

SIMCOE ADVOCATE

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Norfolk supports buy local campaign

LUKE EDWARDS

Advocate Correspondent

In many ways county staff beat Coun. Kim Huffman to the punch.

Huffman brought forward a motion at the March 25 Norfolk council meeting that directed staff to develop a buy local campaign in the face of the trade war launched by U.S. President Donald Trump. Her motion, which was approved, called for economic development and communications staff to work together to develop tools to help guide residents to locally produced goods, while also creating a marketing plan. Additionally, staff were directed to search for ways to realign the county's procurement policies to support local and Canadian made.

However, a presentation by staff showed many of those steps were already being taken.

"This is the most comprehensive response to a notice of motion that I have experienced in my time in council," Huffman told Economic Development Director John Regan and Director of Corporate Customer Service and Communications Katherine McCurdy following the pair's presentation.

Since the tariff issues arose, staff said they have re-directed internal priorities.

The county has been working on developing resources for both businesses and residents. On the business front, a new tariff resource hub is available online. It includes a survey businesses can complete

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Jeff Wetsch, Jane Spence and Elana Post from Port Dover enjoyed the festive atmosphere, colourful lighting and good music Friday at Eat & Drink Norfolk.

(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)

Eat & Drink Norfolk highlights 'local'

CHRIS ABBOTT

Editor

This year's Eat & Drink Norfolk, presented by CIBC Private Wealth, marked 15 years showcasing some of the best local food and flavours, brews, wines and ciders.

The April 3-5 gala festival, hosted by the Norfolk County Agricultural Society, celebrated local pride and promoted community spirit, said Special Event Manager Chantal Zorad in a media release.

Recognized as one of the Top 100 Festivals and Events in Ontario, Eat

& Drink Norfolk started as a small gathering to highlight the county's growing food and beverage scene. Over the years, it has annually drawn thousands to the CIBC Aud – including more than 1,000 on April 4 - putting a spotlight on Norfolk's vibrant

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Federal candidates hit the campaign trail

LEAH BAUER

Advocate Correspondent

It is safe to say that the last few months in Canadian politics have been very calm with little occurring that is worth noting... other than the fact that we recently re-elected Ontario Premier Doug Ford for a second term, switched out our Prime Ministers after an internal Liberal election, and are enduring multiple threats to our economy and sovereignty from the President of the United States, nothing has really happened.

On March 23rd, Prime Minister Mark Carney requested the Governor General dissolve Parliament which kick-started a Federal Election across Canada.

Election day is on April 28, 2025 and advance polling takes place April 18-21. Visit [Elections.ca](https://elections.ca) for information on where to vote.

Regardless of your personal political leanings, we can all agree that this election is different, there is more at stake for Canadians than in the 2021 election. Extreme rises in the cost of living, the controversial carbon tax, tariff threats, and concerns about the sovereignty of Canada are all dominating Canadian's sentiments in this election. The importance of this (and every election) cannot be understated and it is important to be aware of the candidates running in our riding of Haldimand-Norfolk.

GREEN PARTY

Nathan Hawkins

At the leadership level, the Green Party has two co-leaders: Jonathan Pedneault and Elizabeth May. However, Pedneault will take on "singular leadership roles" as required by certain aspects of the campaign. At the local level, representing the Green Party of Canada is Brantford native Nathan Hawkins. Hawkins grew up in Brantford, and lives in Kitchener, but is a regular visitor of Haldimand-Norfolk as he is a passionate fisherman.

Hawkins is excited to run as the Green party candidate in Haldimand-Norfolk. He has been a Green party supporter, stating that the election of Jean Chretien was the last time he voted anything other than

Green. His allegiance lies in his concerns about climate change, Great Lakes conservation, and his belief that we need to be funding research on how to use tech to improve and advance sustainable farming practices.

When asked about concerns in regards to dividing the left-leaning votes, he says he does not view the Green Party as a party of the left, but rather a party of the centre. Haldimand-Norfolk is exaggeratedly Conservative (the last non-Conservative candidate federally was Bob Speller in 1988). Seeing this, Hawkins hopes to work with potential Conservative voters to demonstrate that his politics lie in the centre as opposed to the left. His personal views of the party being left leaning differ from the policies published in the Green party's election platform.

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Shannon Horner

The federal New Democratic Party (NDP) is led by Jagmeet Singh, who has led the party since 2017. Locally, Shannon Horner is running as the NDP candidate. Horner is a "steel worker who's been a longtime resident of Haldimand-Norfolk."

The NDP of Haldimand-Norfolk are aware that the party has not performed well historically in the riding. They are looking to build support, increase their vote count, and present a real alternative to break the Conservative hold on the riding. They describe themselves as a grassroots riding association, which means they "can't spend \$90,000 on federal campaigns like the Liberals or the Conservatives." Regardless of their position, the NDP are unafraid and aware stating, "Rome wasn't built in a day and neither was the NDP."

In regards to policy, the NDP takes a strong stance against corporate greed, the housing crisis, and works to support community development and affordable housing projects. They also referenced reforms to our tax system such as eliminating income tax on those making \$19,500 or below yearly, elimination of the GST on home energy bills, cellular and internet bills, children's clothes, and pre-made meals from the grocery stores.

CHRISTIAN HERITAGE PARTY

Lily Eggink

The Christian Heritage Party (CHP) advocates for Canada to be governed according to Christian principles and ethics. The party is founded on the idea that the federal government should ensure security, freedom, and justice for all of its citizens from conception to natural death.

Lily Eggink, CHP's Haldimand-Norfolk candidate, describes herself as: "a single mother who is courageous, a small business owner, and a missionary who fights for what is right."

Eggink believes the foundational principles of the Canadian Constitution of Charter of Human Rights is found in the preamble. "Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law."

Eggink described how the CHP looks at needs and societal problems and seeks a viable solution based on God's morals, values, and laws. She stated, "Canadian's morals are constantly changing and are on a downward trend. Our families, society and economy are following suit. Returning to God's morals is the only viable solution to Canada's problems, and CHP is the only party that stands with God."

If elected as MP, Eggink says she would work to restore the family unit, influenced by the idea that "a great country begins in the homes it consists of."

PEOPLE'S PARTY OF CANADA

Henry Geissler

The People's Party of Canada (PPC) is fronted by Maxime Bernier who famously left the Conservative caucus in 2018 to form the PPC. Since then, the PPC took a strong stance against the Covid regulations, and many aspects of what they see as authoritarian leadership in Canada.

The PPC has accepted Henry Geissler as their candidate for Haldimand-Norfolk. Geissler is a resident of Hagersville who has various experiences in different fields. He is currently working as a snow plow

driver, and also has experience as a gas fitter. His experiences prior to politics lies in what he refers to as the "grunt work." His motivation for entering politics is less focused on personal advancements and more on the fact that he wanted to vote for the PPC and no other candidate had stepped up.

Regardless of his seemingly unlikely background, Geissler offers many opinions and solutions on the current situation of Canada. He believes that governments must allow for dissension and disagreement citing his fear of "authoritarianism creeping into the fabric of our society." While the PPC gained notoriety as a party which combatted the 'excess of government authority' in regards to the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, Geissler agrees the party and Bernier have used their same strong stance to combat this issue in all areas of Canadian governance.

CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Dr. Leslyn Lewis

The Conservatives are headed by Pierre Poilievre, who has led the party since 2022. While he is a right-wing politician, he has used this campaign to distance himself from the right-wing US President who continuously threatens to make Canada the 51st state.

Dr. Leslyn Lewis's bid for the Leader of the Conservative Party in 2021 led her to be critical of Poilievre, though since then she has represented Haldimand-Norfolk as our elected Conservative MP.

Lewis states that representing the 'hard-working people of Haldimand-Norfolk in Parliament has been the greatest honour of her life.' She is aware that people are anxious because of Trump's tariff and annexation threats which add to the economic pressures which people are already facing. Lewis states that she is committed to standing up for farmers and workers in facing the threat of U.S tariffs.

Lewis highlighted how a Conservative government will prioritize making life affordable again by scrapping all carbon

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Federal election campaign is heating up

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

taxes for everyone, both on the consumer side and on our farmers and industries. Directly relating to our community, Lewis is proud to have worked on the issue of orphaned gas wells at the federal level. She believes that more must be done to address the thousands of orphaned wells still posing health and safety concerns.

LIBERAL PARTY

Colin Walsh

The Liberal Party has experienced a tumultuous few months. The final months of 2024 represented the beginning of the end for longtime Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, which was finalized by his arguably forced decision to step down. This resulted in the internal Liberal election wherein former Central Banker Mark Carney won out to former Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland, eventually assuming the position of Prime Minister.

At the local level, community-based French teacher Colin Walsh also experienced many changes in relation to his position in and around politics. Initially, his goal was to get involved as a volunteer for the Liberal party in the Ontario election. As the inevitable Federal Election was called he was inspired to run as a candidate to avoid the likely possibility of having a candidate 'parachuted' into the community. His contempt for parachute candidates is demonstrated in his critique of his campaign's strong adversary Dr. Leslyn Lewis. Walsh doubts her ability to listen and engage with the community, arguing that the incumbent candidate seems to be more concerned with her own political career than with the concerns of her constituents.

The Liberal Party of Canada is represented by leader Mark Carney, who Walsh believes is the man to lead us through the economic crisis in Canada. Walsh believes in Carney's centrist politics and fiscally conservative agenda regarding the economy and trade. Walsh highlighted how Carney worked to improve free trade within his first week in office, strengthening ties with alternative trade partners as well as setting goals to improve internal trade amongst provinces and territories.

Council is looking at ways to help other sectors

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

from the Western Ontario Wardens Caucus. The hub also offers other resources to support businesses affected by the tariffs.

Staff are also working with other organizations such as BIAs and Chambers of Commerce to keep businesses up-to-date on federal relief and support programs.

Residents can also use the Visit Norfolk app or go to norfolkcounty.ca/tariff to learn more about how they can support local.

"While we cannot control international trade policy we can strengthen our local resilience, provide information to affected businesses and advocate for our community's interest during this period of economic uncertainty," said Regan.

"The last thing we want to do is create an anti-American campaign when we're just looking for a Canada first approach."

In their presentation staff also discussed the plan to update the Tourism Ontario Destination signs and installing new signs more quickly than originally planned.

Councillors also approved spending up to \$20,000 on an enhanced campaign that will include advertising on local radio stations and newspapers, as well as other marketing tools like pop-up banners for both digital and analog.

"We have a threat to our community and country as a whole and we have some solutions: buy local, buy

Norfolk and choose Canada," Huffman said.

A related motion from Coun. Adam Veri sought to expand support beyond the tourism and agriculture sectors that he said have been the focus. His motion would have staff look for capital projects that would be more likely to use Canadian made products and, where possible, move them up on the schedule.

"I realize that we're not going to move the needle a ton by doing this but it moves the needle a little bit and I think it's important to recognize this other part of the economy. We talk about tourism and agriculture a lot, (but) there are a lot of people that work in manufacturing that are impacted," he said.

Veri's motion was ultimately referred back to staff for further review. Councillors and staff members alike expressed some concerns about running up against procurement regulations.

"We still have to work within the boundaries of our purchasing policy and the trade agreements to which we are subject, including the CETA (The Canadian-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement)," said General Manager of Corporate Services Heidy VanDyk.

Veri stressed he wasn't looking to give preferential treatment and force companies to use Canadian steel or products, but wanted to look at ways to support other sectors that are affected by Trump's tariffs.

