SNOW BUDDIES CANCELLED PAGE 5

OLYMPIC CURLING BUZZ PAGE 11

The Paris Independent

Issue #230 WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2026 FREE

SWEET SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS (CHRIS WHELAN PHOTO)

Members of the County of Brant OPP joined Special Olympics athletes at the Paris Tim Hortons on Dundas Street on Saturday Jan 30 to help promote the Special Olympics donut campaign. From Jan. 30 to Feb. 1, 100 percent of proceeds from the specially decorated donuts at participating Tim Hortons locations supported Special Olympics programs, helping athletes with intellectual and developmental disabilities take part in sport and community activities. Local athletes were on hand to decorate donuts and meet customers. Pictured from left to right, Special Olympic Athletes Josh, Kailee, Spencer, and Trent donated their time and talents decorating donuts and signing autographs.

Brant opens 2026 community grants, funding reduced

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The County of Brant and the Brant Community Foundation have opened applications for the 2026 Community Grant Program, offering local non-profit groups access to roughly $135,000 in one-time funding.

This year's community grant funding was reduced from $350,000 in 2025 to $135,000, with $240,000 reallocated toward gender-based violence supports. In March 2024, County of Brant council approved a one-time emergency funding allocation of $266,177 to be shared among

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Work underway on North Paris fire station

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

Construction is now underway on the County of Brant's new North Paris Fire Station, with early-stage work set to continue through the winter and a projected completion date of April 30, 2027.

According to a recent staff update, construction officially began in late January with the next 45 days of work scheduled to focus on site preparation and excavation, marking the first major phase of construction.

This early work includes site prep and setup, excavation and related groundwork, allowing the project to advance to subsequent construction phases later in the year. Bi-weekly project meetings are being held to review progress, address issues as they arise and ensure the work remains aligned with the approved schedule.

Based on the contractor's current timeline, the North Paris Fire Station is expected to reach substantial completion by the end of April 2027. County staff say they will continue to monitor progress and report back to council should there be any significant changes to timelines or key milestones.

The new fire station is being built to serve the growing north end of Paris and surrounding areas, responding to increased call volumes and development pressures. In September 2025, council awarded the construction contract to

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Brant opens community grants amid ongoing program review, $135,000 up for grabs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

four local non-profit organizations providing services for survivors of intimate partner and gender-based violence. The funding supported counselling and frontline support positions at the Sexual Assault Centre of Brant, Victim Services of Brant, Willowbridge Community Services and Nova Vita. At its September 23, 2025 meeting, council supported the extension of the funding for another year. Applications for the Community Grant Program opened last Thursday and are available to non-profit organizations that provide benefits to residents of the County of Brant.

The program offers three funding streams: operating and event grants of up to $5,000 each, and capital project grants of up to $10,000. Applications must be submitted online by 4 p.m. on March 6.

This marks the third year the County has partnered with the Brant Community Foundation to administer the program, following a shift away from council-led grant decisions toward a formalized adjudication process.

That change has been the subject of debate over the past year, with several councillors raising concerns that smaller, volunteer-run organizations were being disadvantaged by a more technical application process, while larger, well-established groups with grant-writing experience were more likely to succeed .

Some applications in previous rounds were rejected for being incomplete or submitted late, including submissions from longstanding community groups, prompting calls for the County to revisit how grants are assessed and whether additional support should be offered to applicants unfamiliar with the process.

In September, council ultimately voted to maintain the partnership with the foundation, while introducing limited changes aimed at improving accessibility. Those included a commitment that applicants who miss minor submission requirements would be contacted before being disqualified, and the addition of clearer questions about how proposed projects benefit County residents.

The recent announcement that the grant process is open, issued through a joint press release from the County of Brant and Brant Community Foundation, reflects some of those changes will happen this year. The County says only complete applications will be reviewed but notes that applicants now have access to an online tutorial and additional support resources through the foundation.

A recorded grant application tutorial, along with program guidelines and application questions, is available on the County's website. Applicants can also contact a grants coordinator by phone or email for assistance.

The County says it anticipates strong interest in the program and that applications will be evaluated based on the volume of submissions received.

Last year, more than 100 applications were submitted, with funding requests significantly exceeding the amount available. A total of 109 grant applications represented a total of $631,831 in funding requests. A number of those applications were deemed late, incomplete or otherwise ineligible for funding. The remaining applications underwent the Foundation's adjudication process, resulting in the award of 75 grants, totaling $350,000.

An evening of achievement at the Brant 4-H awards banquet

JEFF JOHNSTON

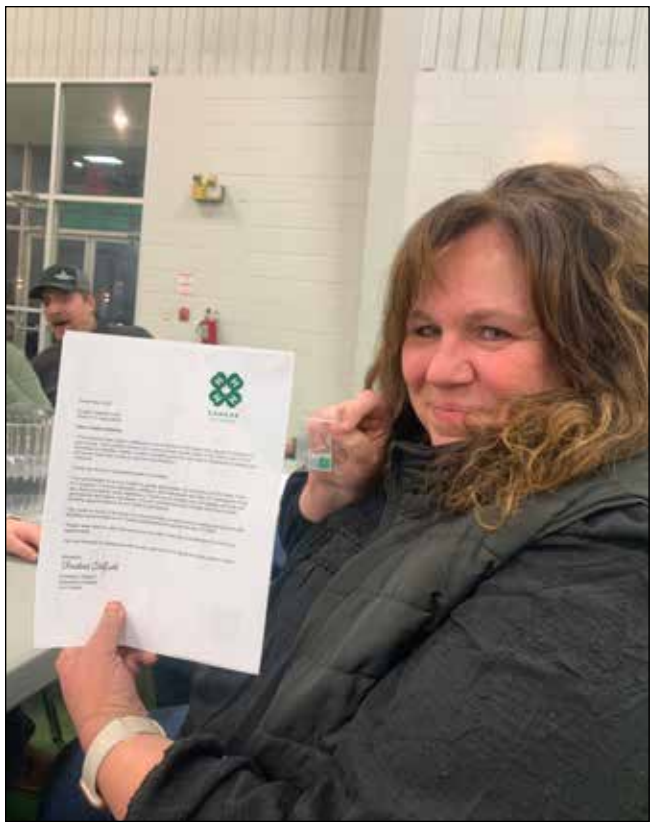
Paris Independent Correspondent

The Paris Independent was pleased to be invited to attend the Brant 4-H Awards Banquet on Friday, Jan. 30, held at the Special Events Hall at the Paris Fairgrounds. Hosted by Angie Cain, director of the Brant 4-H Association, the annual dinner and awards celebration brought together 4-H members, volunteers and local dignitaries from across Brant, Oxford, Haldimand and Waterloo counties to recognize the achievements of local youth.

Mayor David Bailey, Paris Fair Ambassador Grace Aulsbrook-Smith and Christine Olfield addressed the crowd and offered congratulatory messages.

The following photos capture highlights from an evening celebrating leadership, learning and community. For more coverage, including video from the event, visit The Paris Independent's social media pages.

Ashley Cain award winner for completing 24 clubs and being a youth leader



(JEFF JOHNSTON PHOTOS)

Angie Cain proudly displays her 15 year volunteer certificate.

Nicole Marcy, 4H Ontario award winner for being an amazing volunteer

Brook Cain a graduate of 4H Brant County.

Construction begins on North Paris fire station; completion targeted for spring 2027

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Lanca Contracting Ltd. for $5.99 million before HST, following a competitive tender process that attracted eight compliant bids.

The 11,406-square-foot facility will include six apparatus bays, training and administrative space, separate storage areas for firefighter gear and equipment, and design features intended to support future staffing growth. The station has been designed to meet net-zero and carbon-zero operational standards, with a fully electric system and rooftop solar generation.

In addition to construction planning, county staff are also advancing work on equipment and staffing. A draft request for proposals is being prepared to procure the apparatus required for the new station, including a tanker, pumper and light rescue vehicle. Staffing preparations are also underway. In recent recruitment cycles, additional firefighters have been hired for Station 1 in Paris to support training and operational readiness ahead of the new station opening. Once the North Paris Fire Station becomes operational, personnel will be assigned across responding stations to ensure balanced and effective coverage.

County staff are expected to provide council with project updates on a bi-monthly basis, including progress photos and milestone reporting, as construction continues.

A rendering shows the planned design for the North Paris Fire Station, now under construction. Early site work is underway, with the project expected to be completed by spring 2027.

(STEVE HOWES PHOTO)

A 150-year-old oak tree on the site of the future North Paris Fire Hall will remain in place and has been protected during construction. County council approved a new tree protection and enhancement policy in 2025, which was applied to the site following concerns raised by residents. Coun. Steve Howes shared that update on social media last month.

Brant Transit fares are going up: What you need to know before March

CELESTE PERCY-BEAUREGARD

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Transit riders in Brant County can expect each trip to cost a bit more as of March 1.

Last Tuesday night, council passed a by-law bringing the general fare from $5 to $6, and the 55+ fare from $3 to $4.

There is no change for kids under 12 or Canadian National Institute for the Blind card carriers, who ride free.

It's the first fare increase since 2019.

It bumps the county fares higher than several neighbouring services, which are in the $3 range for an adult trip — but the micro service isn't a typical transit system.

"It's challenging to compare Brant Transit, apples to apples, to other nearby transit services because the form of our transit is very specific to us," Rodel Ramos, the county's community outreach director, previously told councillors.

