily, while another 18.6 per cent experienced it weekly. Loud music (32.2 per cent), barking dogs (31.7 per cent), construction activity (21 per cent) and fireworks (17.1 per cent) ranked among the most common sources of concern.

While most respondents were aware of the current bylaw, many indicated they wanted clearer information about what types of noise are regulated, how complaints are investigated, how enforcement decisions are made and who residents should contact when issues arise.

The survey also highlighted concerns about enforcement. Although many respondents reported experiencing disruptive noise regularly, only 31.9 per cent had ever filed a complaint with the County. Of those who had, 56.7 per cent said they were not satisfied with the response they received.

Residents generally supported the County's proposed hybrid approach. Nearly 80 per cent agreed that general noise disturbances should be assessed based on how likely they are to disturb others, while 61.4 per cent supported introducing decibel limits for recurring noise issues. When asked how those recurring issues should be regulated, 42.6 per cent favoured a combination of decibel limits and qualitative standards, while another 22 per cent preferred decibel limits alone.

The report found strong support for preserving community events despite concerns about noise.

More than two-thirds (67.6 per cent) supported festivals, concerts and cultural activities that include amplified sound, with many respondents distinguishing between occasional event-related noise and ongoing disturbances. Comments suggested impacts from events could be managed through reasonable limits, advance notice and thoughtful planning.

Open-ended responses reflected that balance.

One resident wrote, "It should be a legitimate complaint. A dog barking for 8 hours continuously is different than a dog barking for 15 minutes."

Others emphasized the importance of preserving local events, with one respondent writing, "Such festivals like Applefest, are vital for a community," while another added, "Socially, we need music and festivals. Community events usually bring joy to a community. We must not discourage people from coming together."

Business owners, meanwhile, focused less on enforcement and more on maintaining flexibility for operations and community events.

Among business-only respondents, 75 per cent indicated their operations generate noise that could be affected by the bylaw. However, business respondents generally viewed noise as less significant than residents did, with 75 per cent reporting disruptive noise only rarely and saying it does not negatively affect their day-to-day operations.

The engagement report concludes that while residents and businesses approached the issue from different perspectives, both groups agreed future bylaw revisions should be clear, fair, practical and consistently enforced. The findings will now be considered by council as it reviews potential updates to the County of Brant's Noise Control Bylaw.

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Park overrun sparks tough questions over \$340K cost increase

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

A communication breakdown between a developer and County of Brant staff has left taxpayers and development charge reserves covering an additional \$340,000 for the construction of Arlington Meadows Park, prompting councillors to demand answers about how the costly mistake happened and how it will be prevented in the future.

During the Administration and Operations Committee meeting on July 21, councillors endorsed a recommendation to increase the project's budget by \$340,000, with \$306,000 coming from development charges and \$34,000 from the Parkland Dedication Reserve. The recommendation will go before county council for final approval.

The new community park, located at 7 Becker St. in Paris, is being built in the growing Arlington Meadows subdivision. Awarded to 39 Seven Inc. in September 2025 for approximately \$2.29 million, the project will include a splash pad, washrooms and other amenities. Construction began in November 2025.

However, county staff discovered significant grading deficiencies after construction began. An investigation found approximately 5,520 cubic metres of fill was miss-

ing from the park block, requiring extensive mitigation efforts to keep construction moving while responsibility for the missing material was sorted out.

The report states about 80 per cent of the approved contractor change orders are directly related to the soil deficiency, while additional consulting, testing and contract administration costs have continued to mount. Staff estimate total additional costs will reach approximately \$295,500, with the requested funding also including a contingency for any remaining unforeseen issues.

Coun. David Miller acknowledged the size of the project but questioned how such a significant budget increase could occur.

"It's a big project and to go 15% over it can add up," he said, asking whether taxpayers would ultimately bear the full cost.

Director of Facilities Kathy Ballantyne explained that 90 per cent of the overrun would be funded through development charges, with the remaining 10 per cent coming from the Parkland Dedication Reserve.

Ballantyne also noted staff were able to reduce some costs by transporting about 3,200 cubic metres of surplus soil from the Woodslee Avenue water tower stockpile to the Arlington Meadows site, potentially saving \$50,000 to \$170,000 in costs.

Miller then asked staff what lessons had

been learned to prevent similar cost overruns on future park projects.

General Manager of Community Services Phil Mete said several changes have already been implemented, including introducing a pre-qualified parks contractor program similar to the county's public works process, strengthening subdivision agreements, requiring grading certification for park blocks and implementing a vendor performance module expected to launch in 2027.