"I didn't want to leave that sector and the families that rely on it and work in our communities out in the cold," he said.



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EDITORIAL

The rules of the silo – three levels of government

Haldimand-Norfolk

**MPP
Bobbi Ann
Brady**



In Canada, understanding the three levels of government – federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal – is crucial for effective civic engagement but knowing who does what can be tricky.

Most calls, emails, and correspondence my office is currently receiving fall under the municipal purview, which puts my staff and me in a precarious situation given the CAO of Norfolk County has made it clear we are not to involve ourselves in County issues. When you call to tell me you are not getting what you feel is the proper service, I want to help but I don't have the proverbial big stick to beat others into submission.

Most recent examples include concerns over an aquifer in Waterford, Norfolk's water rates, as well as correspondence related to a local development where the constituent feels there is a lack of safe places for children to play. I agree most times with the constituent; however, I am not the elected councillor who is the person paid to represent the taxpayer at the municipal/county level.

I like to get things done and I like to do it better than the next guy, so to speak. But in general, it's a silo structure between the federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government. Essentially, we are isolated entities responsible for specific issues under our jurisdiction. I can let them know there is a problem or issue and then I hope

they solve it to your satisfaction. When my office refers you to someone else, it is not because we want to pass the buck, but rather we must. This is as frustrating for me as it is for you.

In this complicated and bureaucratic environment in which we live and work, it is sometimes hard to know who does what when it comes to government.

Our federal government covers matters affecting all of Canada, which includes national defense, foreign affairs, citizenship, criminal law, currency, federal taxes, Canada Post, Indigenous Affairs, Fisheries, Employment Insurance and Social Programs, and the Supreme Court.

My bailiwick falls under the auspices of the Ontario provincial government. The Ontario government oversees issues including education, healthcare, highways, transportation, natural resources, the environment, and the administration of justice, social services (including but not limited to Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program), culture and tourism, property and civil rights, labor and work conditions, liquor licensing,

and municipal affairs. With respect to the latter, while the province lays out the framework for how municipalities operate, County staffers and politicians are responsible for managing that framework.

And finally, municipal governments are responsible for services and issues like parks, libraries, property taxes, water rates, fire services, sidewalks, streetlights and local road maintenance.

My staff will do all they can to point you in the right direction if your issue does not fall under our provincial responsibilities, but we maintain if you are not receiving adequate service elsewhere, let us know.

There are times when an issue overlaps levels of government. An example is the MZO for the development proposal at the Nanticoke Industrial Park. My wading into this one was much to the chagrin of County staff last week. However, at the end of the day, I represent the taxpayer, not councillors nor the county brass.

- Bobbi Ann Brady is the MPP for Haldimand-Norfolk

Get to know your federal MP candidates at 'debate night'

CHRIS ABBOTT

Editor

Get to know your Haldimand-Norfolk federal election candidates on Thursday, April 10.

A federal MP candidate debate night will be held at the Royal Canadian Legion, 200 West Street, in Simcoe from 7-9 p.m. brought to you by Cornerstone Association of Realtors, Delhi & District Chamber of Commerce and the Simcoe & District Chamber of Commerce.

Doors open for the free event at 6:30 p.m.

"Come and hear each of the candidates speak," said Karen Matthews, Executive Director of the Simcoe & District Chamber of Commerce.

"The three partners have come together to make this event happen, and we are confirming candidates."

There will be a short survey done when you enter and exit the building. When they arrive, participants will be asked (yes or no) if they have already decided who they will vote for. When they leave, they will be asked 'did they change their mind?' or 'did they pick a candidate?'

"Just so we can get a little bit of feedback from folks who are attending," said Matthews. "I'm always curious about that – do people show up to support a candidate, or do they come in with an open mind?"

You can also watch a YouTube livestream on the Simcoe Chamber's YouTube page - search for Federal Debate – Simcoe, ON. If you cannot make it in per-

son April 10, it can be watched later online before the election.

Participating candidates were not all officially announced prior to press deadline, but they will include Nathan Hawkins (Green Party), Dr. Leslyn Lewis (Conservative Party), Colin Walsh (Liberal Party), and Shannon Horner-Shepherd (NDP).

As of Monday, April 7, the deadline for registering, there were six officially confirmed Haldimand-Norfolk candidates on the Elections Canada website, including Lily Eggink (Christian Heritage Party), and Henry Geissler (People's Party). All six HN candidates were invited. The list will be finalized April 9.

The 'electric' provincial Haldimand-Norfolk candidate debate on Feb. 18 drew a full-house crowd at the Simcoe Legion.

"We had standing room only capacity at the event for the provincial election," Matthews noted. "I hope that people are just as engaged for this election and that they are just as passionate, and will show up to hear from the candidates on our debate night. We're hopeful – there's a lot of good chatter when you follow all the Facebook pages.

"A lot of people are very passionate about this campaign because they are looking at the future of this country, and how we move forward with all of the tariffs and everything that is going on, and what party best aligns with their visions. So, I am hoping that people will come learn more about each of the candidates."

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Eat & Drink Norfolk highlights 'local'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

community, food and beverage vendors, and local talent.

"I think it's been on the Festival & Events Ontario's Top 100 list for about 10 years and we got that accolade again this year," said Angela Hogeveen, General Manager of the Norfolk County Agricultural Society, on Friday. "So that's quite the honour."

Festival & Events Ontario awards its Top 100 through a panel of judges based on criteria including effect on the community, economic impact, general appeal, uniqueness, and longevity.

Norfolk County Fair and Horse Show is also on the Top 100 list, Hogeveen noted.

Friday's Eat & Drink Norfolk crowd was estimated to be an average number, said Hogeveen. Even more were expected Saturday.

"At last count there was about 1,000 people in the building, but they come and they go throughout the night. Saturday is typically a bit bigger, and we have Fiddlestix which is a real favourite around here. We haven't had them at this event in a couple years so they are a big draw. Locally, people love them. Sometimes it gets really full and we have to hold the line at the door when we get to capacity."

Over the three days at Eat & Drink Norfolk, participants sampled signature dishes from some of the area's top restaurants and food artisans, sipped wines, brews and cocktails from Norfolk's finest producers, and enjoyed live entertainment by Paul Mallard, Jesse Murphy Band, Eric Brousseau & Co., The Treeline, Claire & Chris, Felicia McMinn, and Saturday's headliner, Fiddlestix.

"This event is so important to our schedule," said Hogeveen. "It's a staple. It's the first thing in the spring, it gets people out of the house. We had beautiful weather today (Friday) and it feels like spring when Eat & Drink

is here. Everybody looks forward to it. Shake off those winter blahs and get out and see everybody. It almost has a reunion feel."

Presented by CIBC Private Wealth, local sponsors included Morison Insurance, Jess Morris Trucking and Excavating, Scotlynn, the Equipment Centre, and more.

Vendors at the 2025 curated show, usually featuring a couple new ones every year, included the Barrel Restaurant, Bush Dog, Charlottesville Brewing Co., Concession Road Brewing Co., The Back Kitchen, Gator BBQ, The Good Bread Company, Hometown Brew Co., Joy Bakery, JP's Barbecue, Marshview Patio, Tacos N' Tequila, The Apple Place, The Dover Cheese Shop, The Shucking King, Turkey Point Hotel, Mann's Distillery, Burning Kiln Winery, Hounds of Erie Winery, Inasphere Wines, Smoke & Gamble – Frisky Beaver, and Wishbone Brewing Company.

Future Norfolk County Agricultural Society events include Norfolk Night Market in June, and the summer Fairground Music Festival, which Hogeveen says is going to be a little different this year "but still fantastic." Announcements for those events will be coming soon, she said.

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Kelly Shepherd and Robin Beasley from The Barrel at Eat & Drink Norfolk.



Tacos 'N' Tequila's Fernando Lacy and Steve Farrow at Eat & Drink Norfolk.

(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)

Fine Free Week at Norfolk County Public Library

The Norfolk County Public Library has announced April 7-12 is 'Fine Free Week' at all Norfolk Library Branches.

This special initiative offers Library users the opportunity to clear their overdue fines. Enjoy a fresh start at the Library while supporting the community just in time for Easter.

Overdue fines can be waived by donating nonperishable food items or toiletries. All donations will go directly to local food banks, and the Free Little Pantries across Norfolk, ensuring those in need benefit from your act of kindness.

"Fine Free Week is a wonderful way for our community to come together in the spirit of generosity," said Julie Kent, NCPL CEO. "By participating, Library visitors not only clear their overdue fines but also help support individuals and families in need. It's a win-win for everyone."

To participate in Fine Free Week, Library visitors are encouraged to bring their donations to any NCPL Branch between April 7 and 12. This offer, however, only applies to overdue fines and does not include fees for lost or damaged items.

The next Fine Free Week is the week before Thanksgiving.

For more details, visit ncpl.ca or stop by your local Library Branch.

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Wildlife on Roads is a tool for citizen science

ADVOCATING FOR AUTHORS

By
Dick Bourgeois-Doyle

"Yours may be the only one I've ever seen with a dead bird on the cover," I said.

"That was controversial," ecologist Kari Gunson said, talking about her book *Wildlife on Roads*. "There was a little debate, and we went around in circles for a while."

The cover works though. It catches your attention and communicates the book's purpose immediately. It's a reference on the type of wildlife killed on Ontario roads and ways to reduce their numbers.

Kari began drafting the book with the goal of producing a technical manual using data collected, in part, during her years of work in Norfolk County and around Long Point. But Kari's bent for communications and public education guided the writing and the format. This led her and co-author Dr. Fred Schueler to produce a work that features lively writing and stunning images. The collection does more than just serving as a technical reference.

"It started with the intention of getting all this road-kill data compiled into something useful for those on the ground," Kari said in an interview.

She wanted to create a straightforward, user-friendly guide that could translate complex ecological information into actionable steps by road crews and planners. As Gunson began working on the manual, she quickly realized that making the data truly practical and accessible to non-experts required more than simplification: it needed



Kari Gunson holds her book, *Wildlife on Roads*. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

to be engaging.

"That explains the diverse components in the book," Gunson said.

She incorporated essays, case studies, professional illustrations, and some 140 photographs, transforming what began as a data-driven manual into a book of well over 200 pages. The book appeals to many people. It now serves as a tool for citizen science and public involvement

far beyond Norfolk County.

The book can be a model worthy of study by any writer hoping to reach a wide audience.

But it was a lot of work.

"The photos were so time-consuming as we needed many permissions," said Kari. "But they made the book more appealing as did the illustrations by Elena Karstad, a world-renowned nature artist."

Kari said she had a lot of respect for Dr. Schueler's work which includes recording road-kill information since the 1960s in a database that now contains about 25,000 records.

"But we had a tug of war over how much of that data and quantifying we really wanted to include," said Kari, suggesting that best way for co-authors to work as a team might be within a project plan. "I ended up taking the lead as I had more time for the book."

Although the book has proved to be a useful tool for professionals, Kari is pleased that it appeals to the general public and anyone looking to protect endangered wildlife. To this end, she encourages readers to familiarize themselves with the iNaturalist website, a venue to share observations, such as location and type of roadkill, with scientists and others involved in conservation.

With more data and more field studies, Kari expects to update *Wildlife on Roads* someday. While a new edition would include more data and information, it will also retain the images, the photos, the stories, and, most likely, that dead-bird cover.