The transit service operates more like a ride-share taxi, where riders book a trip in advance and receive curb-to-curb service, Ramos said.

Trips can be within the county or to and from the neighbouring municipality of Brantford — which accounts for around 85 per cent of trips, according to a report councillors saw in November.

How do nearby transit fares compare?

Adult fare as of January 2026:

- Brantford: $3 a ride.
- Hamilton: $3.75 cash or $2.85 with a Presto card.
- Norfolk County: "In town" routes are $3 and "out of town" routes are $6.50.

In 2024, the county collected $101,119 in fares and $280,774 of provincial gas tax funding. This helped offset the county's contribution to the service, which was $880,710, the report said.

With around 1,000 unique riders a year, it means the county is essentially subsidizing riders at almost $900 a person, Coun. John Bell pointed out at the time.

A survey revealed more than half of the riders use Brant Transit to get to and from work. Around a quarter of riders use it to get to medical appointments, and a smaller group of riders uses it for running errands, going to school, or for leisure.

The service was expected to have completed 27,500 rides by the end of 2025.

Celeste Percy-Beauregard's reporting is funded by the Canadian government through its Local Journalism Initiative. The funding allows her to report on stories about Brant County.

Guiding Principles

1. Everyone has a story
2. The news should be free for all to enjoy
3. Good news beats bad news
4. A Newspaper should be a community effort (contribute to your local paper!)
5. Newspapers document history
6. Newspapers strengthen communities
7. Advertisers, big or small, should profit from their ads (meaning sensible ad rates)
8. Newspapers should be locally-owned and operated

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

Restoring small-town journalism, one community at a time!

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EDITORIAL

Proud to live in a community that shows up

Buster Volunteer Ice Rink

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

If you're looking for proof of what it means to live in a community that truly cares, you don't have to look very far in Paris. Sometimes, all it takes is a kind note, a small gesture, or a few words of appreciation shared publicly to remind us why this place feels like home.

This week, we've received several letters that quietly but powerfully capture the spirit of this town. They speak to neighbours who go out of their way to help one another, volunteers who show up day after day without asking for recognition, and local businesses and organizations that continue to thrive because people choose to get involved or go the extra mile. None of these acts are grand or flashy but together, they are what hold a community together.

Paris is growing. There's no question about that. New faces, new homes and new opportunities are shaping the future of our town. And we might not agree with that growth or the decisions that come from growth, but what's clear from these letters is that growth hasn't erased the small-town touch that defines us. A thoughtful gesture doesn't go unnoticed here. Helping someone shovel a sidewalk, volunteering your time, or simply saying thank you still matters and still makes an impact.

That sense of connection is what transforms a town from just a collection of streets and buildings into a community. It's what keeps service clubs strong, community groups active and local traditions alive. It's what makes people feel seen, supported and proud of where they live.

As Paris continues to evolve, holding onto these everyday connections will be more important than ever. They are the threads that bind us together, reminding us that community isn't something you inherit rather it's something you actively care for.

We're proud to be part of a town where people look out for one another, where volunteerism is valued, and where kindness still feels like second nature. And we know there are many more stories like these waiting to be told.

If you have a moment, we invite you to share yours. Write to us and tell us why you love living here, who made a difference in your day, or what community means to you. Let us know what makes Paris the Prettiest Town in Canada not just for how it looks, but for how it feels, inside and out.

We can't wait to hear from you.

Letters to the Editor

Grateful Neighbour

To the Editor:

Many thanks and a shout out to Mr Deane, Colin McClelland and the others whom names I don't know, for tirelessly keeping up with snow clearing all around St. James Church.

The many who attend services, functions and events, as well as those who simply walk by, thank and appreciate you greatly.

- Signed, A Grateful Neighbour

Small-town kindness shines at downtown Rexall

To the Editor:

Thank you to the sweet person in cosmetics at Rexall downtown last Saturday, for this free sample. Not only were they attentive and helpful when my friend had some questions, they also helped her feel very pampered on her birthday

Feeling the small town love, Paris!!!

- Shar O'Neill, Paris, Ont

Paris Legion president thanks Independent for keeping community connected

To the Editor,

As President of the 'Royal Canadian Legion Paris Branch 29', I am writing to express my sincere appreciation to the entire team at 'The Paris Independent' for the generous and ongoing coverage you provide to our Branch. Your recent stories and features have made a real, measurable difference in our community. Thanks to your publicity, we have already welcomed two new volunteers to our team—eager individuals who are now helping us carry forward our important work of supporting veterans, their families, and the broader Paris area. This kind of impact perfectly illustrates why local news matters so much.

In an era where national and international headlines dominate feeds, it's the dedicated reporting on hometown organizations, events, and people that truly keeps a community connected and thriving.

Your paper shines a light on the efforts of groups like ours, helping neighbours learn about opportunities to get involved, support one another, and build stronger ties right here in Paris.

Without outlets like 'The Paris Independent' many worthwhile local initiatives would go unnoticed, and that's why your role as a community newspaper is so vital.

Thank you again to 'The Paris Independent' for proving, once more, that local news truly does make a difference.

- Barry Humphry | President Royal Canadian Legion Branch 29

Brant's Snow Buddies program cancelled amid volunteer shortage

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

A shortage of volunteers has led to the cancellation of the Snow Buddies program this winter, reducing access to snow-removal assistance for some of the community's most vulnerable residents during a season of significant snowfall.

The volunteer-based program was designed to connect seniors, residents with disabilities and those with limited mobility with community members willing to help clear snow from sidewalks and driveways, tasks that can quickly become safety hazards during winter storms.

County officials announced in mid-December that the program would not continue this winter due to a decline in volunteer registrations. "Since it began, the Snow Buddies program has experienced challenges in registering enough volunteer 'Buddies' to assist those in need," said Sarah Dredge, manager of recreation services for the County of Brant. "Even with additional promotion efforts, we have not been able to connect everyone with volunteers to provide support." While detailed registration numbers for this winter were not available before deadline, Dredge said the primary type of assistance residents were seeking was snow shovelling for sidewalks and driveways, which can be a critical service for individuals who may be unable to safely manage snow removal on their own.

The loss of the program is particularly felt this winter, as repeated snowfalls have created difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions for residents with limited mobility. Icy sidewalks and blocked driveways can prevent people from leaving their homes, accessing medical appointments or safely receiving deliveries.

Dredge said residents who registered for Snow Buddies were informed during the application process that assistance could not be guaranteed without sufficient volunteers, and that not all requests could be matched.

"Residents were understanding when not matched, as it was clearly communicated during the registration process that matches could only be made if enough volunteers signed up," she said.

County staff explored whether similar programs existed in neighbouring communities, but found that many municipalities do not operate volunteer-based snow removal services. In some areas, Dredge said, support is offered through neighbourhood associations or community organizations rather than municipal programs.

With no County-run replacement for Snow Buddies, residents who still need help are being encouraged to seek assistance through informal community connections. Suggestions shared by the County include reaching out through local social media groups, posting flyers at schools and community spaces, connecting with neighbourhood youth, or arranging services through local snow removal companies.

At this time, there are no plans to revive the Snow Buddies program next winter.

However, residents or community groups interested in helping can still contact the County. Those willing to volunteer or seeking information about community support options are encouraged to reach out to the Community Partnership and Seniors Services Coordinator by email at parksandrec@brant.ca.

Accumulating snow has created challenges for residents with limited mobility during a winter marked by heavy snowfall. The County of Brant's Snow Buddies program was cancelled because of limited volunteer participation.

Dr. Andrew Burkett steps into top medical leadership role at BCHS

MEDIA RELEASE

Brant Community Healthcare System (BCHS) is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Andrew Burkett as Chief of Staff and Vice President, Medical & Academic Affairs, effective February 9, 2026.

Dr. Burkett is a highly respected Respirologist and Interventional Pulmonologist who has served as Chief and Medical Director of Internal Medicine at BCHS for the past three years. He brings extensive leadership experience and a strong commitment to advancing quality care and medical education.

"Dr. Burkett's proven leadership and dedication to patient-centered care make him an outstanding choice for this role," said David Diegel, Chair of the BCHS Board of Directors. "We are excited to welcome Dr. Burkett to this new role and look forward to his leadership and innovation."

Bonnie Camm, President & CEO, added: "Dr. Burkett's expertise and collaborative approach will be instrumental as we advance our academic partnerships and enhance the quality of care for our community. We are thrilled to welcome him to this expanded leadership role."

Dr. Burkett has held key positions within the region, including Medical Director of Quality and Patient Experience for the Waterloo Regional Health Network, and continues to serve on the Thoracic Advisory Committee for Ontario Health – Cancer Care Ontario. His clinical focus includes pleural disease and lung cancer diagnosis, and he has a strong academic background in epidemiology and interventional pulmonology.

BCHS extends sincere appreciation to Dr. Azra Khan for her steady interim leadership during this transition. Dr. Khan has been a tremendous support over these past several weeks and has gone above and beyond to support our patients, families, teams, and senior leaders during this interim period.

(BRANT COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE SYSTEM PHOTO)

Dr. Andrew Burkett has been appointed chief of staff and vice president of medical and academic affairs at Brant Community Healthcare System, effective Feb. 9, 2026. Burkett previously served as chief and medical director of internal medicine at BCHS and brings extensive clinical and leadership experience to the role.