Coun. John Bell said the county needed to ensure the situation was not repeated.

"We must learn from this because we don't want to repeat it," Bell said, noting grading issues can often arise between the completion of subdivision work and final certification.

"How did we let such a big issue happen?"

Mete said the problem stemmed from a breakdown in communication between departments after the developer advised county staff the grading work had been completed.

"The developer sent an email to the community services to advise the grading was to plan. The email bypassed development services so the development services staff didn't get triggered to go out. We missed the community between each other. Everyone has been working on it since we found the problem."

Bell argued the developer should be responsible for more of the additional costs resulting from the grading deficiencies.

Mete said the developer has already

agreed to provide the missing topsoil but discussions regarding additional responsibility are continuing.

"But the problem is there's delays in the project and we're still going to work through with our solicitor on what we do with both the contractor and the developer," he said.

Committee chair Coun. John Peirce halted further discussion before it entered matters that could require an in-camera discussion.

Coun. Robert Chambers also questioned what impact drawing an additional \$306,000 from development charges would have on the reserve fund.

Heather Miffin, Director of Finance for the County of Brant, told councillors the development charges reserve remains in a healthy position and can absorb the additional cost.

Bell cautioned against relying too heavily on those reserves.

"The development charges fund is not an endless piggy bank we can keep drawing from," he said.

"We challenge the integrity of the system if we don't follow through, if we don't make the developer pay for his failing in this case."

Bell asked staff to report back to council on how the county ultimately handles recovery of the additional costs.

Despite the setbacks, staff expect construction to be completed during the second quarter of 2027, although the delays mean weather conditions could affect commissioning of the splash pad and washrooms.

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(JOHN BELL PHOTO)

Construction continues on Arlington Meadows Park in Paris, where crews are working to build the new community park and splash pad. County councillors recently approved a recommendation to increase the project's budget by \$340,000 after grading deficiencies and a communication breakdown between the developer and county staff resulted in significant additional construction and consulting costs. The project is now expected to be completed in the second quarter of 2027.

Canadian Tire Paris Exceeds \$5,000 Target to Support Local Youth Through Jumpstart

CHRIS WHELAN

Editor

Thanks to a wave of community support throughout June, Canadian Tire Paris has blown past its fundraising goal, collecting \$5,409 to help local children overcome financial barriers to sports and recreation.

The achievement was part of Canadian Tire's national Jumpstart Month. The Canadian Tire team in Paris originally set an ambitious \$5,000 target, relying heavily on register donations and a series of lively community events to rally support.

The store recorded 3,649 individual checkout donations during the campaign, achieving an extraordinary 20% customer donation conversion rate—meaning one out of every five customers passing through the checkouts chose to pitch in.

"We were blown away by the response at the cash registers," said Megan MacDonald, the Store Manager at Canadian Tire Paris. "To see one in five shoppers step up and contribute shows just how deeply this community cares about supporting our kids."

That figure earned the Paris store 2nd place in the Canadian Tire regional group for customer conversion rates—a testament to both staff enthusiasm and local generosity.

Fundraising efforts extended far beyond the registers. Throughout June, the store hosted a variety of events to engage shoppers, including:

- A Jumpstart community BBQ

- Raffle draws
- A "Buy a Mini Tool Chest for a Chance to Win a Big Tool Chest" promotion
- A crowd-favorite "Pie in the Face" fundraiser featuring store staff

Local organizations stepped up as well, with the Optimist Club of Paris making a notable \$500 donation to the campaign.

"Whether it was a loonie, a toonie, or a larger gift, every single donation helped make a difference," added local owners Angie and Matt Miskuski. "The energy from our team during events like the BBQ and the pie toss was incredible, but it's our customers and local partners who truly made this milestone possible."

A core feature of the Jumpstart program is that 100% of the funds raised at the Paris location stay directly in the local community. The money covers registration fees, equipment, and transportation costs for local children who might otherwise miss out on organized sports or recreational programs.

Since its launch in 2005, Jumpstart has helped more than 4.5 million children across Canada build confidence, teamwork, and healthy habits through sport. Nationally, Canadian Tire locations and their communities raised nearly \$2.5 million for the charity this year alone.

Local families interested in applying for Jumpstart funding can submit applications online at jumpstart.canadiantire.ca or inquire directly at the Canadian Tire Paris store for more details.