- Dick Bourgeois-Doyle

CELEBRATING LOCAL AUTHORS

For more on how you can help protect wildlife in our area, look for information on iNaturalist and the Long Point Biosphere Region websites. And for Kari's podcast interview in full, go to the Beach Reads Website under Community or to <https://doverwrites.blogspot.com>

Share your thoughts on library hours

The Norfolk County Public Library (NCPL) is inviting the community to help shape the future of Library services by participating in a brief survey about its hours of operation.

As a thank-you for participating, respondents will have the option to enter a draw for a chance to win an iPad.

Library users can share their preferences regarding when the Branches of the Library should be open. Feedback will help determine the Library's hours of operation moving forward.

"We want to ensure that our Library hours reflect the needs of our community," said Julie Kent, NCPL CEO in a media release. "Your input is essential in helping us create a schedule that works for as many people as

possible across Norfolk County."

The survey is open until Friday, April 25, at 11:59 p.m., and can be completed online by clicking the banner at ncpl.ca or in person - each Branch will have paper copies available to be filled out and submitted. All responses are confidential.

Norfolk County Public Library has branches in Delhi, Port Dover, Port Rowan, Simcoe and Waterford. The Waterford branch is currently closed during construction/renovations with an anticipated re-opening in April.

Whether you are a regular visitor or an occasional user, your feedback will help NCPL determine the best schedule to serve Norfolk County residents.

Specialist training introduced at Holy Trinity



Norfolk firefighters Brad Bakker and Stephen Lem teach Fire Extinguisher Safety at Holy Trinity on March 21.

(LEAH BAUER PHOTO)

LEAH BAUER

Advocate Correspondent

Holy Trinity Catholic High School has been proud to offer programs that enable students to graduate with a Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM).

The specialized SHSM program at HT allows students to develop skills for a future career, while gaining the necessary certifications and hands-on training. It offers training and certifications for students in the following areas: sports, transportation, agriculture, construction, health and wellness, as well as hospitality and tourism.

On March 21st, HT welcomed Norfolk firefighters Brad Bakker (Station 4) and Stephen Lem (Station 9) into their classrooms to teach fire extinguisher training and safety. Students had the added benefit of gaining hands-on experience and safety training.

The firefighters were excited for this opportunity to engage and educate the students as since the Covid pandemic they haven't been able to get into the schools to present. Which is unfortunate, as prior to the pandemic Norfolk was respected for its high-quality fire education programs.

Carla Aitken, organizer, highlighted how having the SHSM program under a student's belt upon graduation can translate into increased work opportunities. When students who have participated in the SHSM program graduate they receive a red seal which puts their application "right at the top" and makes them more employable.

Trades teacher Reg Ellis noted how this program gives advantages to students who are not university-bound giving all students equal opportunity to excel, even if their interests lie more in the skilled trades as opposed to academia.

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Brooke Marley Jones explores fantasy, horror, romance genres

DOUG GOODHUE

Advocate Correspondent

Brooke Marley Jones' debut novel, *The Forest Where the Phoenix Sleeps*, combines elements of fantasy, horror, romance and humour.

Published in June 2024, it features 'fairy tales and nightmares filled with tenderness and terror' in the horrorfantasy genre.

"The overarching genre I write is fantasy, with horror and romantic subplots," said Jones in a recent email interview. "I like to write in a way that is relatable and filled with humour. If we aren't laughing, what's the point? Nowadays, there are so many sub genres rising, I would also say I write Cottagegore and Horromantasy."

She says horror has always been her greatest obsession.

"Some of my earliest memories are reading Stephen King books using the crack of light from my bedroom door, when I was supposed to be sleeping. Books turned into movies, *Evil Dead*, the *Conjuring* series, you name it. While I loved horror, I always wanted more romance. I wasn't satisfied with that horror romance gap, and that's where my debut, *The Forest Where the Phoenix Sleeps* was born."

Her favourite book, however, is not horror or romance, it's sci-fi.

"That book is *The Martian* by Andy Weir. I also loved the *Throne of Glass* series by Sarah J. Maas, and it wasn't until I read *A Court of Thorns and Roses* that I was really inspired to sit down and write my own stories."

Jones started writing *The Forest Where the Phoenix Sleeps*, the first in a three-part series, during Covid in March 2020. Writing a book about magic - and quaint, special characters - was not something she had thought about... it just happened.

"For me, I can't fathom telling a story without magic,



Brooke Marley Jones, author, with her debut novel *The Forest Where the Phoenix Sleeps*. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

I suppose it was the inevitable conclusion. Hands down, creating characters is my favourite part of the writing process. My strength isn't in worldbuilding but creating vibrant characters that bring stories to life. Making them relatable, funny, and real, that's my greatest strength. Human behaviour fascinates me, and unsurprisingly I studied psychology in university. I'm always watching - always creating characters. When I consume media, I focus on

actors. I pay attention to phrases and mannerisms, vocal and physical, to help form my own characters that people come to know and love."

Seeing the "beautiful book cover for the first time" was a magical moment and she enjoys connecting with readers "who feel as if you've written a book just for them."

Her characters are not derived from her childhood in Jarvis, but she did waitress at Knechtel's in Port Dover. She says, "It's very easy to see my commentary on the treatment of service staff, particularly in the food industry... I'll let you decide why waitressing stuck with me after all that time."

Multiple copies of the book are available in the Norfolk County Library and may be purchased from booksellers, including Amazon and Indigo.

Her next book is a standalone set to release June 1, 2025. *The Hound of Scrying Hollow* is 'sort of a scary *Beauty and the Beast* retelling.'

"This is a gothic romantasy loosely inspired by the *Beast of Gévaudan*, the true story of a terrifying beast that tormented the French countryside in the 18th century. *The Hound of Scrying Hollow* enjoys sprinklings of *Dracula*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and other fairy tales.

"In the future, I'd love to focus entirely on horror. I have a ghostly-haunted-house-story itch that needs to be scratched. But I think I should keep the fans happy and finish my three-part series before exploring that route too thoroughly. Right now, I'm really enjoying the mix of fantasy, romance, AND horror. It's also tough to imagine a time when I'm not writing about magic, it's just a compulsion I must add a little razzle dazzle into any story."

Book two in *The Forest Where the Phoenix Sleeps* trilogy is set to release in 2026.

This reviewer found that Brooke Marley Jones, currently living in the Niagara area, is looking at a bright future from her choices using a diversity of genres.

Simcoe Little Theatre seeks directors for 2025-26

Simcoe Little Theatre (SLT) is ushering in a new era of creativity and collaboration as they prepare for the upcoming 2025-26 season.

The theatre, recently announcing the formation of a leadership committee, welcomes Anna Reu as the new Simcoe Little Theatre Coordinator as they gear up to bring fresh, exciting productions to the community.

The Simcoe Little Theatre leadership committee is committed to fostering a collaborative environment, building on the theatre's rich history, and ensuring the continued success and growth of the organization. The committee, comprised of local theatre enthusiasts and dedicated volunteers, is focused on supporting their mission of providing quality community theatre experiences in Simcoe. Formed early last year, the leadership committee has spent the current season developing resources, updating best practices, and establishing their goals for the future.

Reu steps into the role of Coordinator at a pivotal time for the theatre. Anna brings a wealth of experience, having worked managing volunteers for over three decades and has a long history with the theatre, appearing on the SLT stage for the first time in 1990. She is eager to support the creative and operational needs of SLT as the theatre continues to engage with the community.

"My love of live theatre and my past involvement with Simcoe Little Theatre led me to this position as the Simcoe Little Theatre Coordinator," said Reu in a media release. "I am enjoying all aspects of this position, from recruiting and managing the precious volunteers at SLT, to supporting

the artistic direction of our dynamic SLT Leadership Committee. Then add the administration learnings from the knowledgeable staff at Lighthouse Festival and a strong example of collaboration is created. All to continue to provide community theatre at its best!"

Nikki Wiltac, a member of the leadership committee, expressed her enthusiasm about the future of SLT, saying, "A community theatre in Norfolk not only celebrates local talent but also serves as a venue where diverse voices can be heard. It allows for the exploration of social issues, encourages dialogue, an opportunity to learn about history, and of course, to be entertained. Something magical happens when an audience witnesses a story together; they have both a personal and collective experience. An experience that can never be recreated, and that is the beauty of live theatre. By offering a platform for those in our community to express their arts, SLT enriches the cultural fabric of Norfolk and strengthens the sense of belonging within the community."

The leadership committee is comprised of eight members - Sally Bellamy, Melinda Campbell, Dave Kent, Dave Smythe, Heather Reichheld, Brian Reichheld, Chris Verge, and Wiltac. As SLT Coordinator, Reu also sits on the committee, along with Lighthouse Festival Operations Manager, Caitlin O'Neill.

CALL FOR DIRECTORS

In addition to the excitement surrounding the new leadership team, SLT is also calling for directors to join the theatre family for the upcoming season.



Simcoe Little Theatre presented the musical *Little Shop of Horrors* last fall. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

With plans for several productions, the need for creative minds to take the helm and guide new works is essential to ensuring the theatre continues to flourish. Directors with fresh ideas, passion for the arts, and a desire to inspire local talent are encouraged to apply and be a part of the magic that makes Simcoe Little Theatre so special.

Heather Reichheld spoke to the importance of getting new directors on board.

"Whether you are a first-time director or a veteran, there are always great resources that you can draw upon to help you. Simcoe Little Theatre is always open to various kinds of shows. We have had dramas, comedies, musicals, mysteries, etc. There is always an audience for the various kinds of shows.

"If a director has a particular show in mind, we're always open to reading the script to see if it's something that we feel would be appropriate for our audiences. If

they don't know what they want to direct, we have a whole closet full of scripts for them to choose from."

For more information on how to become a director or to learn about upcoming volunteer opportunities, visit www.simcoelittletheatre.org or contact Anna Reu at sltcoordinator@lighthousetheatre.com.

ABOUT

Simcoe Little Theatre is a non-profit community theatre located in Simcoe. For nearly 80 years, SLT has been dedicated to providing quality theatrical productions and fostering a love for the performing arts in the local community. Simcoe Little Theatre and Lighthouse Festival have enjoyed a symbiotic relationship since 2021 where Lighthouse Festival is responsible for venue ownership and operational support, while Simcoe Little Theatre volunteers have artistic autonomy.

For more information, visit www.simcoelittletheatre.org.



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Norfolk County celebrates an Easter tradition

ALEX HUNT

Advocate Correspondent

The hunt is on as Norfolk County is preparing for some Easter festivities.

Delhi BIA is set to run their 17th annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 19 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the downtown district. The event will continue a tradition where children and families will set off looking for sweet treats, exploring the various small businesses to discover what delicious secrets lie within.

“With new people moving into town, this event helps generate local interest to the small businesses instead of them purchasing items at the big supermarkets or shopping centres,” said Les Berta, chair of the Delhi Business Improvement Area.

Berta said that 29 businesses will be participating in the event. A map is available on their Facebook page.

They also want to introduce long-standing community members to new local businesses.

“This is why we continue on with these traditions, there are new businesses coming in every year in and this is a great opportunity to introduce new kids and families to them.”

Fifty-two businesses will be participating in the 3rd annual Simcoe Easter Hunt on Saturday, April 19, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

You can hunt your way through Simcoe, exploring local businesses on the map, while the children get to fill their Easter baskets with goodies.

You can enter for one of three grand prize Easter baskets with prizes from participating local businesses. Eleven 11 businesses are ‘Golden Bunny Stops.’ Each Golden Bunny spotted gives you an additional entry for the grand prize Easter baskets. Finish your hunt at mobilemend (122 Robinson Street, Simcoe) to enter the grand prize draw.