County of Brant, GRCA launch enhanced flood mapping to help residents prepare

MEDIA RELEASE

The County of Brant and the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) are making it easier for residents to understand flood risk, with enhanced flood mapping now available to the public.

Flooding remains the number one natural hazard risk in the County of Brant. To help property owners better understand whether their homes or land may be vulnerable, the GRCA has developed detailed river flood mapping for the Grand River within the County of Brant and a portion of the Nith River in Paris.

The mapping divides the waterways into three sections: the Grand River from Glen Morris to Paris (Penman's Dam), the Grand River from Paris (Penman's Dam) to Onondaga, and the Nith River in Paris. Each section is further broken down into five flood zones, representing increasing levels of potential impact, with Zone 1 indicating the lowest risk and Zone 5 the highest.

"We encourage all property owners and residents to check the flood mapping and become familiar with the level of risk in their area," said Greg Demers, County of Brant's Director of Roads and Flood Coordinator. "This tool, in partnership with the GRCA, gives residents clear, accessible information that can help guide preparation and response planning during flood events."

Residents can access the interactive County of Brant Flood Map online to see whether a specific address falls within an identified flood zone. Knowing which river section and zone a property is located in can help residents take proactive steps to prepare for potential flooding, protect their property, and make informed emergency planning decisions.

The GRCA continuously monitors watershed conditions and issues flood messages that are shared with the community and County of Brant officials. During flood events, these messages identify which river sections and flood zones are expected to be impacted, making it important for residents to understand how their property is classified.

Forecasting flood impacts can be challenging due to changing environmental conditions, including ice jams. Residents are reminded to remain vigilant, monitor river conditions closely, and be prepared to respond quickly to protect their property or evacuate if necessary.

To stay informed, residents are encouraged to subscribe to County of Brant news at www.brant.ca/Subscribe and GRCA updates at www.grandriver.ca/subscribe, and to follow both the County of Brant (Facebook, Instagram and X) and the GRCA (Facebook and X) on social media.

More information, including access to the flood map tool, is available at www.brant.ca/flooding. Additional emergency planning resources can be found at www.brant.ca/emergencyplanning.

(COUNTY OF BRANT PHOTO)

High water from the Grand River inundates Bean Park in Paris, one of several areas covered under newly enhanced flood mapping released by the County of Brant and the Grand River Conservation Authority.

HISTORIC PARIS

PARIS PAST: Officer Southcote: keeping Brant safe, one lesson at a time

By Chris Whelan

It started, as these things often do now, with a Facebook post. I shared the above photograph from that I called "The Rural Mystery from 1969." In it, an Ontario Provincial Police cruiser is parked on a quiet gravel road. The passenger door is open. The officer is kneeling down in front of the car so he can be eye to eye with a little blonde girl in a pink dress, holding her small school bag. Behind them, there's nothing but rural Ontario: trees and bushes, a split-rail fence, open grass and sky. No landmarks. No street signs. Just a moment of quiet, country calm that could be almost anywhere.

In the caption, I wrote that we knew it was an OPP officer and a young friend, but the exact location was a mystery. With only the gravel road and that timeless rural landscape as clues, it felt like it could have been taken right here in the heart of the County of Brant. Maybe on a concession in Burford. Maybe along a back road near St. George. Maybe just outside of Paris. Wherever it was, it seemed to capture the spirit of our rural roots and the kind of community policing many of us remember.

So I asked for help: Did anyone recognize the officer or the girl? Was she lost? Had she missed the bus, as one person suggested? Did the scene look familiar to anyone who grew up in rural Ontario in the late 1960s?

The responses came quickly. Some people focused on the beauty of the image itself, calling it a Norman Rockwell moment that deserved to be painted. Others pointed out that it likely wasn't in Paris as we had our Police service up until amalgamation. And then came the comments that changed everything. More than one person looked closely at the photograph and said what they thought they saw: "Looks like Officer John Southcote." One commenter added that he had been a kind, caring man who lived in St. George, and shared a memory of spending time at his family home.

Not everyone agreed on the origin of the photo. More than one former Paris Police Service Constable noted the number on the cruiser door and suggested that the car itself likely wasn't from Brant County at all, but from the Downsview area at that time. The mystery of exactly where and when that moment took place deepened rather than resolved.

Whether or not that officer in the 1969 photograph truly was Constable John Southcote, the image had done its work. It stirred up memories of him and of a particular era of policing in the County of Brant. That one quiet roadside scene sent me down a rabbit hole of old clippings, photos, and childhood recollections featuring Provincial Police Safety Officer Constable John Southcote – a man who, for many of us growing up here in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s felt like a familiar part of the landscape of our lives.

One of the best images I found might be my favourite photograph of him. In it, Constable Southcote is crouched beside six-year-olds Joanne and David. Spread out in front of them is a toy highway, a little toy school bus, and a collection of Little People figures. Together, they're using this miniature world to demonstrate proper bus and road safety – how to get on and off the school bus, where to stand, how to cross safely.

Constable John Southcote looks on as Jeanne Dickie, 6, shows David Csetneky, also 6, the way to cross a highway to a bus.

It's such a simple scene, but it captures so much about how safety was taught in those days. It wasn't just lectures and rules. It was hands-on, practical, and surprisingly playful. The police officer wasn't some distant authority figure. He was right there on the floor, at kid level, moving tiny plastic people across a tiny plastic road so that real children would know how to cross the real ones. Once I had that image in my mind, other memories and clippings started to line up.

There's the bike rodeo at the Burford Community Centre, part of a week-long bicycle safety week sponsored by the Burford Optimist Club. Provincial Police Safety Officer John Southcote, along with Larry Hewitt and Mike Konkiewicz, would carefully inspect a bicycle during the rodeo. It wasn't just about handing out prizes. It was about making sure the bikes we rode were actually safe – brakes working, tires in good shape, reflectors where they needed to be.

Then there's the "junior police" experience for school children with Constable Southcote involved in finger printing kids or helping children try on riot gear. Those visits to the station left a big impression. We were given a tour, fingerprinted "like real criminals" (which was wildly exciting when you were eight), and then sent home with our own fingerprint cards as souvenirs. It was equal parts serious and thrilling. We learned that the police station wasn't just where "bad guys" went – it was where important work was done to keep the community safe, and where kids could ask questions and see behind the scenes.

Another piece of the puzzle comes from 1979, when an article announced that local school safety patrollers were heading to Ottawa. Safety patrollers from across the County of Brant, including Paris, were chosen to travel to Ottawa for a special event honouring their work. Among those mentioned are Constable John Southcote, Paris Police officer Jonathan Allway, and North Ward School teacher Linda Simser, who served as a chaperone.

Looked at separately, each of these memories is just a moment in time: a big motorcycle and a little boy, a bike being inspected, a girl with inky fingers, kids in riot helmets, a group of patrollers on their way to Ottawa, two six-year-olds learning bus safety with toy figures.

Seen together, they form something bigger – a portrait of a particular kind of policing and a particular kind of community.

For those of us who grew up here, Officer Southcote wasn't just a name in the paper. He was a regular presence in our schools, on our streets, and in our memories. We saw him at bike rodeos, school assemblies, and safety demonstrations. We knew his face long before we ever knew his full title.

In an era before social media, before online campaigns and viral videos about safety, this was how it was done: one classroom at a time, one bicycle at a time, one conversation at a time. A police officer kneeling beside a child, explaining where to stand when the bus doors open. A steady hand guiding a small one across a painted crosswalk. A friendly authority figure who could be both serious about safety and gentle with shy, nervous kids.

Looking back now, that 1969 photo on Facebook feels like more than just a nostalgic image. The strong reaction it got – the comments, the memories, the "Hey, isn't that Officer Southcote?" – shows how deeply those moments lodged in the minds of the people who lived them.

For many of us, he represents a time when community policing had a very literal meaning. The officer knew the kids by name. The kids, in turn, knew that the person in uniform standing at the front of their classroom or inspecting their bike wasn't a stranger. We knew him by name.

In Paris Past, we often talk about buildings that have disappeared, businesses that have changed hands, and traditions that have faded away. But just as important are the people who quietly did their jobs so consistently that they became part of the backdrop of our lives.

Constable John Southcote was one of those people. These memories all sparked by a single old photograph and one simple comment: "That looks like Officer John Southcote."

Stronger elections start with stronger participation

It's time to rebuild participation in local democracy

LUKAS OAKLEY

Special to the Paris Independent

Last month, I attended this year's Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) conference. At the conference, ROMA's parent organization, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), shared details of their Healthy Democracy Project, which aims to help foster a stronger, more vibrant, more widely participated in election process in 2026.

Voter turnout has steadily decreased in municipal elections, from 43% province wide in 2014 to a record-low of 36% in 2022. Further, less people are putting their names forward for election, with 553 seats across Ontario being filled by acclamation (including the County of Brant's Ward 4), and more than 20 percent less people running across the province between 2010 and 2022. AMO's research has shown a correlation as well between these two statistics: where there were acclamations, or uncompetitive races, voter turnout was depressed by up to 10% (this held true in Ward 4, where significantly less voters turned out to vote for a mayor as well).

We should all find this greatly concerning, as many important issues are handled at the municipal level, from road maintenance to funding libraries, planning community growth to running social services, building new recreation facilities and collecting household waste. We need both your input as the electorate and community residents, and local leaders to step up to share their views and opinions on how to guide the nine-figure annual budget of the municipality. I strongly believe that competitive elections generate great new ideas, regardless of who wins at the end of the day, and thus none of us hope to see acclamations later this year.