Airport boundary hearings delayed to allow more public review

MEDIA RELEASE

The City of Brantford and the County of Brant are notifying residents that the proposed Airport Boundary Adjustment statutory public meetings previously scheduled for July 27th and July 29th, 2026, have been rescheduled. The City of Brantford's statutory public meeting will now take place on Monday, August 10th, 2026, and the County of Brant's statutory public meeting will take place on Wednesday, August 12th, 2026, both at 6:00 p.m. at their respective Council Chambers.

This decision was made jointly by both municipalities to provide residents and landowners with additional time to review the updated Airport Boundary Adjustment map, which was released last week, and to allow municipal representatives to continue working together toward a draft restructuring agreement. City and County staff are constructively working through the final details of the proposed boundary adjustment agreement to ensure it reflects the objectives of both municipalities, as well as the feedback and concerns that

have been shared by members of the public throughout this process. Both municipalities remain committed to transparency and meaningful public engagement and are working toward a draft agreement that reflects what has been heard to date. The draft agreement will be released publicly in advance of the rescheduled statutory public meetings to provide residents with sufficient time to review before the public statutory meetings.

Updated details regarding both meetings, including how to participate and how to access the draft restructuring agreement once available, will be communicated publicly in advance of the new meeting dates. Residents are also encouraged to continue submitting questions and comments through the Let's Talk Brantford engagement portal at LetsTalkBrantford.ca/Airport.

Both the City of Brantford and the County of Brant thank residents for their continued engagement as this process unfolds and remain committed to ensuring the community has a full and meaningful opportunity to participate before any final decisions are made.



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Jokes

What kind of birds become priests?

Birds of prey.

What do you call a box of ducks with a prize inside?

Quacker Jacks.

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 18

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PET OF THE WEEK

BELLA

Meet our Pet of the Week:

Bella is in her happy place, enjoying a boatride while she anticipates a good swim in the lake .

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

ROBIN
BLUEJAY
CARDINAL
CHICKADEE
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1	4	8	7	6	5	2	9	3
9	5	2	8	4	3	6	7	1
6	2	9	4	7	8	3	1	5
8	1	5	6	3	9	7	4	2
4	7	3	1	5	2	8	6	9
2	8	4	3	1	7	9	5	6
3	9	1	5	8	6	4	2	7
5	6	7	9	2	4	1	3	8



HOMES OF HEROES:

If you have a story about a Paris Veteran, please email the committee at info@homesofheroes.ca. Let's work together to give all our veterans, living and fallen, in war and in peace, the recognition and honour they deserve. If you have any questions about the project, please email Neil Edwards at neiledwards51@gmail.com.



WEEKLY

Horoscope

July 29 - August 4 2026

ARIES

Mar 21 - Apr 20

Positive momentum builds, Aries. A welcome opportunity encourages fresh confidence and renewed purpose. Stay determined—it attracts success and reveals exciting possibilities ahead.



TAURUS

Apr 21 - May 21

Patience brings rewards, Taurus. A thoughtful decision creates stability and growing optimism. Trust yourself—it encourages progress and opens meaningful opportunities ahead.



GEMINI

May 22 - Jun 21

Fresh inspiration arrives, Gemini. An encouraging conversation sparks confidence and creative ideas. Stay curious—it encourages growth and reveals exciting possibilities ahead.



CANCER

Jun 22 - Jul 22

Comfort surrounds you, Cancer. A caring connection brings reassurance and renewed happiness. Trust your instincts—it encourages harmony and strengthens lasting relationships ahead.



LEO

Jul 23 - Aug 23

Your confidence shines, Leo. A rewarding achievement highlights dedication and natural leadership. Stay focused—it attracts recognition and encourages exciting opportunities ahead.



VIRGO

Aug 24 - Sept 22

Careful planning succeeds, Virgo. A practical step creates confidence and steady progress. Trust your judgment—it encourages achievement and strengthens valuable connections ahead.



LIBRA

Sept 23 - Oct 23

A positive conversation brings clarity and renewed understanding. Stay open—it strengthens relationships and encourages rewarding progress ahead.



SCORPIO

Oct 24 - Nov 22

Inner strength grows, Scorpio. A meaningful opportunity rewards determination and thoughtful choices. Trust yourself—it encourages success and builds lasting confidence ahead.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23 - Dec 21

Excitement returns, Sagittarius. A new experience inspires optimism and fresh motivation. Follow your instincts—it encourages adventure and memorable opportunities ahead.



CAPRICORN

Dec 22 - Jan 20

Steady determination pays off, Capricorn. A worthwhile accomplishment brings confidence and renewed focus. Stay committed—it encourages success and meaningful progress ahead.