Printed copies of the map are available at participating businesses and can be found on the mobilemend Simcoe website and social media (Facebook and Instagram) pages.

James Christison, curator at the Waterford Heritage & Agricultural Museum, said the museum's annual Easter



Families enjoy an Easter Egg Hunt from a previous Waterford Heritage & Agricultural Museum celebration.

(SUBMITTED PHOTOS)

Eggstravaganza will also take place on April 19. Gates will open at 10:30, with the egg hunt kicking off at 11 a.m. at the Waterford Arena baseball diamonds at 32 Church Street East.

The Waterford event will cost \$5 per child with a 12-years of age or under limit. Tickets will be given to each child upon gate arrival, which are contributed to a prize package draw following the conclusion of the hunt.

Christison said that children will also have the opportunity to find more tickets during the hunt among the 8,000 eggs scattered around the field.

“We’ve been doing this for a number of years now and it used to be at the museum, on the property,” said Christi-

son. “However, the event became too large, and it attracted a lot of folks. This is a great time for the community to come together to celebrate Easter and have some fun.”

Sponsored by the Waterford Chamber of Commerce, Christison said he expects about 150 children participating on April 19, depending on weather conditions.

Langton Firefighters Auxiliary will be hosting its annual Easter Egg Hunt for Langton-area families on Friday, April 18.

With communities coming together, this year’s Easter egg hunts promise to bring joy, excitement and a sweet sense of tradition for families across Norfolk County.



Lions need your support



Simcoe Lions Club is presenting its 71st annual 'Millennium Music Experience' on Friday, April 25 and Saturday, April 26. Friday night is the Cabaret, for tables of 10, with perch dinner starting at 6:30 p.m. and a 7:30 p.m. show at the Simcoe Composite School Lions Auditorium. Saturday is the Lions Variety Show with individual \$30 general admission tickets – showtime is 7:30 p.m. Tickets available through the Lions website, simcoelions.com.

Van Paassen asks staff to review purchasing contracts

LUKE EDWARDS
Advocate Correspondent

A Norfolk councillor wants to make sure signing on the dotted line means something.

Coun. Chris Van Paassen asked staff to review how they develop contracts with suppliers, following an unwelcome discovery that some purchases - namely of fire trucks - were going to cost the county significantly more than expected.

"If our contracts are so loose that they can add this much more after the fact there's something wrong with the contracts," he said at the March 25 council meeting.

Van Paassen pulled a capital status report item from the consent agenda to bring up the agenda. The report included several instances where costs rose above what was budgeted. The councillors singled out a few replacements for the fire department fleet that went hundreds of thousands of dollars over the expectation.

"What kind of contract language do we have where we accept and enter into an agreement to build a fire truck for \$825,000 and then later on they can add on that much more?" Van Paassen asked.

Staff said there are some issues that are unavoidable. For instance, contracts typically have an irrevocability clause that ensures the agreed upon price is in place for a certain period of time.

"Depending on the market conditions for the item or services being procured and the volatility of the market, which we

have seen historically with items like fire trucks, sometimes the irrevocability period is shorter than others," said Heidy VanDyk, general manager of corporate services.

However, given the relatively quick turn-around time for some of these contracts, Van Paassen said it wasn't likely enough to explain the rising costs. He also questioned the replacement requirements for fire trucks. As prices go up, having to replace these pieces of equipment every 20 years will put added burden on taxpayers, he said.

The 20-year requirement is partially a result of insurance requirements, but Gord Stilwell said they also don't want firefighters to have questions about an older truck when they're rushing to an emergency. Getting replacement parts can also be a challenge for older vehicles, he added.

There has been some advocacy to get those rules changed, and Van Paassen said these increased costs only underscore the need to continue that advocacy.

"We need the province to open that up because this is not sustainable to spend \$1.5 million for a fire truck and then have to get rid of a perfectly good fire truck after 20 years because the rulebook says so," he said.

Council ultimately directed staff to have county lawyers look at the purchasing contracts to see if there are ways to tighten them up, and also have staff look at life cycles for the fire department fleet.

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Homelessness prevention program punches above its weight

LUKE EDWARDS

Advocate Correspondent

Long thought of as a big city problem, recent trends have shown that's not the case in Ontario when it comes to homelessness.

Smaller communities like Norfolk and Haldimand are also facing pressures as homelessness numbers increase in nearly every part of the province. Fortunately, a review of the efforts made locally shows a team that punches above its weight. That's especially the case since the local service provider doesn't receive the same top up funding from Queen's Park that other service providers get.

"It appears that you are the only service manager who doesn't have the additional municipal top up in homelessness investments, so it's remarkable with what you've been able to do with your staff and kudos to the performance of the system," said Helpseeker's Jesse Donaldson, speak-

ing to members of the Health and Social Services Advisory Committee for Norfolk-Haldimand at a March 24 meeting.

Following a budget increase in 2023, Helpseeker was brought in to conduct a review of the service provider's homelessness prevention program. The review offered some recommendations, mainly around improving data collection but overall said the team is doing a good job with limited resources.

Helpseeker systems planning specialist Jillian Mah pointed to a few numbers that should fill Norfolk-Haldimand with pride. The first is with their emergency shelter program, where they have a 33 per cent success rate in getting people into sustainable housing.

"That 33 per cent success rate is incredibly high for emergency shelter programs," she said, adding other municipalities struggle with this form of support.

The housing assistance program, which focuses more on homelessness prevention

by helping with things like last month's rent or when people get behind on their utility payments, also has a strong success rate with 91 per cent remaining housed a year after accessing the service.

Housing assistance also takes the form of ongoing support for people who can't afford the cost of housing, and Mah said it prevents "people from cycling into a system of needing more complex support."

Despite those successes, the region faces similar challenges to many communities in Ontario.

"What we're seeing throughout the province, especially since 2024, is huge increases in homelessness," Donaldson said.

Based on current trends, Ontario could see anywhere from 128,000 to 294,000 people experiencing homelessness by 2035, Donaldson said. Those numbers don't factor in any potential economic crises, either.

Locally, the most recent count found

117 people experiencing homelessness, a 48 per cent increase from the last count in 2018. Donaldson said some of the increase is the result of increased outreach, though it also is the result of increased demand. Additionally, rural homelessness is increasing at a faster pace than in more urban areas.

Several factors are at play, Donaldson said, including a slowdown in housing construction, economic pressures, population growth, infrastructure costs and increasing complexities as people often face additional issues with mental health or addiction in addition to homelessness.

Better tracking and data isn't just needed to better understand the situation and support those who need it, the consultants said. That kind of information can also help when it comes to grants and other funding support.

Norfolk stays the course on investment decisions

LUKE EDWARDS

Advocate Correspondent

Norfolk County could be foregoing some added revenue, but in the face of uncertainty and as a matter of principle, councillors are opting to stay the course.

Staff provided an update to councillors at the March 25 meeting regarding changes to their investment plans for the \$67 million legacy fund. Councillors had previously directed staff and their financial advisors to take out any investments in American markets as a way to show their displeasure with U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff war and annexation threats.

However, when the update came back to council, some wondered if the statement was worth the potential loss of revenue.

"My concern is there's quite a loss in revenue. As much as I appreciated Coun. (Chris) Van Paassen's motion to throw out the U.S. portion, there is a great potential for investment in the U.S.," Coun. Doug Brunton said.

"Are we doing the taxpayer any benefits by eliminating that?"

In the initial report - which included changes such as a move to using a financial instrument called principal protected notes - suggested the new investment plan could increase the return by as much as \$650,000 a year. However, by avoiding the American markets where possible staff believe the increase in return will only be



Doug Brunton, Ward 5 Councillor

\$140,000 to \$160,000 a year.

Treasurer Amy Fanning pointed out that while it's not the bounty they were predicting earlier, this still marks an increase in revenue coming into the county's coffers.

"The fact our returns are still increasing, it's still a benefit to the county and to the residents," she said.

"Our returns will not increase as much as we had originally forecasted, but I'm also hopeful that our current economic and political climate is short lived and this is a temporary shift and when the tariff wars are over and when things have changed, we'll

be able to shift those investments back into that higher growth market. That would be our goal."

Coun. Tom Masschaele said it's a decision municipalities in Canada have to make.

"That's the rub you get when you're trying to make a political statement against perhaps a prudent financial strategy. We have to weigh that against the fact that every municipality, every form of government in Canada is trying to send a message to Mr. Trump that this tariff situation is not acceptable," he said.

Van Paassen, who brought the original motion forward to direct staff to move the investments out of American markets, said not only is it a stance on principle, but it may very well end up being a smart financial decision, as the U.S. economy is facing significant uncertainty. He acknowledged that historically U.S. markets have been moneymakers but pointed out things have changed.

"I don't think you can take anything historically of what's going on in the financial markets in the United States of America right now," he said.

The legacy fund is money the county received from the sale of Norfolk Power Inc. in 2014. Since that time, the county has used the returns of the fund's investments to pay for road work to the tune of just under \$20 million, as well as \$5 million set aside for Norfolk General Hospital.

Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. What is the birthstone for April?
2. Where did the SS Edmund Fitzgerald sink?
3. What does CNN stand for?
4. What U.S president served 4 terms?
5. What was Blackbeard's real name?
6. How many continents are there?
7. Peabody Museum of Natural History is located at what University?
8. What is the only country lemurs are native to?
9. A perfect game of 10-pin bowling consists of how many points?
10. In what country is the current season of "The White Lotus" based?

This week's answers are found on pg. 23



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Declining consumption, trade war among concerns for apple growers

J.P. ANTONACCI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

With apple consumption in decline in Ontario, Norfolk County apple farmer Chris Hedges wants to remind shoppers of the many benefits of buying local.

"The carbon footprint of an imported apple is substantial," said Hedges, who farms 750 acres of apple orchards on farms in Vanessa and Delhi.

An Ontario-grown apple, Hedges continued, "is likely cheaper at the store than the imported one, it's had less travel time, it's fresher."

"Even though it may have been stored, it's been moved around less, (so) the quality should be better, flavour should be better," he added.

Shoppers can also feel good about supporting their neighbours who work to grow, pick, package and distribute Ontario fruit, said Hedges, who chairs Ontario Apple Growers (OAG), an advocacy and marketing group representing approximately 200 commercial apple growers.

"There's no doubt the spinoff and the overall economic benefit of buying local far exceeds buying something imported," Hedges said.

"You have the whole industry that's attached to the production of apples."

The province's apple industry generates about \$120 million in annual sales, with 15 varieties growing on nearly 16,000 acres.

While some Ontario apples are exported to the United States and other overseas markets, most fruit grown here is eaten here.

"Generally speaking, Ontario remains an



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ONTARIO APPLE GROWERS)

Norfolk County farmer Chris Hedges of Vanessa chairs Ontario Apple Growers, an advocacy group that represents the province's 200 commercial apple farmers.

importer of fruit," Hedges said. "The export opportunities largely depend on the season."

If growers in foreign markets luck into good weather, their own production will satisfy demand, he explained. But if a bad year elsewhere coincides with a bumper crop in Ontario, local growers can sell beyond Canada's borders at a healthy margin.

Hedges grows Ontario's three most popular apple varieties by acreage planted - Gala, Honeycrisp and Ambrosia.

Former powerhouses like McIntosh, Empire and Red Delicious are declining in terms of domestic consumption, though

the legacy varieties still have some cachet overseas.