So why are less people putting their name forward, or choosing not to reoffer? AMO identified three key factors at work: time commitments outpacing what is "expected" on paper, limited compensation, and social costs. The first two work together: the vast majority of councils across Ontario, including our own, presume council to be a part-time position and compensate thusly ($36,000 gross salary for a Brant councillor) but hours and schedule far surpass the hours budgeted for. County of Brant compensation for its council assumes 15 hours a week in meetings, preparatory work, constituency work, and more; I can tell you from personal experience it averages close to 30 hours. Factoring in that council, with its committees, has morning, afternoon, and evening meetings, let alone showing up for community events, gatherings, and more that are expected (and they should be to do the job right!), it's incredibly challenging for members of council to fit their "day jobs" into these schedules. AMO identifies in their studies that part-time councils struggle with getting younger candidates, diverse candidates, and female candidates more so than their full-time counterparts.

The other complicating factor which discourages people from running is the increasing temperature of political discourse and the ease of access to you as an elected official (or to frame it differently, the impossibility of disconnecting). Nasty comments, threats, and more have become more commonplace, which understandably can make anyone shy away from putting their name forward.

Over my term of council, an experience shared by many of my municipal colleagues, I have received threats and insults directed at both myself and my family, at times serious enough to require police involvement. I lost an employment opportunity as a result of my support for an issue at council—specifically, gender-based violence support services, a position I hold without a single regret—and I responded to urgent community concerns at all hours.

Other councils have made the news about these types of issues. Both the councils of Pickering and Sarnia have at varying times been forced to go fully remote for safety reasons for council, staff, and the public. T Many community members have shared this concern with me as a reason they would not consider seeking office and these are absolutely incredible, brilliant, passionate people we would be darn lucky to have represent us around the horseshoe.

So, with all of that (and how attractive I've just made the role of elected official sound), what can we do? A few things, in my humble opinion.

First of all, as the electorate, we all need to recognize (and act accordingly) that the incredible people who choose to run for office are human and are deserving of kindness. I encourage folks to be passionate in their beliefs, and there are times where all of us will vehemently disagree with a decision or individual politician, but it's unfair and unproductive to be nasty to the people involved. This extends to participation in public meetings as well. Most recently we've had conversations surrounding Cleaver Road Bridge, and members within our public gallery booed and hissed at a member of the public expressing a dissenting opinion. This behaviour discourages healthy debate and future participation by members afflicted. In short, it costs nothing to be kind, and we can all disagree without being disagreeable.

Second, I would strongly encourage the next term of council to consider when it conducts the once-a-term review of ward boundaries and council composition to change to full-time councillors (I would imagine at one a ward rather than two). You, as voters and ratepayers, deserve a council that's full-time job is running your local government, and the future elected officials deserve to have their time and energy appreciated. I fully acknowledge that there have been times when I haven't returned a call as quickly as I should have or couldn't continue advocating on an issue, but I am only human, with limited hours in the day and other paid work to maintain.

Finally, seek out your local leaders and encourage them to step forward and share their ideas. We need them, and they may not always see themselves in these roles—or realize just how much they have to offer. It might even be you. I certainly never imagined myself in this role, but a few community members and mentors encouraged me to do so in the spring of 2022, and here I am today serving you. It's a challenging role, yes, with all the issues I've highlighted, but I can share with you from experience that is rewarding and meaningful like no other.

All in all, this election cycle, I hope we see many talented, wonderful people choose to run for office, and all of you turn out to vote for them. Local democracy is important; I encourage you to make time to participate in this process this year.

Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. Alex Honnold, solo climbed Taipei 101 on Jan. 23, 2026. What country is that in?
2. What does WEF stand for?
3. What does China's Terracotta Army protect?
4. What animal species did Jane Goodall study?
5. How many years ago did the Ice Age end?
6. Williams and Bosc are varieties of which fruit?
7. Which basketball team became the first to reach the milestone of 3,000 wins in 2010?
8. In beer, what does IPA stand for?
9. The gopher is a member of what order of mammals?
10. What vehicle is used to smooth an ice rink?

This week's answers are found on pg. 19

Nominations open for Brantford Sports Council's 20th annual sports awards

PARIS INDEPENDENT STAFF

Paris Independent Contributor

The Brantford Sports Council is now accepting nominations for its 20th annual Sports Awards and Recognition Celebrations.

The awards program recognizes outstanding achievements by local athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, teams and sponsors who are actively involved in supporting youth sports in the community.

Nominations for the 2025 awards will be accepted until March 22, 2026, across a range of categories celebrating leadership, sportsmanship, volunteerism, coaching, officiating and long-term contributions to sport.

Award categories include the Kevin Finney Memorial Award for Sportsmanship and Dedication, the Phyllis Gretzky Memorial Award for Female Youth Leadership, the Frank Bricker Memorial Award for Male Youth Leadership, and the John Macklin Memorial Award for Coach of the Year, among others.

Additional honours include awards for excellence in sports officiating, lifetime sponsorship, lifetime volunteerism, team of the year and sport event excellence.

Nomination forms and award criteria are available through the Brantford Sports Council's website at www.brantfordsportscouncil.ca. More information about the Sports Awards and Recognition Celebrations can also be found online or by contacting the council directly by email info@brantfordsportscouncil.ca

Local cat rescue gears up for annual fundraiser

KIMBERLY DE JONG

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Hearts to Home Feline Rescue and Sanctuary will be hosting its "Crazy Cat People" Pawsta Dinner and Comedy Show fundraiser event on Saturday, February 7, 2026.

The eighth annual event will take place at the Best Western Brantford Hotel and Conference Centre, and doors open at 6 p.m.

Upon arrival, guests will have the opportunity to browse the silent auction table and enter to win different door prizes before sitting down for dinner.

The menu for the evening includes pizza, pasta, salad, garlic bread, followed by tea, coffee and dessert. While there are no gluten free options, there is vegetarian available.

As usual, comedian Chris Jarvie will serve as the evening's master of ceremonies, and the comedy show will kick off at 8 p.m.

(KIMBERLY DE JONG PHOTO)

Timmy Boyle jokes about his costume change in the bathroom of the Best Western during Hearts to Homes Feline Rescue and Sanctuary's seventh annual Comedy Show and "Pawsta" Dinner fundraiser on Saturday, February 8, 2025.

The Paris Independent SPORTS
Jumpstart Bon départ
Sponsored by Paris Canadian Tire

Full Moon Face Off draws 51 teams to Paris, Brant County arenas

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

The Paris Minor Hockey Association's inaugural Paris Full Moon Face Off tournament wrapped up Jan. 25 after a busy three-day run that brought 51 house league teams to Brant County from the U11 to U18 levels.

Tegan Blake, Communications and Liaison representative for Paris Minor Hockey, said the weekend went smoothly from an organizational standpoint and has already sparked interest for next year.

"The weekend was a huge success," Blake said. "Many teams enjoyed it and are looking forward to next year already."

Coordinating an event of that size required careful scheduling, particularly with 18 teams competing in the U11 division alone. Games were spread across three arenas; the Brant Sports Complex, Burford Arena and the Gaukel Memorial Community Centre in St. George to ensure sufficient ice time for all teams. A small but mighty committee, composed of Blake, Brittany Espinola, Peggy Pawley and Rob Delaronde, spearheaded the inaugural event.

The Paris U18LL2 Wolfpack celebrate their silver-medal finish at the Paris Full Moon Face Off tournament after advancing to the finals Jan. 25, where they fell 2–1 to the North Middlesex Jr. Stars in a tightly contested championship game.

The Paris U13LL2 Wolfpack pose together after a round robin win on Jan.23 at the Paris Full Moon Face Off tournament. They finished round-robin play with three wins and a tie before falling 5–3 in the semi-finals to the Belmont Rangers, the eventual U13 division champions.

Representing the host organization, Paris Wolfpack teams delivered several strong performances, including a deep run by the U18LL2 Wolfpack, who advanced to the championship game. Paris reached the final with a 3–1 round-robin record, defeating St. Thomas, Penetang and Delhi before facing North Middlesex in the title game.

After a 6–0 loss to North Middlesex earlier in the tournament, Paris kept the championship close, with the game tied 1–1 late in regulation. North Middlesex scored with 15 seconds remaining to secure a 2–1 win, leaving Paris with a silver-medal finish.

In the U13 division, a the LL2 Wolfpack team advanced to the semifinals after winning three games and tying one in round-robin play. Paris fell 5–3 to the Belmont Rangers, who went on to win the division title.

Blake credited volunteers and community support for keeping the tournament running smoothly across all venues. Board members were on site throughout the weekend, while volunteer high school students staffed coach sign-in desks. Timekeepers were scheduled around their availability, with many also participating as players.

Winter weather created one unexpected challenge, when a team travelling from Owen Sound was unable to reach the tournament for its first game due to road closures. Organizers were able to reschedule the game later that day, so the team did not miss any play.

"This was our inaugural year for the Paris Full Moon Face Off tournament, and we're looking forward to many years in the future," Blake said.

Division winners were Mount Brydges Cougars LL3 (red) in U11, Belmont Rangers LL2 in U13, South Bruce Blades in U15 and North Middlesex Jr. Stars in U18.