AQUARIUS

Jan 21 - Feb 18

Creative thinking excels, Aquarius. An inspiring idea encourages confidence and exciting direction. Trust your vision—it encourages innovation and lasting achievements ahead.



PISCES

Feb 19 - Mar 20

Hope grows stronger, Pisces. A thoughtful gesture brings comfort and renewed optimism. Trust your intuition—it encourages happiness and reveals meaningful opportunities ahead.



FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

JULY 29

Wil Wheaton, Actor (54)

JULY 30

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Actor (79)

JULY 31

J.K. Rowling, Author (61)

AUGUST 1

Jason Momoa, Actor (47)

AUGUST 2

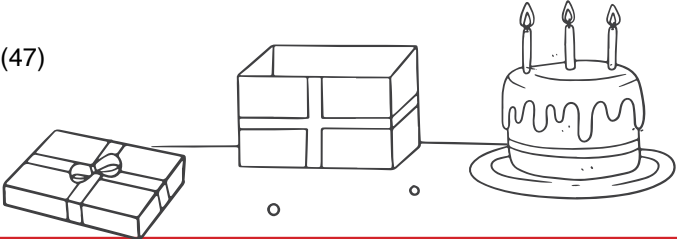
Austin Theory, Wrestler (29)

AUGUST 3

Tom Brady, Athlete (49)

AUGUST 4

Billy Bob Thornton, Actor (71)



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EMAIL TO INQUIRE INFO@THEPARISINDEPENDENT.COM

AUGUST 1, 2, 3 & 7,8,9

Sunflower Festival - at Brantwood Farms, 351 German School Road from 10 am to 5 pm. Wagon ride, sunflower trail, photos spots, play patch, farm animals, pick your own sunflowers. More information online at www.brantwoodfarms.com.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2

Outdoor Gospel Music Content - with Dave Randall. Sunday, August 2 at 7pm. Burtch Baptist Church, 352 Cockshutt Rd. Brantford. Bring a lawn chair. On-site parking, wheel chair accessible, inside if raining, freewill offering. Come and enjoy a beautiful casual evening of inspirational music.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11

Brant County Men's Probus Club Meeting - is on Tuesday, August 11th at 10 AM at the Sherwood Restaurant 799 Colborne Street in Brantford. The guest speaker will be Patricia Barlow, the Fitness Lady. New members are always welcome. Come join us for a coffee, fellowship and a presentation.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 13

Men's Probus Club of Brantford -will meet on Thursday, Aug. 13 at 10 a.m. at the Walter Gretzky Municipal Golf Course (320 Balmoral Dr., Brantford). The meeting will feature keynote speaker Dr. Mike Dixon, PhD, project leader of the Canadian research team studying the role of plants in supporting life in space and founder of the University of Guelph's Space and Advanced Life Support Agriculture (SALSA) program. The club welcomes retired and semi-retired men interested in friendship, social activities and guest speakers. For more information, contact Bill Hyde at 519-442-0510 or visit brantfordprobus.ca.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21

Movies in the Park Series - The County of Brant is hosting its free Movies in the Park series turning local parks into open-air theatres for family-friendly films under the stars. All screenings begin at dusk and are free to attend thanks to sponsorships from Riverside Heating & Air Conditioning Inc. and Grand Bridge Energy. Friday, August 21at King William Park in St. George, featuring the movie Bad Guys 2.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25

Knights of Columbus Monthly Meeting - on Tuesday, August 25th at 7:30 PM in the Sacred Heart Parish hall at 17 Washington Street, Paris.

MONDAY, AUGUST 31

Brant County Singers Hosting a Choral-oke - 7:00 pm at the Sydenham-Heritage United Church, 120 Sydenham Street, Brantford. The event is open to all potential singers as both the women's and men's choruses will be present to learn several songs. Join us for two hours of song and see if you enjoy the sounds with other singers.

Garden Club scholarship supports local graduate



(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Since 2018, the St. George Garden Club has awarded a \$1,000 scholarship each year to a County of Brant Grade 12 graduate pursuing post-secondary studies in agriculture, horticulture, forestry or environmental science. This year's recipient, Paris District High School graduate Violet Lamont, accepted the scholarship from club members Mary-Judith, Victoria, Dorothy and Betty. Lamont will attend Trent University this fall. The scholarship is funded through proceeds from the club's annual plant sale. Best of luck, Violet!

Thank You, PARIS!

TOGETHER, WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

This June, we set out to raise \$5,000 for Jumpstart.

Thanks to your incredible generosity,
we exceeded our goal!



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TIRE**
— PARIS —



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DONATION
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