Shoppers in a rural area like Norfolk can buy apples near where they are grown, sometimes directly from the farm. It takes more work to reach urban consumers who lack that direct connection to their food, so Hedges' association turns to social media and in-store branding.

Worryingly for apple growers, consumers appear to be thinking of the sweet fruit less often when browsing the produce section.

"One thing we are seeing is per-capita consumption of apples is on the decline,"

Hedges said.

"That's a fairly recent observation."

While the reasons for the decline are unclear, Hedges said the abundance of new apple varieties on offer could be confusing consumers.

"If you go buy peaches or cherries, it's a peach, it's a cherry, so you buy that. Whereas the regular consumer goes in and sees eight or nine different varieties of apples and don't know what they are. And maybe they buy something else."

The cost of fuel and fertilizer has risen dramatically, but consumers can only stomach so much by way of higher prices, Hedges added. Add in global uncertainty over U.S. tariffs, and farmers are feeling stressed.

"We're spending a lot more money growing the crop than we have in the past, and I would say that we're not achieving the returns from the marketplace to cover those increases," Hedges said.

The first-generation farmer has seen ups and downs over his nearly 30 years in the industry, but he is confident apples will remain a staple for decades to come.

"Ontario apples are a popular, year-round fruit choice, and we will continue to advocate for the legislative support we need from all levels of government to produce food in an economically sustainable way," Hedges said.

- J.P. Antonacci is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter based at the Hamilton Spectator. The initiative is funded by the Government of Canada.

Simcoe animal shelter seeks community volunteers

ALEX HUNT

Advocate Correspondent

Staff and volunteers at the Simcoe and District Humane Society continue to persevere through hardships, serving the community - and animal needs - to build a better future for all.

In recent years, the shelter battled against a plethora of animal diseases and continues to work diligently keeping animals safe from outside illnesses. Cathie Hosken, president of SDHS, said that the (feline) herpes virus ranked number one in terms of disease spread and they even witnessed the return of a form of Chlamydia.

"What I think is happening with some of the feline diseases is that they are mutating and changing it up," said Hosken. "We're not always seeing the proper symptoms, it's difficult to pinpoint what it is. We've had cases of feline kennel cough a few years ago so we have been vaccinating against it."

Hosken said the emergence of diseases is caused by the high-numbered feline population and they are ensuring the shelter is heavily sterilized to prevent the infection from spreading or reigniting.

"We are vaccinating everybody and have even installed a \$2,000 air cleaner," said Hosken. "We just have to be proactive and preventative, cats that come in here get fleas treated, dewormed and vaccinated, which helps us keep

the disease spread down."

Housing 81 animals ranging from cats, dogs, rabbits, goats, chickens, and even a horse, the shelter expects to see a rapid influx of newcomers by mid-April. With only seven staff and volunteers, Hosken hopes that they will receive support from the community with the oncoming arrival, programming and future adoption events.

SDHS currently runs educational seminars at community schools and senior homes, with the objective of providing information on programming and animal care. Some of the programs offered by the shelter range from Seniors with Animals as Pets where volunteers can care for pet duties that belong to the elderly.

Also offered by the SDHS is The Guardian Angel Program which allows an owner to have their pet be cared for after their passing.

"Over a period of years, we lost five of our members that used to volunteer with us and it's very sad because they were great. We just haven't been able to fill that void," said Hosken. "People are working, and they don't have the time anymore. I'm just finding that there is so much on our plates already, it's hard to dedicate just an hour of volunteer time."

Those interested in volunteering at SDHS can call 519-428-9161, email at info@SimcoeDHumane.ca or visit the shelter on 24 Grigg Dr., Simcoe.



(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Em Hancock, a volunteer at the Simcoe and District Humane Society, helps nurse sick puppies back to health at the shelter.



Your Independent Grocer values its customers

There's a bright red sign near the front doors of Your Independent Grocer in Delhi.

Owned and operated by your neighbours – Wilkinson's.

Proudly Canadian. Proudly selling thousands of Canadian products every day.

"The majority of items that we carry are Canadian," said franchisee Matt Wilkinson, noting that has always been the case at Your Independent Grocer in Delhi.

"We have always supported local. We are extremely fortunate being in the area that we are, because we are completely surrounded by some of the largest vegetable growers around."

Some fruits have climate requirements, he noted, like oranges and lemons, but just about every vegetable can be grown in Ontario. And Norfolk County is known as Ontario's Garden.

"We have always supported our local farmers."

Wilkinson is in his 16th year as franchisee at Your Independent Grocer at 227 Main Street, Delhi. Co-owner with his wife Kristie, they are only the third owners of the grocery store at that location since it was originally built by George Trottier.

"Delhi is a small tight knit community and I am very blessed with the staff that we have here," said Matt.

He remembers saying in a 2009 interview, "I didn't really understand the meaning of community until I came here. I knew the definition of it, but I had never felt it."

In addition to carrying Canadian products, customer service continues to be one of their highest priorities.

"I say this to customers and anybody that is willing to listen to me... 'It's not the size of our parking lot, it's not the fact that we are a small grocery store, the reason why people



Matt Wilkinson, franchisee/co-owner of the Your Independent Grocer in Delhi.

(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)

come back here is our customer service.

"We value our customers, and that's not just a line. It's reality. I want Delhi to support their grocery store, so I give them what they ask for," said Matt. "We try to keep every customer happy, we want them coming back for more."

Your Independent Grocer has high-value services on site like a full-service butcher, a full-service deli, salad bar (fresh salads made on site), and a full-service bakery.

"These are the differentiating factors that separate traditional supermarkets, separates us, from a discounter store. For the customer that is looking for the total package, that wants the 'full shop,' we are the ideal destination. We are the place where a 'foodie' likes to shop.

"Our staff are extremely knowledgeable about the products we sell."

Always supporting local, Wilkinson is a member of the Delhi & District Chamber of Commerce and BIA. He is a Paul Harris Fellowship recipient, and is a director on the Board at the Delhi Community Health Centre.

"It's my opportunity to give back to the community. The community has been so good to me in all my years here, and has welcomed me and my family, and it's my pleasure to give back to the community."

Your Independent Grocer is also involved in local sports as a sponsor, including minor hockey, baseball and soccer, swimming and skating.

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Discover the delights of Ontario's Garden right in your backyard

As Norfolk residents, we're fortunate to live in the heart of "Ontario's Garden"—a region blessed with incredible agricultural abundance. This year, explore the culinary treasures that surround us and rediscover what makes Norfolk so special.

Our unique microclimate, sandy soils, and longer growing season create perfect conditions for an impressive variety of produce right on our doorstep. From sweet strawberries in June to juicy peaches in August and crisp apples in September, we're surrounded by seasonal bounty that changes with each passing month.

Farmers' markets and roadside stands

Take a drive along our rural roads and you'll discover a patchwork of local farms, many offering farmgate stops where you can purchase directly from your neighbors who produce this amazing food. These roadside stands overflow with vine-ripened tomatoes, sweet corn, asparagus, and specialty crops like sour cherries and lavender — not just providing fresh produce, but a chance to connect with the passionate farmers who nurture our land.

Our local markets showcase Norfolk's agricultural diversity throughout the year:

Simcoe Farmers' Market: Open each Thursday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Port Dover's Silver Lake Market: Open year-round each Saturday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Port Rowan Farmers' Market: Runs each Friday from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., June through Thanksgiving

These markets feature local vendors offering meat, fruits, vegetables, flowers, baked goods, and cheese, plus crafts from local artisans.

Norfolk's restaurants proudly embrace our local bounty, crafting menus around what's fresh and available. From upscale farm-to-table dining to casual lakeside eateries serving perch just hours after being caught, we have diverse culinary experiences right in our community that blend Norfolk's harvest with global influences.

Vineyards and wineries

Norfolk County has also established itself as one of Ontario's exciting wine regions, with several vineyards and wineries taking advantage of our favorable growing conditions.



The sandy soils and lake-moderated climate create an ideal environment for distinctive varieties.

Spend an afternoon touring local wineries, where you can sample award-winning wines that truly capture the essence of our territory. Many of these offer tastings, tours, and special events that provide insight into the winemaking process while showcasing spectacular rural views.

U-pick experiences

Beyond eating and drinking, engage with local food through u-pick

experiences at nearby orchards and berry farms. Our region's lavender farms offer another sensory dimension to agricultural tourism, with fragrant fields that provide stunning photo opportunities and specialty products.

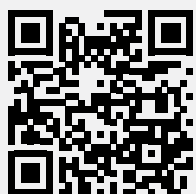
Craft beer

If you're a craft beer enthusiast, you'll appreciate our thriving local brewery scene, where artisans transform regional ingredients into distinctive small-batch offerings. Several breweries offer tours and tastings

that highlight their unique brewing processes and locally-inspired flavors.

Food events

This year, take time to explore the agricultural riches of our own community. Consider participating in seasonal food events like the Norfolk County Fair, strawberry festivals, or harvest celebrations that bring together local producers and residents in celebration of our agricultural heritage.



Experience Norfolk

Download the Visit Norfolk app at experiencenorfolk.ca to discover farmgate markets, local eateries, breweries, wineries, and more experiences throughout the seasons.



SIMCOE ADVOCATE SPORTS

Broadway on Ice nearly sells out

CHRIS ABBOTT

Editor

In the On Broadway song, the ‘neon lights are bright’, and ‘there’s always magic in the air.’

Both were true on Saturday, March 29 when Waterford Tricenturena Skating Club presented its annual skating carnival, Broadway on Ice, in Waterford.

“Very happy with how things went,” said Meaghan Tompkins, WTSC carnival chair, a few days after their two carnival shows. “The biggest thing is the skaters had fun. We’re definitely glad how everything comes together. It’s definitely not the first time we’ve done this, but it’s a lot to pull it all together.”

The dazzling opening number was practiced for the first time during Friday’s dress rehearsal, bringing together all the junior and senior StarSkaters, and adult skaters, who typically skate on different nights.

“Our coaches had a vision of what they wanted and they had about an hour’s worth of practice. And away they went. We’re happy that it turned out as well as it did.”

Broadway on Ice numbers included Welcome to New York, Sixty-Six Trombones, New York New York, Fame, You’re in the Band, Ever After, Moulin Rouge, Grease, Circle of Life, Backstage Crew, Roar, What is this Feeling, Tommy Pinball Wizard, Defying Gravity, Footloose, Pirates of Penzance, Mamma Mia, Hair Spray, Rock of Ages, Little Mermaid, Greatest Showman, Seussical, and Cats.

“Over the years, we’ve been trying to slowly build our costume ‘store.’ We do re-use costumes, but we will get a couple new things. We try to keep things fairly simple and use what we have. A lot of costumes were re-worked... we kind of combined two costumes together to make things work.”

As guests and skaters were leaving the afternoon and evening shows, they were presented free ice cream courtesy of Unilever/Breyers, a custom that goes back at least four years.

Following their carnivals, the club typically takes a two to three week break. This year the ice is scheduled to come out at the Waterford arena for maintenance, which will push the start of a shorter spring session back to mid-May. The summer session, which includes skaters from Waterford, Simcoe and other area clubs, will run July and August in CanSkate, Hockey CanSkate, and junior and senior StarSkate programs.

Registration for the spring session started April 5 and continued April 9. It will continue until all programs are

(quickly) filled up.

“Right now, we’re slowly kind of wrapping everything up and saying thank yous to everybody that helped us out,” said Tompkins.

“We have an awesome group of volunteers who have helped us out and we try very much to be community-minded. We try to do things with local sponsors, local businesses, so just a really big thank you to all of those who helped us put on the show.”