PARIS MINOR HOCKEY
FULL MOON TOURNAMENT SCORES

U11 Team 1
- Game 1: 5-1 win against Beverly Bandits
- Game 2: 5-2 loss against Mount Brydes Cougars (Blue)
- Game 3: 8-1 win against St. George Generals

U11 Team 2
- Game 1: 1-1 tie against Woolwich Wildcats
- Game 2: 5-4 loss against Burford Coyotes
- Game 3: 10-0 loss against Cayuga Stars

U11 Team 3
- Game 1: 6-1 loss against Penetang Flames
- Game 2: 7-1 win against Port Dover Sailors
- Game 3: 8-2 win against Huntsville Otters

U13 Team 1
- Game 1: 1-1 tie against Woolwich Wildcats
- Game 2: 2-2 tie against Welland Tigers
- Game 3: 2-1 win against Huron Bruce Blizzard
- Game 4: 1-0 loss against Mitchell Meteors

U13 Team 2
- Game 1: 4-3 win against Port Stanley Sailors
- Game 2: 3-2 win against Midland Centennials
- Game 3: 3-3 tie against Huron Bruce Blizzard
- Game 4: 3-2 win against Clearview Canucks
- Semi finals: 5-3 loss against Belmont Rangers

U15 Team
- Game 1: 6-2 loss against Beverly Bandits
- Game 2: 4-3 loss against New Hamburg Huskies
- Game 3: 3-3 tie against Hagersville Hawks

U18 Team 1
- Game 1: 5-0 loss against Zurich Thunder
- Game 2: 4-0 win against Ottawa South
- Game 3: 4-1 loss against Oro Thunder
- Game 4: 3-2 win against South Kent

U18 Team 2
- Game 1: 4-2 win against St. Thomas Stars
- Game 2: 5-2 win against Penetang Flames
- Game 3: 4-3 win against Delhi Rockets
- Game 4: 6-0 loss against North Middlesex Jr. Stars

Paris Curling Club rolls out the welcome mat during Olympic season

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

With the Winter Olympics getting underway this weekend, Canadians can expect a lot more yelling and sliding granite on their television screens. As the only Olympic sport with games broadcast every day of the Games, curling is once again in the spotlight and clubs across the country are ready to use that momentum to welcome newcomers curious to try the sport for themselves. In Paris, the Paris Curling Club, located at 14 Oak Ave., is hosting a couple two-hour Try Curling sessions this month, with club members on hand to welcome newcomers and introduce them to the sport.

"Interest in curling always explodes during an Olympic year and this year at the Paris Curling Club, we decided we wanted to give people the chance to experience a little taste of what they are seeing on TV these next few weeks and to try it out for themselves," said Ashley Heys, a local curler and member of the Paris Curling Club Board.

The Try Curling classes are for adults 18+ who are either brand new to the sport or have only stepped on the ice once or twice before. With a team of experienced volunteer instructors to help safely teach the very basics in a supportive and fun environment, participants will learn how to safely navigate the ice, how to throw a rock and a bit of sweeping too. All participants need to pack is warm, athletic clothing, clean indoor running shoes and a desire to learn and have fun! Heys said the sessions are a great way for participants to see if curling is for them before committing to the club's full 6-week Learn to Curl program or before joining a league next Fall.

"The Friday night Mixed League, Saturday Open league or our U5 (Under 5 years of experience) league are great ways for new curlers to play the sport while continuing to learn and develop their skills from more experienced curlers," explained Heys.

The Paris Curling Club strives to be "the friendliest house in town" and the club's end-of-year survey last year indicated that this is a huge reason why members continue to come back each year. What makes the atmosphere so friendly? Traditionally, curling games end with "broom-stacking," a long-standing custom where teams sit together afterward to socialize. Paris curlers say that sense of community is just as important as the game itself.

The club also looks for ways to bring members together across all experience levels, from those new to the Learn to Curl program to curlers with decades on the ice, through regular league play and social bonspiels held throughout the season.

"It's always exciting to try and replicate the crazy shots you see the pros make on TV, but one of the best things about the sport, is that you will find yourself playing with and connecting with people from all sorts of backgrounds, with all sorts of experience that you likely never would have in your regular day-to-day," said Heys. "I have been curling now for 7 years at the Paris Curling Club and I can truly say that I come for the curling, but stay for the friendships."

Founded in 1843, the Paris Curling Club is one of the oldest curling clubs in Canada, with roots tracing back to Scottish settlers who first played the sport on local rivers and ponds. Over the decades, the club has weathered fires, relocations and rebuilding efforts, eventually settling into its current home in 1961. Today, the club continues that long tradition, offering leagues and programs that welcome curlers of all ages and experience levels while maintaining the sport's strong sense of community.

Try Curling classes will be held from 3-5pm on February 8 and February 22. Registration is open now on the Paris Curling Club website and participants are welcome to register for both sessions if they wish! Any questions can be directed to info@pariscurlingclub.com.

Graduates of the Paris Curling Club's 2024 Learn to Curl program are pictured after completing the introductory course. The club is now offering Try Curling sessions this month to give new participants a first taste of the sport.

Flashback

(SUBMITTED BY SCOOP STEWART)

Members of the 1967 Paris Jr. C Mounties Inter-County champions, coached by the legendary Wally Kalichuk. The roster includes future Paris 29er standouts Rick Pottruff, Roddy Davidson, Tooter Belair and my personal favourite hockey player, Andy Moran — a tremendous athlete and community builder who belongs in the Brant Hall of Fame. Keep your stick on the ice. Always a pleasure. — Scoop Stewart

Canadian athletes prepare for Olympic spotlight as Milan hosts historic Games

GEORGE LE GRESLEY

Sports Correspondent

This is the first time Milan has hosted the Winter Olympics, hosting all arena events, including hockey, figure skating, short-track speed skating, and the opening and closing ceremonies. The remaining events will take place in Cortina, about 400 kilometers north.

Events take place between Feb 4 - 22, with the Opening Ceremonies on February 6 starting at 1:30 PM EST. The opening ceremony will feature performances by Mariah Carey, tenor Andrea Bocelli, and, of course, the athletes representing the competing countries. Mikael Kingsbury and Marielle Thompson, both 33, are Canada's flag bearers and, for both athletes, their fourth Winter Olympic Games. Mikael, a mogul skier, has had a successful career with over 100 World Cup wins and three Olympic medals. Meanwhile, Marielle, a ski cross racer, has won Olympic Gold in 2018 and a silver medal in 2022.

There are plenty of opportunities to watch these games on CBC, CBC News Network, Sportsnet and TSN in Canada. For those who don't subscribe to any of these networks, the best way to view events live or taped is to download the free CBC Gem App on a "Smart TV", or your mobile device or tablet. CBC Gem is free to use and offers a variety of CBC programming.

Here's this week's schedule, with the events in **Bold** and the Canadian athletes in **Italics.**

Wednesday February 5

As usual, there are sporting events that begin before the Olympic Games' official opening, and **Mixed Doubles Curling** begins its round-robin competition. *Jocelyn Peterman* and *Brett Gallant* represent Canada. These two Albertans have had success in this event, both on the international and national stages and have a great chance to medal. Their first game will be against Czechia.

The **Women's Hockey** tournament kicks off, with the Canadian side, who are always in the mix for medals at this event, facing Finland at approximately 9 AM.

Snowboarding also begins this day, and Olympic medalists from Canada *Eliot Grondin* and *Meryeta O'Dine* will lead the way. Be sure to watch out for the **Half Pipe** event, where Canadian Felicity Geremia will contend for Gold in this event.

Friday February 6

The Opening Ceremony is today, and the **Figure Skating** events begin. Canada has 12 men and women competing in Figure Skating, most notably *Piper Giles* and *Paul Poirier* in Ice Dance. *Deanna Stellato-Dudek* and *Maxime Deschamp*s have medalled in two international events and could be on the podium.

Saturday February 7

The **Men's Downhill Ski** race and medal presentation will occur. Cameron Alexander, who will be competing at his first Olympic games, has had a breakout year on the World Cup circuit, stepping on the podium five times this season.

The **Women's 10 KM + 10 KM Skiathlon** includes Medal presentations.

The **Women's 3000 m Speedskating** race and medal presentation occur. Look out for Valerie Maltais, a recent Bronze Medal winner at her sport's last World Cup event.

The **Men's Singles Luge** race, where speeds of up to 140 km per hour are reached, will feature Canada's very young team competing in this event.

Women's Ski Jumping kicks off today, and Abigail Strate, who has had success this past year, might make it to the podium.

Canada's Mixed Curling side takes on Estonia.

At the ski hill, the **Men's Big Air competition** and medal presentation. Watch for Eli Bouchard, who has had success at the Junior Olympic level, to take a run at the podium.The Canadian **Women's Hockey** team takes on Switzerland.

Sunday February 8

The **Women's Downhill Ski Race** and medal presentation. Although a favourite, American Lindsey Vonn, who came out of retirement this year and dominated in World Cup Races, was recently injured in her knee in a crash, her team claims that she'll be ready for her runs today.

The **Men's 10 Km + 10 km Skiathlon** race and medal presentation. This event is a cross-country ski event with two styles: traditional and skating.

The **Mixed 4 X 6 km Biathlon** race and Medal presentation take place.

The **Men's Parallel Giant Slalom** race and Medal Presentation. Racers are placed on a playoff-style bracket, where two competitors snowboard down identical slalom tracks, with the first to finish advancing and the loser eliminated.

The **Canadian Mixed Curling Team** takes on Korea.

The **Men's 5000 m Skate Race** and medal presentation occur. Watch to see if veteran Ted-Jan Bloeman, who won silver at the Olympics in 2024, can medal this year.

Monday February 9

Canada's Mixed Curling Doubles team plays Switzerland.

Women's Freeski Slopestyle Race. The course is a downhill skatepark race, featuring obstacles like jumps and rails.

Men's Team Combined Slalom race and medal presentation.

Women's 1000 m Speed Skating race and medal presentation. *Carolina Hiller-Donnelly*, skating in her first Olympic games might be a surprise contender!

If Canada qualifies, they will compete in the Mixed Curling Semi-Final.

On the ski hills, the **Women's Snowboard Big Air** Final and Medal Presentation,

Figure Skating events are scheduled today.

Men's NH Individual Ski Jumping and medal presentation. This event takes place on a minor hill and is judged on distance and

Women's Ice Hockey match between Canada and Czechia.

House League Standings - Week of January 20th

7-8 Year-Old (House League)

King Pineapple defeat Lakers, 26-10
Warriors defeat Fruit, 24-14

This week's top scorers:
1. Hukam, King Pineapple,16 points
2. Ryder, Warriors,12 points
3. Jaime, Fruit, 10 points

9-11 Year-Old (House League)

Warriors defeat Lakers, 20-1
Raptors defeat Tigers, 16-14

This week's top scorers:
1. Benson, Warriors,16 points
2. Laith, Tigers, 8 points
3. Owen, Warriors, 8 points

Titans fall to Merchants, Navy Vets despite strong goaltending

GEORGE LE GRESLEY

Sports Correspondent

The Paris Titans endured a tough road loss Thursday, Jan. 30, falling 8–2 to the Norwich Merchants.

Norwich jumped out to an early lead and never looked back, firing 47 shots on Titans goaltender Calvin Gardner and building an 8–0 advantage after two periods. Kayden Blacquiere and Cole Kersey scored for Paris in the loss.

The Titans bounced back with a more competitive effort Saturday against the first-place Woodstock Navy Vets. Birthday boy Colton Thomson was tagged to start in goal. The play in the first period was tight, with both sides having one power play each.

The second period was much like the first; the Titans were playing even, and there was a stretch when one might have thought the Paris side had a chance to win. With 4:12 left in the period, Thomson in the net takes a shot that rebounds to his left to a Woodstock player's stick, who shoots the puck past Thomson, who dives but is too late to make the save. At the end of the period, Woodstock led the Titans 1-0.

In the first ten minutes of the third period, each team had a power-play opportunity, but neither scored. At the 12-minute mark, a Woodstock player breaks out alone at the Paris net, chased by a diving Titan player who trips the man, and the referee calls for a penalty shot. Thomson knew the Woodstock player and knew where he could come from so Thomson moved slowly out of his crease and waited for the shooter's first move. Standing straight up, Thomson made the save on the player who tried to go between the legs. Woodstock scores a power play goal with four minutes left in the period, followed by an empty net goal to end the game as a 3-0 win for Woodstock.

In the end, Colton Thomson was named first star of the game, making a whopping 41 saves. The coaching staff received great effort from the team for two periods. The goal now for the players and coaching staff is to get three periods of consistent effort for the rest of the season and playoffs.

This past Sunday, they would have played the Tavistock Braves, who will likely be their first-round playoff opponent. Details not available by press deadline. On Thursday, February 5, at the Brant Sports Complex, they face the New Hamburg Firebirds at 7:30. On Friday, they travel to Tavistock to meet the Braves and end the week on Saturday, February 7, when the Hespeler Shamrocks come to the Brant Sports Complex for a 7:30 puck drop.

Winter Active Month highlights fitness, wellness and connection in County of Brant

MEDIA RELEASE

County of Brant

The County of Brant is encouraging residents to embrace the season as February is officially Winter Active Month — a community-wide celebration of physical activity, mental well-being, and staying connected during the colder, darker days of winter.

"It can be tempting to stay indoors during the colder months, but getting out and exploring the community can make a huge difference in both physical and mental health," said Stacey Elllins, Director of Parks and Recreation for the County of Brant.

To celebrate, the County of Brant is pleased to offer daily activities throughout February for residents of all ages and abilities to enjoy. Most programs are free or offered at a very low cost, making it easy for everyone to participate and stay active close to home.

Opportunities include indoor recreation, such as skating, walking, fitness programs, family activities, and more — all designed to help residents make the most of the winter season. Getting active outdoors is also highlighted – including visiting the Winter Walkway Trail at Lions Park in Paris.

A young skater steals the spotlight during a County of Brant public skate, showing that winter fun — and confidence — comes in all sizes as residents are encouraged to stay active this February.

"Thank you to our community partners – including the EarlyON Centre and County of Brant Public Library - for joining this year's Winter Active celebrations," said Ellins. "And thank you to the community for your participation!"

Residents are encouraged to explore new activities, invite a friend or family member to join them, and make staying active part of their winter routine.

A full schedule of Winter Active Month events and activities can be viewed at www.brant.ca/WinterActive.

There are a wide variety of outdoor winter activities in the County of Brant that can be enjoyed all season long, beyond Winter Active Month. Residents are encouraged to visit www.brant.ca/WinterActivities to explore everything available in our community throughout the winter months.

For programs and registered activities, view the Winter Community Services Guide at www.brant.ca/guide.

Let's make February a month to move, connect, and enjoy winter in the County of Brant.

What's going on with Great Lakes water levels?

Southwestern Ontario Outdoors

By Jeff Helsdon

What happened to all the water?

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

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

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

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

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

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

At Long Point, the lower water is clearly visible. Water levels on the sea walls in the marinas tell a tale of where the water is and has been, and are three feet below the high-water marks from a few years ago. At the Long Point Waterfowl Unit, staff told hunters they would need a mud motor to access many blinds due to low water. Angie Woodward of Marina Shores said she has never seen the levels this low. This is something marina owners need to keep an eye on as erosion increases when the water levels are low and closer to the bottom of the sea wall.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I also recall cottager's associations on Lake Huron were calling for measures to slow the water in the St. Clair River, with the hope it would bring the water levels back up. That changed less than five years later as record highs were seen. What the near future holds is uncertain, but water levels will rise as part of an endless cycle.

When snow days are still the best days

(JEFF JOHNSTON PHOTO)

While adults across Paris may be eyeing snowbanks with dread and counting the hours spent shovelling, Logan, sees winter a little differently. Armed with a shovel and a big smile, he's making the most of the deep snow, a gentle reminder that for kids, every snowfall is still an adventure.

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: In the midst of history

By Paul Knowles

Stadhampton celebrated the 50th anniversary of VE Day with a huge bonfire in the village square. (PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

One of the many things I love about travel is that sometimes, out of the blue, you find yourself in the middle of an historic moment.

Perhaps my oddest moment came in 2004, when I was staying at a National Trust moated manor house in England. The owners were passionate fans of fox hunting, which was about to become illegal in the United Kingdom. There was one hunt left – would I like to come along?

I did. I was cheering for the fox – especially when I learned that the hunters, mounted on horses and following hounds, were using cell phones to report the fox's location. That seemed rather unfair. The good news (for me and the fox, if not the hunters and hounds) – the fox escaped. And I added an odd but genuine historic experience to my travel writing resumé.

I've been in the U.K. for more significant events. Way back in 1995, we happened to be staying in the village of Stadhampton, just outside Oxford. We were there on May 8, the 50th anniversary of VE Day – the end of World War II in Europe. We were invited by our B&B hosts to join a community event on the village common. I remember music, lamb stew, a world-class bonfire (a tribute repeated across the U.K.), and the apparently unscheduled appearance of a dark-suited man with a cigar, a doppelganger for Winston Churchill. It was a remarkable evening of nostalgic joy and sad reflection.

Two years later, I led a group of good friends on the "Grand Tour" of the U.K. We were there in the first week of September, 1997 – the week following the death of Princess Diana on August 31.

Throughout our two-plus weeks in the U.K., the tragedy was top of mind. We saw the forest of floral arrangements in front of Buckingham Palace. We purchased Elton John's "Candle in the Wind" CD in Harrod's. We adjusted our itinerary to account for the closure of everything on September 6, the day of her funeral.

And during our tour of Canterbury Cathedral, I noted that the personal speakers they then used for tours had a different program from my most recent visit. The tour was avoiding the beautiful Chapter House. But, "come with me," I said, and led my friends to the Chapter House. The doors were open, and inside, there were tall candles burning and a number of "Books of Remembrance" open on tables, ready to be signed. And, in all sincerely, keenly aware of the mourning of a nation, we each sat and signed the books that were eventually to be given to Diana's family.

These kinds of moments, when as a traveller I was dropped straight into history, have happened in other parts of the world, as well. A few years ago, I had the amazing fortune to be part of a small group of travel journalists invited to witness – and dive – at the installation of a huge number of statues at Grenada's Underwater Sculpture Garden. Joining us was the sculptor, Jason deCaires Taylor, an artist who is making vital and dramatic artistic statements about our environment, all over the world.