More than 500 guests watched the afternoon show this year, close to a sellout, and 400-plus watched the evening show, both featuring approximately 150 skaters.

There are typically 300-plus skaters from year-to-year including fall, spring, and summer programs, and the 13-week winter program.

The Waterford Tricenturena Skating Club, which includes Waterford and Simcoe area skaters, can be contacted through email wtsc.info@gmail.com or their redesigned website waterfordtricenturenaskatingclub.com. They are also active on social media.



Some of WTSC’s younger skaters in Ever After – Into the Woods.



Waterford Tricenturena Skating Club presented Broadway on Ice in two shows Saturday, March 29 in Waterford. Wearing bright red jackets, Seventy-Six Trombones – Music Man was one of the first numbers in Act One.



Young skaters from Roar with a coach.



You’re in the Band from School of Rock.

(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTOS)



Circle of Life from the Lion King.



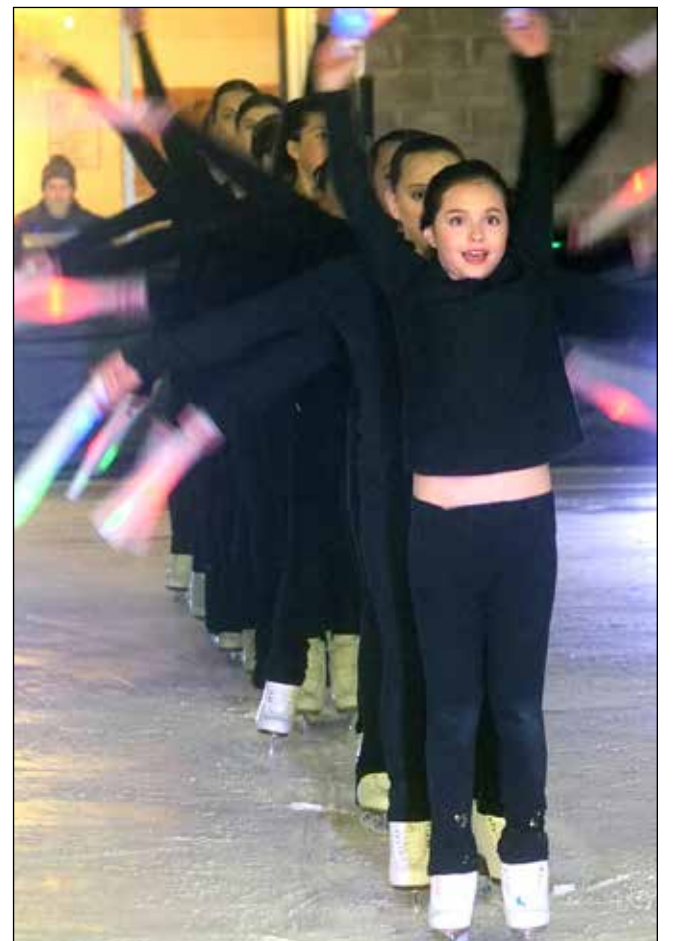
Travis Whitford soloed in a Grease number.



Footloose featured a 15-skater number in the Second Act.



Final accolades during the Broadway on Ice second half finale.



Rock of Ages featured colourful glow wands.



Waving to the crowd of about 400 Saturday night in You Can't Stop the Beat – Hair Spray.



\$500,000 donation to Norfolk Haldimand Community Hospice



Peter Porter, on the right, presents a \$500,000 cheque to the Norfolk Haldimand Community Hospice in memory of his late wife Judith Ann. Andrea Binkle, Executive Director, accepted the donation on behalf of the hospice.

(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

The Norfolk Haldimand Community Hospice recently announced a transformational \$500,000 donation from Peter Porter has been made in memory of his late wife, Judith Ann Porter.

This generous contribution will support the construction of the HN hospice, with the Family Room named in her honour - creating a space where families can find comfort, peace, and connection during their most difficult moments.

Peter's donation is a deeply personal tribute to Judy, who passed away in 2024 after battling cancer. As a stroke survivor, Judy required 24-7 care from Peter in her final months. Despite his unwavering devotion, he realized how physically and emotionally taxing it was to care for a loved one at home without proper support.

"I wish my wife had access to a hospice at the end of her life," Peter reflects. "She didn't want to go to the hospital - she wanted to be at home. And I never pushed it. But looking back, I understand how much a hospice would have helped, not just for her, but for me, too. It's a place like home, but with the support you need."

Judy's journey was filled with strength and resilience. After suffering a stroke, she faced the challenges of recovery while also battling cancer. Through it all, Peter was by her side, ensuring she had everything she needed. However, as her illness progressed, he realized that no matter how much love and dedication he provided, there were aspects of her care that would have been better managed in a hospice setting.

"If you ever have someone who is in real pain, home is no place to be," Peter explains. "If your loved one is suffering for a long time, it's not fair to them - or to the family. A hospice would have allowed me to be with her, without having to take care of her. That's a big deal."

Recognizing the need for a hospice in Norfolk and Haldimand, Peter is committed to en-

suring that other families don't face the same challenges he did. His donation is not only a tribute to Judy but a lasting gift to the entire community.

Legacy of Giving Back

Peter's success in business allowed him to give back to the community that supported him throughout his career.

"I have been very fortunate in business, and I really appreciate the landowners and especially the people who have worked for me. Without them, I wouldn't have been able to do what I've done. This is my way of paying it back."

He hopes that his donation will inspire others to support the hospice, ensuring that families in need have access to compassionate, dignified end-of-life care.

"Maybe one day, someone else in this community will have the fortune of using this facility when they need it most," Peter says. "It will make things a little easier for them - and that's what matters."

The Norfolk Haldimand Community Hospice extends its heartfelt gratitude to Peter Porter for his generosity and vision. His donation will leave a legacy of comfort, care, and compassion for generations to come.

"Peter's incredible generosity will make a lasting impact on our hospice and the families we serve," said Andrea Binkle, Executive Director of the Norfolk Haldimand Community Hospice in a media release. "His gift ensures that those facing end-of-life care will have access to a warm, supportive, and home-like environment, just as Judy would have wanted. We are deeply grateful for his commitment to creating a space where families can find peace, dignity, and the care they deserve."

For more information about how you can support the hospice, visit the hospice website (<https://norfolkaldimandhospice.ca/>) or contact the team directly - email ed@norfolkaldimandhospice.ca or call 519-410-0881.

Celebrating a century of song at Norfolk's Carillon Tower



On June 17, Norfolk County residents will parade to the Carillon Tower in Simcoe for a ceremony that will replicate, as closely as possible, the original dedication in 1925.

J.P. ANTONACCI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Residents of downtown Simcoe were treated to a surprise concert last month when students from Yale University came to town to play the carillon.

The visiting musicians who put the century-old bell tower through its paces were from the Yale Guild of Carillonneurs, whose members perform twice daily on their campus carillon.

"I take my duty of playing on campus very seriously," said Zoe Pian, a molecular biophysics student from New York City.

"We're playing music that people hear when they're walking by, so it's really important for me to play well and play a variety of music," added Pian, who especially enjoys being at the keyboard when her fellow Yalies get their diplomas.

"That's a real cool thing to be the soundtrack to someone's graduation, so I try to pick pieces that will make people cry," she said.

The group of 16 students spent their spring break playing 11 carillons in Ontario, Quebec and upstate New York, including at the Cathedral Basilica of Christ the King in Hamilton.

"Which was absolutely lovely. It's a two-octave carillon, like this one," said guild member Joey Tan, a computer science student who organized the 10-day tour.

Tan found Simcoe's carillon listed in an online database and contacted carillonneur Jim Nicholls to arrange a tour after the group visited Niagara Falls.

"It was actually my first time in Canada, and I really enjoyed it," said Jessica Liu, a chemistry student from North Carolina.

"I really like going around seeing what different bell towers are like. And I've enjoyed the sightseeing."

The guild members took turns at the keyboard, their balled hands hovering

over the wooden pegs before striking with a quick flick of the wrist to send the melodic strains of "Danny Boy," "Amazing Grace" and "Clair de Lune" floating across town.

"I used to be a pianist, so the carillon is a nice way for me to continue having a creative outlet," said Pian, one of many carillonneurs who transition from tickling the ivories.

"It's a very public instrument," math student Ian Haile added from under his Yale ball cap.

"Even if they're not actively paying attention, I'm playing background music as somebody's walking to class, and I enjoy having that audience."

For whom the bells toll

Norfolk's free-standing carillon is also the county's war memorial, as the 60-foot limestone tower was built to honour the 250 residents who gave their lives in service of Canada during the Great War.

"That was the idea - every time we hear the bells, we'll remember our soldiers," Nicholls said.

A few years after the war, residents raised the equivalent of \$213,000 in today's dollars to commission the carillon from Gillett and Johnston, a British foundry that used a special vertical lathe to grind and tune each of the 23 bronze bells hanging in the tower.

The largest bell, which chimes the hour and weighs almost 1,600 pounds, features an inscription honouring Norfolk's war dead.

Norfolk's future carillon made its debut at the 1924 British Empire Exhibition, a showcase akin to the World's Fair that drew tens of millions of visitors.

"Heads of state, members of the Royal Family heard the bells that were coming to Simcoe," said James Christison, a museum curator and historian.

A radio broadcast of a concert at the exhibition by famed Belgian carillonneur Jo-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

Carillon 100 committee plans June anniversary event

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

sef Denyn brought the perfectly tuned tones into homes throughout the British Empire.

"The newspapers were saying, 'Whoever gets this carillon will receive one of the best in the world,'" Nicholls said.

"And we'd already bought it."

The distinctive clock tower stands near Simcoe's public high school and the Lynn River on land the local school board donated in memory of former students who died on the battlefields of Europe.

"I've always found it amazing that this small community, even smaller in 1925, came together to create such a unique and fitting tribute," Christison said.

A century of music

Norfolk council declared a holiday on June 17, 1925, and a crowd of thousands flocked to witness the dedication of the new cenotaph, which housed only the second carillon ever installed in Canada.

Exactly 100 years later, residents will again parade to the Carillon Tower on June 17 for a ceremony that will "replicate, as closely as possible, the original dedication in 1925," said Christison, who leads the Carillon 100 committee.

Attendees will hear music specially composed for the occasion, and a choir from West Lynn Public School in Simcoe will perform a hymn with lyrics adapted from the dedication speech delivered a century ago.

Hanging inside West Lynn is a photo of former student Petty Officer Craig Blake, a bomb disposal expert who was killed in Afghanistan in 2010 and whose name adorns one of the memorial plaques at the base of the Carillon Tower.