There have been other such moments such as a free, pop-up concert by Jimmy Buffett in Key West; or the celebration of the Hungry Ghost Festival in Hong Kong. But what actually sparked today's feature were two events in the United States, a country I currently am not visiting, although I deeply regret the need for such a decision. And these two moments, to which I was a silent witness, capture for me the entire recent history of our neighbour to the south.

The first happened on January 20, 2009. I was with a buddy in a waterfront bar on the Intracoastal Waterway in Pompano Beach. We couldn't help but notice that all service had completely ceased. Everyone – bartenders, wait staff, cooks, hostesses – had abandoned their posts, and were glued to the TVs mounted behind the bar.

Because this was a moment no one had dared to hope for – the inauguration of Barak Obama, the first Black President of the United States. There were cheers, and tears, and no one minded that it took an extra hour to get a drink or dinner. It was a time of enormous hope.

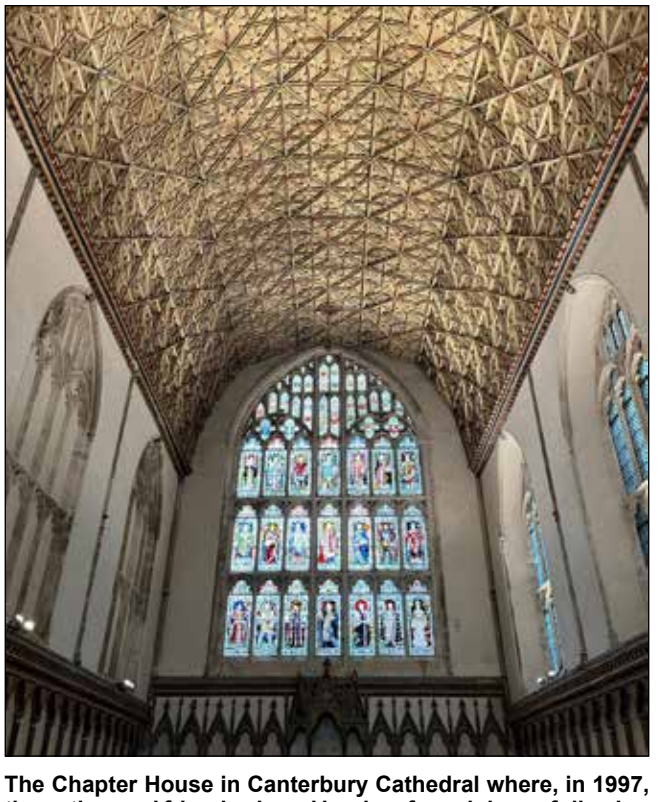
In contrast, I was back in the state of Florida, this time in my beloved Key West, on the morning of November 9, 2016. I came down to breakfast at the B&B, to find the gay couple who owned the place sitting in shock, while their Latino cook sobbed in the kitchen. The reality was sinking in – Donald Trump had won the election and all three of these folks were terrified that their lives had changed, for the worse, and forever.

So today, as I have considered the question, "Should I travel to, and write about, the United States?", those two moments are front and centre in my thoughts. And for now, I stand with my Key West friends, against what is happening in the U.S. – while hoping that the spirit of 2009 may again become the dominant reality, and soon.

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

Key West's "Southernmost Point"; while tourists posed many local residents mourn the current political situation.

Canterbury Cathedral



The Chapter House in Canterbury Cathedral where, in 1997, the author and friends signed books of condolence following the death of Princess Diana.

Mustafa, a busker on Key West's Mallory Square.

Blowing snow closes Grand Erie schools for two straight days last week

School boards apologize for last minute notice

J.P. ANTONACCI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Students in Haldimand-Norfolk and Brantford-Brant welcomed two snow days last week resulting from poor weather conditions.

With ice coating the roads and blowing snow causing near-whiteout conditions on rural bus routes, the Grand Erie District School Board and the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District Board pulled the plug on in-school programming Jan. 27, including night school and after-school activities. Classes were also cancelled on Jan. 26, but that decision was made public on Sunday.

The Catholic board announced Tuesday's closure on social media at 7:15 a.m., with the public board following suit 15 minutes later.

Parents commenting online were generally supportive of the move in the name of safety but irked at late notice, which left some scrambling to find childcare.

Some parents bemoaned the decision being made after some children had been driven to school or put on the bus, meaning parents had to venture out again to pick up their kids.

The Grand Erie board blamed the closure on "significantly reduced visibility across the region" while the Catholic board said officials "were just made aware of an unexpected inclement weather front."

But some parents argued online the weather was already bad at 6:30 a.m. and that the board could have made an earlier decision — allowing for more time to arrange daycare or take time off work.

Both school boards apologized for the late notice.

The second straight snow day meant high school exams were bumped again, with some students now preparing to write multiple exams on Wednesday.

Parent Maria Iozzo said the roads near her Dunnville home were impassable.

"The wind picks up every other minute and blows the snow all over," she said on Facebook.

"My son has had his exam pushed twice now, and I know it's an inconvenience and hardship for child care for some people, but this is a good call."

The public board cancelled its regular meeting of trustees last Monday evening due to the weather, and a "Women in Trades" workshop for Grade 7 and 8 students at Paris District High School scheduled for Wednesday evening were postponed.

In the wake of dozens of collisions on area roadways, OPP Sgt. Ed Sanchuk pleaded with residents to drive according to the road conditions and not the posted speed limit.

"Did you really want to end up in a ditch today or be involved in a crash? I didn't think so," Sanchuk said in a video posted to social media.

Despite the dangerous road conditions, he continued, "we still have drivers operating like it's warm summer day."

WEEKLY Horoscope

February 4 - February 10, 2026

ARIES
Mar 21 - Apr 20

Momentum gathers gradually, Aries. A confident choice sharpens focus and opens new pathways. Hold your ground—it strengthens resolve and keeps progress moving.

TAURUS
Apr 21 - May 21

Calm settles in naturally, Taurus. Steady patterns soothe feelings and quiet the mind. Trust the rhythm—it restores clarity and maintains balance.

GEMINI
May 22 - Jun 21

Ideas flow easily, Gemini. An engaging discussion sparks clarity and fresh motivation. Follow interest—it supports learning and forward motion.

CANCER
Jun 22 - Jul 22

Soft reassurance emerges, Cancer. A peaceful pause renews emotional stability. Continue gently and trust yourself.

LEO
Jul 23 - Aug 23

Your confidence radiates. Assurance grows as you act with purpose, warmth, and courage. Step ahead—it's your moment to shine openly.

VIRGO
Aug 24 - Sept 22

Clarity deepens through thoughtful structure. Careful attention to small tasks restores calm, confidence, and clear direction. Trust your method—it supports steady progress and keeps everything moving smoothly forward each day.

LIBRA
Sept 23 - Oct 23

Balance returns quietly, Libra. A sincere interaction improves outlook and understanding. Choose harmony—it clears the way forward.

SCORPIO
Oct 24 - Nov 22

Perception sharpens, Scorpio. A quiet realization subtly alters direction. Trust inner guidance—it supports steady progress.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov 23 - Dec 21

Opportunity whispers softly. A spark of curiosity encourages motion and optimism. Accept the invitation—it reveals new paths.

CAPRICORN
Dec 22 - Jan 20

Forward movement continues steadily. Dedicated effort begins showing tangible results. Remain committed—the foundation stays firm.

AQUARIUS
Jan 21 - Feb 18

Fresh perspective leads, Aquarius. A creative thought fuels progress and attention. Embrace originality—it leaves a meaningful mark.

PISCES
Feb 19 - Mar 20

Quiet awareness calms emotion and strengthens inner insight. Subtle messages appear as you pause and observe carefully. A gentle understanding offers comfort and emotional balance. Trust intuition—it leads you onward with calm, faith, and ease.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

FEBRUARY 4
Alice Cooper, Rock Singer (78)

FEBRUARY 5
Cristiano Ronaldo, Soccer Player (41)

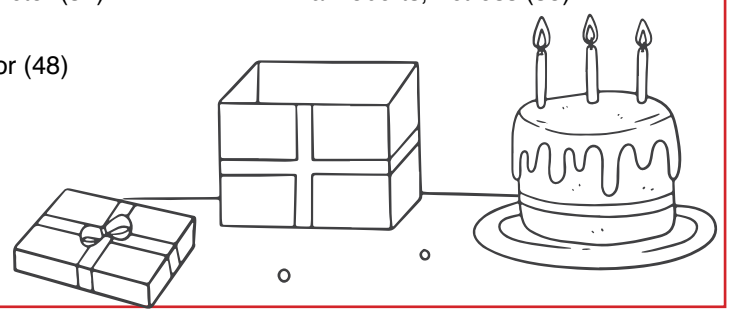
FEBRUARY 6
Charlie Heaton, TV Actor (32)

FEBRUARY 7
Ashton Kutcher, Actor (48)

FEBRUARY 8
Paul Wight, Wrestlers (54)

FEBRUARY 9
Michael B. Jordan, Actor (39)

FEBRUARY 10
Emma Roberts, Actress (35)



Riddles

I'm white, cold, and melt away, yet I can stop traffic. What am I?

Snow

I'm short but sometimes feel very long, and I come once a year in winter. What am I?

February

I can be seen but not held, and I decide six more weeks of winter. What am I?

A shadow

I shine brighter in winter skies but don't give off heat. What am I?

The sun

I can be frozen in place, yet I'm always moving. What am I?