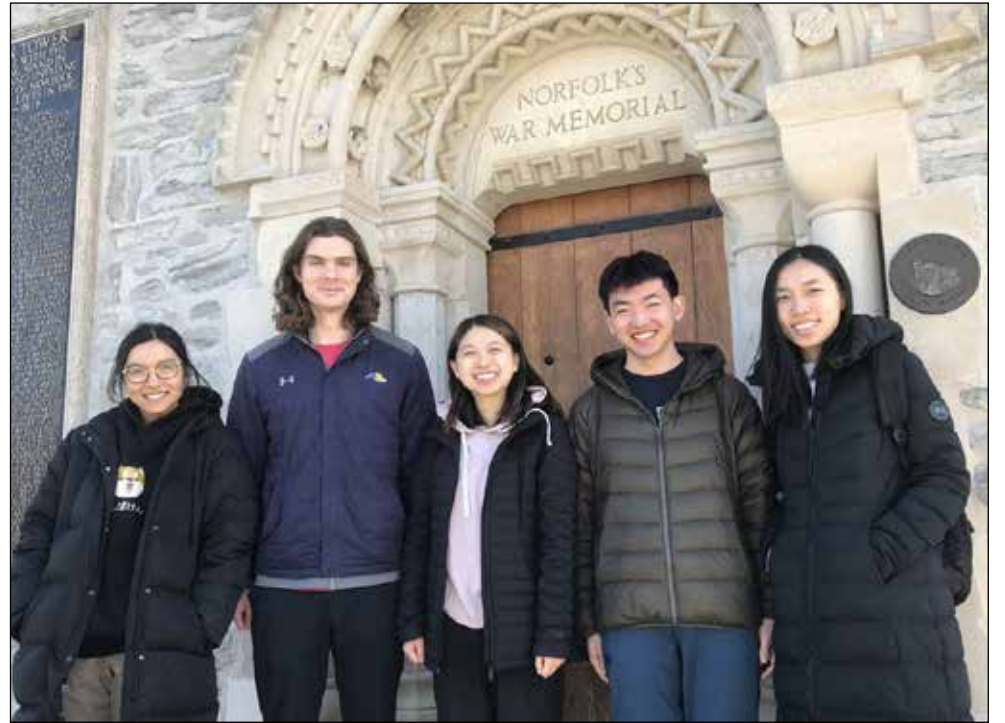
Descendants of the Silver Cross Mothers who unveiled the plaques commemorating Norfolk's fallen will be on hand in June to lay wreaths during the service.

Volunteer carillonners spend many hours up in the bell tower, providing the soundtrack to languorous summer evenings and frantic Christmas shopping sprees. But Christison said the carillon is first and foremost a monument to valour.

"This is not only a musical instrument, but our countywide war memorial," he said.

"And it's important to remember the sacrifices that were made."

- J.P. Antonacci is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter based at the Hamilton Spectator. The initiative is funded by the Government of Canada.



(PHOTO BY J.P. ANTONACCI, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER)

Zoe Pian, left, Ian Haile, Joey Tan, Daniel Wang and Jessica Liu were part of a delegation of 16 carillonners from Yale University who recently visited the Carillon Tower in Simcoe as part of a 10-day tour of bell towers in Ontario, Quebec and upstate New York.

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Spring banding underway at Long Point Bird Observatory

LISA TIMPF

Advocate Contributor

There's a saying that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

That's doubly true at Long Point Bird Observatory, where birds are momentarily detained for data collection and banding. The process provides important information for researchers.

Emma Buck, Program Coordinator at Long Point Bird Observatory, notes that every effort is made to make the banding activity as low-stress as possible for the birds. The 14 nets spread out on the observatory's grounds are made of a soft polyester material. Nets are checked and emptied regularly to minimize length of time birds spend cooped up.

Once birds are brought to the banding station, banders examine each individual, logging the species, measuring and recording wing length and other factors, and assessing health indicators like the amount of fat. The banders also place a metal band around the bird's leg, to assist in future tracking.

Though there's a lot going on, the process is efficient. Banders try to keep the assessment and banding process under one minute per bird. Once it's complete, the bird is freed to resume its normal activities.

LPBO has been gathering bird data since 1960, making it one of the longest-running programs of its kind in the Americas. The information helps researchers understand trends in bird populations and health. For example, we know from data gathered at LPBO and other similar facilities that grassland species are declining, likely due to pesticides and habitat loss. Raptors, on the other hand, have shown increasing numbers since DDT was banned in the 1970s.

LPBO bands birds from April to mid or early June, and from early August to mid-November. On April 3, which is early in the migration season, LPBO banded 200 birds. When migration hits its peak, they might band as many as 400 birds in six hours of activity.

Because of LPBO's long history and reputation, it serves as a place where bird banders

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



The Long Point Bird Observatory has been collecting data since 1960, helping researchers spot trends in bird populations. Raptors, such as this sharp-shinned hawk spotted in Simcoe in March, are increasing in numbers following the ban on DDT in the early 1970s.

(GINETTE PIEPER PHOTO)



A bald eagle's nest is visible from the Long Point Bird Observatory parking lot.

(GINETTE PIEPER PHOTO)



Warblers like the black-throated green warbler shown here will soon be migrating through Long Point.

(LONG POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY PHOTO)



(LONG POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY PHOTO)

A black-and-white warbler, one of the species banded at the Long Point Bird Observatory during spring migration. Visitors are welcome to watch bird banding daily (weather permitting) from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at the Old Cut Research Station and Visitor's Centre.



Colin Walsh, Haldimand-Norfolk's Liberal Party of Canada candidate, held Meet-and-Greet events in Delhi and Port Dover on April 5, Dunnville on April 7. He will be in Caledonia at the Lions Club April 14 at 6 p.m. From left at the Polish Hall are Mike Liscombe (Hagersville), Walsh, and Paula Jongerden (Lynedoch).



Colin Walsh, Haldimand-Norfolk's Liberal Party of Canada candidate, hosted a Town Hall style meet-and-greet Saturday at the Delhi Polish Hall, giving voters in the upcoming federal election a chance to ask questions. Walsh said he is 100% looking forward to the riding's three debate nights, including April 10 at the Simcoe Royal Canadian Legion (7 p.m.). From left are Jim Dillon (Delhi), Walsh, Liz Henry (Delhi) and Lynne Dillon.

(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTOS)

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Turkey reintroduction a conservation success story

SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO OUTDOORS

By Jeff Helsdon



The silence of the spring pre-dawn darkness was disrupted by a distant turkey gobbling.

"There's another," said Dr. Dave Ankney, who was sitting beside me for that morning hunt south of Langton, when a different, more distant tom turkey sounded off further south.

Taking place in 2011, the significance of turkey hunting with Ankney was akin to hunting with Aldo Leopold. While Leopold is revered as the father of conservation, Ankney was one of two people who were the driving force behind bringing turkeys back to Ontario and could be considered the father of the wild turkey reintroduction. Ontario's turkey population went from zero to tens of thousands in a few short decades, providing opportunities for hunting, bird watching and bringing back a bird that was part of the province's biodiversity.

Historically, wild turkeys were found in southern Ontario and

Quebec. In Ontario, records show the original range was southwestern Ontario, north to Lake Simcoe, and east between Toronto and Trenton.

The large birds were a food source for First Nations, who used both snares and bows and arrows to harvest the birds. European settlers also saw the food potential with wild turkeys. Unfortunately, habitat loss from deforestation and unregulated hunting for food and market hunting led to the demise of the wild turkey in Ontario and Quebec. The situation was similar across North America, although pockets of birds remained in some American states.

With a dwindling population, Ontario's wild turkey season closed in 1905. The last recorded sighting of a wild turkey in Ontario was in 1909.

There were several attempts in the ensuing decades to bring wild turkeys back using pen-raised birds. Information about the pen-

raised wild turkeys is scarce, but MNRF was involved in raising turkeys at the Normandale Fish Culture Station in Norfolk County. Being raised in a pen, the birds in these early attempts couldn't survive in the wild and the reintroduction failed.

Ankney, a University of Western Ontario zoology professor, his spouse Sandi Johnson, and friends Joel Hopkins and spouse Ann Marie Green, went on annual hunting trips. Turkey populations were taking off again in the U.S. due to restoration efforts and Hopkins heard about turkey hunting. The foursome, who have all since passed to the hunting grounds in the sky, made plans for a turkey hunt in Virginia in 1979.

When I hunted with Ankney – on a farm that was one of the original release sites – he recounted the story. When he, Hopkins and their spouses went to Virginia, they didn't have high hopes of success and just wanted to see or hear a turkey. The success they had, taking three toms, hooked them on turkey hunting and was the start to Ontario's reintroduction.

Ankney's uncle had assisted with the reintroduction of the birds in Michigan and he primed Ankney with background information. Ankney then approached MNR regional ecologist Paul Prevett.

The Ontario Federation of An-

glers and Hunters (OFAH) was given credit for moving the reintroduction forward by Ankney. He brought them on board in 1982 and OFAH executive director Rick Morgan and Lance Males joined the reintroduction steering committee. Ankney later became president of the OFAH.

The National Wild Turkey Federation, which was behind the tremendous resurgence in the United States, came on board as a partner. NWTF provided the format for the first fundraising dinner for the OFAH-administered Wild Turkey Trust Fund, which provided funding for trap and transfer programs. With its experience south of the border, NWTF also assisted in finding sources of turkeys to bring to Canada and provided expertise on trapping and transferring live birds.

The team working on the reintroduction had a first release in sight by 1982, but Ankney said there was still some reluctance due to the past failures with game farm birds. Then, they heard a provincial budget freeze could de-rail the turkey program.

Hopkins went in to see Owen Williams, the regional MNR biologist, and asked what it would cost to move it forward, thinking it would be \$50,000 or \$100,000. He was surprised to hear it was only \$5,000.

"I pulled out my cheque book and asked who I made the cheque

out to," he told me more than a decade ago. The cheque was made out to the OFAH, since it administered the trust fund. It was never cashed but was used as leverage to make the wild turkey reintroduction happen.

Through some wildlife trading with American states – for moose and river otters – a source of wild birds was found. The first genuinely wild turkeys Ontario had seen in nearly eight decades arrived in specialized shipping crates from Missouri on March 6, 1984. They were released near Port Rowan in southern Ontario. More releases followed.

"You couldn't have done that today," said retired MNRF biologist Dave Reid, who was one of the ministry staff who worked on the program. "It was just coincidence we had the right people in the right place at the right time. As turkey hunters, we reaped the benefits."

After a population was established, trap and transfer programs within the province and natural expansion saw the range of wild turkeys grow across southern Ontario and expand northwards. When numbers reached the necessary thresholds, the first turkey hunt was in 1987.

The reintroduction of the wild turkey has become the most successful wildlife management story in the province's history.

Long Point Bird Observatory bands birds April to June

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

around the world come to get training and experience. Applications for this year's banding season came from Austria, Chile, Germany, the United Kingdom, and other locations.

Banding takes place daily during the season, with the exception of rainy weather. Visitors are welcome to observe the banding activities from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at the Old Cut Research Station and Visitor's Centre, located on Old Cut Boulevard (Long Point/Port Rowan).

Visitors can also walk the trails. A wooden platform provides a spot to view waterfowl and the occasional raptor. On a recent visit, a spotting scope set up by a volunteer offered close-up look at a merlin perched in a nearby tree.

A posting board near the research building gives bird-watchers the opportunity to note down significant finds in the Long Point area. Hermit thrush, purple martin, eastern phoebe, red-throated loon, and a vesper sparrow were examples of sightings noted on the board in early April.

There's also a gift shop on site, offering birding guides, nature books, clothing items, hats, mugs, and organic coffee, among other items.

Each season - spring and fall - has its

merits for visitors, says Peter, one of this year's volunteers at the LPBO site. While the fall offers greater numbers of migrating birds, due to the inclusion of youngsters hatched that season, the springtime birds are often showier in terms of plumage. Either way, stopping by the LPBO makes for an interesting visit for anyone interested in learning more about birds and the hands-on aspects of bird migration research.

Bird banding isn't the only activity taking place at LPBO. In addition to banding, volunteers log the various species and numbers of birds they see in the area, including those out on the water. Other scientists, including some from universities, visit the LPBO site to conduct research into specific bird species, or even bats.