Time

I come once a year, decide the season, and leave before lunch. What am I?

Groundhog Day

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 19

Sponsored by:

Paris Veterinary Clinic

PET OF THE WEEK

FIONA

Meet our Pet of the Week:

Although 2 1/2 year old Fiona was named after a hurricane, she is an absolute "snow dog"! Fiona's owner reports she is an absolute joy on four paws. Snowflakes on her nose and a tail that doesn't stop. Fiona will still take every opportunity to be the coziest lap dog in front of the fire.

Stay tuned for more heartwarming stories every week from Paris Veterinary Clinic.

Word Search

LET THE GAMES BEGIN!

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

Olympics
Milan
Medal
Italy
Gold
Silver
Bronze
Skiing
Hockey
Curling
Snowboard
Luge
Torch
Champion
Victory
Athlete
Team
Competition
Bobsled
Skeleton

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EMAIL TO INQUIRE INFO@THEPARISINDEPENDENT.COM

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

Chili & Lasagna Dinner - 5:00 to 6:30 p.m at the Etonia Princeton United Church 101 #2 Highway, Etonia. Adults: $25; children (12 and under) $6; preschoolers free includes Caesar Salad, garlic bread, cake & ice cream, refreshments. Takeout available. Wheelchair accessible.

Free Drop-in Dodgeball - Dodgeball at North Ward School (Paris), 6:30–7:30 pm, for ages 7–12.

General Meeting - Our General Meeting is February 4th at the Paris Fairgrounds, social time at 7 pm. Our guest speaker is Michael Albanese; Michael does Landscape Design for Ecological Gardening & Stormwater Management his speciality is water management. The program will be on "Rain scaping the Modern Garden" at 7:30 pm . Be our guest and join us for a very informative evening. You may decide to become a member of PHS.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6

Paris Optimist Club Youth Dance - At the Syl Apps Community Centre. The theme for this dance is Happy Valentine's Day. Open to students in Grades 5 to 8 only. The DJ begins the dance at 7 pm and it ends at 10 pm. Volunteers must arrive at 6:45 pm. The dance is chaperoned. Entry fee is $5 with a concession booth for pop, chips, candy and pizza. All proceeds support the Paris Optimist Club and its projects for the youth of our community.

Free EarlyON Come Play! - Early childhood play program at Mt. Pleasant Community Centre, 9:00–11:30 am, for ages 0–6.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Rec Expo - Hosted by the County of Bvrant at the Brant Sports Complex, 944 Powerline Rd, Paris from 10 am to 12 pm. Information on sports and recreation programs for all ages.

County of Brant Rec Expo - Recreation expo at Brant Sports Complex from 10:00 am–12:00 pm, including Free Family Zumba.

Seniors' Bingo - Hosted by County of Brant at the Oakland Community Centre, 3 King St N, Oakland from 2 pm to 3:30 pm. Free refreshments, prizes and Bingo.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8

Family Fun Day and Free Skate - Hosted by County of Brant at the Burford Community Centre, 14 Potter Dr Burford. Event runs from 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm and includes free skating, face painting and prize draws. Skate runs from 1 pm to 2 pm.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 17 & 24

The Brant Men of Song - will be holding their choir practices on Tuesdays on February 3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th at the First Baptist Church 70 West St., Brantford from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. New members are always welcome to attend and enjoy some singing.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Brant County Men's Probus Club Meeting - Tuesday, February 10th, 2026 at 10 AM at the Sherwood Restaurant 799 Colborne Street in Brantford. The guest speaker will be Doug Hunt who is a motivational speaker. New members are always welcome.

Free Public Skate - Evening public skate at Brant Sports Complex, 6:30–7:30 pm.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Women Inspiring Women, Women's Institute Monthly Meeting - Thursday, February 12th, 7-9 PM at the Paris Fairgrounds, Community Room. All About Beach Relief and Safeguarding our Planet with Tenille Maher

Free Will Offering Soup Luncheon - St. Paul's United Church - 48 Broadway St W at noon

Men's Probus Club of Brantford Monthly Meeting - will be held on Thursday, February 12, 10:00 a.m. till noon, with keynote speaker Adam Shoalts, Writer, Adventurer, Explorer and one of Canada's best-selling authors, elected a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society for "extra contributions to geography". Come join us. Meeting location: Walter Gretzky Municipal Golf Course, 320 Balmoral Dr.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Youth Cooking Class - Cooking class for ages 11–15 at Burford Community Centre, 6:00–8:00 pm. Fee: $6.00, registration required.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16

FREE Family Day Skates - Free skating at all community centres from 10:00 am–12:00 pm.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

The Hobby Hub: Intro to Flying - Introductory flying program for teens and adults at Burford Library Branch, 6:30–8:00 pm. Registration required.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Free Pop-up Youth Centre - Drop-in youth centre at the County of Brant Library (Paris Branch) from 1:00–2:00 pm, for ages 11–15.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Free Drop-in Pickleball - Pickleball at Scotland Community Centre from 12:00–2:00 pm, for ages 18+.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21

2026 Kids Adventure Expo - is coming to Brantford at the Woodman Community Centre, 491 Grey St Brantford, beginning at 10 am to 4 pm. A high-energy, hands-on event where kids explore, play, create and discover. Hosted by EduColor Press, a Brantford-based children's media and publishing company. Free admission.

Free Drop-in Storytime - Storytime for young children at the County of Brant Library (Paris Branch) from 10:30–11:30 am, for ages 0–6.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Free Public Skate - Free public skating at Gaukell Memorial Community Centre from 1:30–2:30 pm.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Free Parent & Tot Skate - Parent and child skating at Burford Community Centre from 9:30–11:30 am, for ages 0–6.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Knights of Columbus Monthly Meeting - The Knights of Columbus will be holding their monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 24th at 7:30 PM in the Sacred Heart Parish hall at 17 Washington Street, Paris

Free Kinderplay - Kinderplay at Syl Apps Community Centre from 10:00–11:30 am.

Free Zumba Gold - Zumba class for ages 55+ at Sojourn Church (Paris) from 3:00–4:00 pm.

Free Public Skate - Evening public skate at Brant Sports Complex from 6:30–7:30 pm. Sponsored by Contact Brant.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Free Drop-in Dodgeball - Dodgeball at North Ward School (Paris) from 6:30–7:30 pm, for ages 7–12.

THURSDAY, MARCH 12

Free Will Offering Soup Luncheon - St. Paul's United Church - 48 Broadway St W at noon

SATURDAY, MARCH 21

Oxford Philatelic Society OXPEX & OTEX 2026 Stamp Show - St. Mary's Catholic High School, 431 Juliana Drive, Woodstock, ON, N4V 1E8. 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Free admission and parking. Framed and Judged exhibits, Stamp dealers, youth gift bags, Sales Circuit, draw prizes. Contact: dhfe@silomail.com Web: http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford

THURSDAY, APRIL 9

Free Will Offering Soup Luncheon - St. Paul's United Church - 48 Broadway St W at noon

1 & 3 TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

The Brantford Stamp Club – In Support of the Food Bank - The Brantford Stamp Club meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday September to December and January to May as well as the 1st Tuesday in June and December. Meetings are held at The Branlyn Community Centre 238 Brantwood Park Drive in Brantford. Doors open at 7pm and meetings start at 8pm.

SECOND TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

The Probus Club of Brantford – The Probus Club of Brantford with 140 members, provides fellowship, friendship, fabulous guest speakers and fun for retired and semi-retired men. We meet on the second Thursday of each month at the Walter Gretzky Municipal Golf Course, 10:00 a.m. to noon. Find out more at BrantfordProbus.ca

EVERY OTHER FRIDAY

Ingersoll Country Music Jamboree Meeting – In 2026 it's your fix! Ingersoll Country Music Jamboree meeting every other Friday 1-4 p.m. at Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St. S. Ingersoll. Join us, walk ins welcome. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Perform, listen, dance & enjoy! January 16 & 30, February 13 & 27, March 6 & 20, April 10 & 17, May 1, 15 & 29, June 5 & 19.

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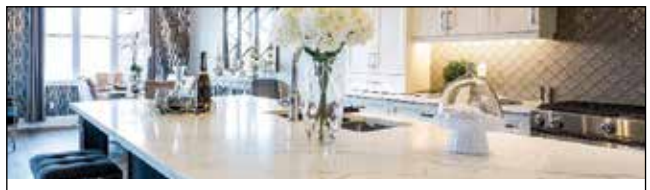
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WANTED

I will pay cash for antiques and collectibles. Coca Cola, Pepsi or any pop company. Brewery items - Kuntz, Huether Labatts, etc. Old radios and gramophones, wristwatches, pocket watches, old fruit jars - Beaver Star, Bee Hive etc. Any old oil cans and signs - Red Indian, Supertest etc. Any small furniture. If you are moving or cleaning out stuff please contact me – 519-570-6920.

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EMAIL YOUR STORY IDEAS TO OUR EDITOR

CASANDRA TURNBULL AT
STORIES@THEPARISINDEPENDENT.COM

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Taiwan
2. World Economic Forum
3. Tomb of Emperor Qin
4. Chimpanzees
5. 1,700 years ago
6. Pears
7. The Los Angeles Lakers
8. India Pale Ale
9. Rodents
10. Zamboni

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

HOMES of HEROES
Discover Their Stories

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.