The LPBO conducts some species-specific research of its own, and also hosts the Doug Tarry Young Ornithologists' Workshops for ages 13-17. The workshops take place in August, and give an opportunity for aspiring ornithologists to participate in all parts of the migration monitoring process. Buck notes that applications for this program are open until April 30, with information available on the Birds Canada website.



Data from Long Point Bird Observatory (and other sites) shows that raptors, like the sharp-shinned hawk, are increasing in numbers.

(LONG POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY PHOTO)

Experience great food, drinks at Ramblin' Road

WHAT'S FOR DINNER NORFOLK COUNTY

By Ian Milmine

During my interview with Haleigh Partington (Picard) about their family's renowned Ramblin' Road Brewery Farm, a brew farm and restaurant just south of La Salette, I quickly realized that the story was far more captivating than I had anticipated.

John Picard, affectionately known as 'Big John,' was a true visionary - one whose foresight and determination helped set the foundation for a thriving family business. From humble beginnings, where he was quite literally making peanuts, he helped build an enterprise that has not only endured but exceeded all expectations.

Big John was a pillar in the community, known far and wide as a local farmer, his passion for craft beer and his family's renowned business, Picard's. After graduating from Western University with a Bachelor in Economics, Big John returned home to work alongside his siblings to support their family farm. But Big John wasn't just content with maintaining tradition - he was a visionary. He saw an opportunity to elevate their business beyond its humble roots by introducing handcrafted treats like chocolate-covered peanuts and peanut clusters.

As demand for these local delicacies grew, the family invested in equipment to scale production, transforming their small operation into a thriving enterprise. The business later separated into two separate businesses in 2012.

Never one to settle, Big John

went out in search of new opportunities. His next venture? Potatoes. With a deep understanding of food and sustainability, he found an alternative use for the farm and started growing potatoes for house-made chips. But his innovation didn't stop there - he found a way to make use of every element in the process. Rather than discarding the starch left behind from washing potatoes, repurposed it using a dry ale beer bath as the perfect foundation for brewing potato beer. This ingenuity led to the creation of Ramblin' Road Brewery Farm, a venture north of Delhi, 2970 Swimming Pool Road (519-582-1444), that would earn the prestigious Premier Award in 2012.

Big John wasn't just a farmer, brewer, or businessman. He was a visionary. One who crafted an experience that brought people together through food and drink. He was deeply passionate about the art of a great burger, conducting extensive research on what truly makes a burger exceptional. While he loved a classic, he also had an innate ability to blend unexpected flavors in a way that just made sense - almost as if he could taste the perfect combinations in his mind before bringing them to life. His dedication to quality and creativity captivated his patrons, pairing his locally brewed beer with meals that left people not just satisfied, but genuinely delighted.

Big John's legacy is one of innovation, craftsmanship, and an



A delicious spread at Ramblin' Road.

(IAN MILMINE PHOTOS)

unwavering commitment to offering people something more than just food and drink - he created an experience, one that lives on in every bite and every sip. We would sadly lose Big John in March 2022. Today his legacy lives on with his children Haleigh Partington (Picard) and John Picard Jr.

When you walk into The Roost at Ramblin' Road, you get to experience a meal and cold beer as if you were in Big John's house as a friend or family. From artwork on the walls, old westerns playing on the TV, to the menu and specials inspired by John himself. You feel as if you are sitting there with the local legend with your feet up, belly full and an ice-cold beer, relaxing after a hard day's work.

Haleigh and John Jr. have done an amazing job in honouring their father's legacy

and work ethic. Even their staff puts forth the same effort that Big John would inspire in people, making sure you are taken care of whether it's your first time or 100th time dinning there. I have only been a few times myself now and the staff knows what I like and where I like to sit when I come for a meal. The staff helps with creative input on menu specials to make sure they all agree that Big John would create and approve each item on the menu.

Big John's influence can be felt in every corner of Ramblin' Road - his spirit lives on in the food, the beer, and the warm hospitality that greets every guest who walks through the doors. Haleigh and John Jr. have not only preserved their father's vision but have built upon it, ensuring that his passion for great food, craft beer, and community endures.

Stepping into Ramblin' Road isn't just about grabbing a bite or enjoying a cold beer - it's about experiencing a legacy. While Big John may no longer be here in person, his vision, work ethic, and love for bringing people together remain at the heart of everything his family continues to build.

And if you're lucky enough to visit, take a moment to raise a glass to Big John - the legend whose passion helped create something truly extraordinary.

Ian Milmine is the Facebook administrator for What's For Dinner Norfolk County. To share your feedback on his monthly Norfolk column - or ask him questions - email Ian at imilmine@hotmail.com



A flight of beer at Ramblin' Road.

(IAN MILMINE PHOTOS)



Ramblin' Road burgers and sandwiches.

(IAN MILMINE PHOTOS)

Waterford Foodland welcomes the Poiriers

BRENDA MOSER

Advocate Correspondent

If you've stopped into Waterford Foodland lately you may have seen a couple new faces. Matt and Jamie Poirier are the new owners and they are fitting into their new surroundings quite well.

I guess you could call them 'the new kids on the block'. So welcome to you both!

"I was born in Hamilton but grew up in Caledonia. Jamie grew up in Toronto," says Matt. "I met Jamie when I was working for Sobeys in Oakville. I guess you could say the rest is history."

They are not new to the grocery business or to Foodland. "I've been a part of Sobeys since I was just 17 years old," said Matt. "I was a Meat Department Manager for 19 years. Sobeys offered a FIT program – Franchisee In Training – so I decided to take it."

Since then, they have had franchises in Ingersoll and Elmira.

Jamie was doing forensics for Intact Insurance but decided to join Matt in the grocery business in 2018.

"We discussed having a store together so Jamie gave her job up... she kind of got 'thrown into the fire' but we've found a way to make it work," said Matt. "We had Ingersoll first and then took over Elmira, near the end of having Ingersoll we also ran both locations at the same time."

"We're quite happy having just one store and we love the Waterford community. I got to know the former owner, John VanDam, and a lot of the staff here knew me. We took over Feb. 2nd and got right in here to see what was needed, what we had and what we want. We're loving it here... we're closer to home and my 'pipe dream' is to one day have a property on the edge of town... I'm a real outdoor person," said Matt. "We have three beautiful girls - Brooklyn (7), Bailey (11) and Payton (15) - all planning to be part of the team eventually."

He also explained that living closer to his work would be more convenient.

"If an alarm should go off I would be a lot closer... we need to have a contingency plan."

Running a store is more than putting groceries up on a shelf.

"We want to live up to how John ran the store... I looked



Matt and Jamie Poirier are the new franchisee owners of Waterford Foodland.

(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

up to him."

They are always ready to serve the community.

"We want to hear from the customers to let us know what they want and we will look for it... we have resources to locate products. We are also 'local proud' and believe in supporting as many Canadian companies and products as we can. Look for the 'Local Support Canada' signs on the shelves and the Canadian flags in their flyers. Don't be shy... if you don't see what you're looking for just ask us and we'll try our best to get it. We are always wanting to evolve."

Waterford Foodland employs about 75-77 employees with each department having two or three full-time staff.

"Next year will be our first full-fledged Pumpkinfest and I'm looking forward to being a part of that. I hope to be a part of a lot of things going on in the community and to actively be a part of this town."

The Poirier family is a perfect fit for Waterford and to date they say they have been welcomed by everyone. The small-town friendly feeling and their welcoming staff will make your next trip to the grocery store a pleasant experience.

OPP 'Stay Focused' campaign concludes

Hundreds of Inattentive Drivers Charged

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) West Region traffic initiative 'Stay Focused' has led to hundreds of charges against inattentive drivers on area roads and highways.

During the campaign (March 1 until April 4), OPP West Region officers, alongside members of the West Region Traffic Incident Management and Enforcement team, charged 232 drivers under Ontario's distracted driving law, including 10 in Norfolk County.

Distracted driving refers to all forms of distracted or inattentive driving such as adjusting a vehicle's entertainment system or GPS unit or stereo, eating and drinking, using a hand-held communication or entertainment device, self-grooming or tending to children in the back seat.

Drivers also need to be aware that using a hand-held communication or entertainment device while stopped at a traffic light, stop sign or when stopped in traffic for any reason is also a distracted driving offence.

"Inattentive driving continues to be a serious issue on our roads," said Acting S/Sgt. Julie McLeod, OPP WR Traffic and Marine, in a media release. "The OPP will continue to target drivers who make our roads unsafe by dividing their attention between driving and using a cell phone. Every driver has a responsibility to direct their entire attention to driving safely."

Riddles

What kind of bean can't grow in a garden?
A jelly bean.

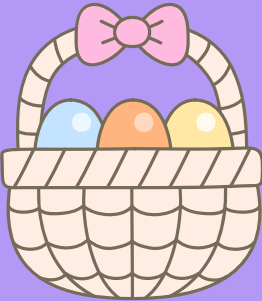
What happens if you tell a duck an Easter joke?
They'll quack up.

Where does the Easter Bunny get a hair cut?
At the hare salon.

What is the Easter Bunny's favorite dance move?
The bunny hop.

What kind of stories does the Easter Bunny like best?
The ones with hoppy endings.

What is the Easter Bunny's coffee order?
Eggs-presso.



Knock, knock
Who's there?
Doughnut
Doughnut who?
Doughnut forget who stuffed all the Easter eggs this year!

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 23

PET OF THE WEEK

Nominate your Pet of the Week by emailing info@simcoeadvocate.com



BELLA

Meet our Pet of the Week:

She is a Pomeranian Bichon-Frise dog.

She is very playful and love doing tricks for her treats. She is also very needy and doesn't like to be alone so you can always find her close by you.

Submitted by Lynn Murtland



Word Search

HAPPY EASTER!



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

- Words**
- Basket
 - Bunny
 - Candy
 - Chick
 - Chocolate
 - Colourful
 - Decorative
 - Dye
 - Easter Egg Hunt
 - Family
 - Fun
 - Jelly Beans
 - Pastels
 - Peeps
 - Spring
 - Tradition
 - Tulips

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Email to inquire: info@simcoeadvocate.com

FRIDAY, APRIL 11

Library Roadshow with CEO

10:00 a.m - 12 p.m

Youve heard of the Antiques Roadshow, but what about The Library Roadshow - with the CEO!? This monthly program invites folks to meet for coffee and conversations with Julie Kent, CEO of the Norfolk County Public Library! Provide feedback, ask questions, and collaborate on enhancing Library services across the county

Norfolk County Public Library Port Dover Branch - 713 St. George Street Port Dover

Would you like to Volunteer to help at one of our events.

We welcome you! You do not need to be a member to Volunteer. Just contact the legion and leave your name and number and purpose of your call.

Students and Adults welcome. For More Information call, the Legion at 519-443-5588 or <https://www.teetervillelegionbranch526.ca> The Wagner Memorial, Teeterville Legion Branch 526

3890 Teeterville Road, Teeterville, Ontario

MONDAY, APRIL 14

BINGO NIGHT

7 p.m

Doors open 5:30 p.m - Early Bird 6:30 p.m

Presented by ABEL Enterprises.

abelenterprises.ca

Simcoe Legion

Meet & Greet Event: Colin Walsh

6 p.m

Please join Colin Walsh, Haldimand-Norfolk's Liberal Candidate

Caledonia at the Lion's Club

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16

Teen Social Night

4 p.m - 5 p.m

Looking for a fun way to hang out, get creative, and game with friends? Whats in store? - Squad up in Minecraft, Roblox, and Dungeons & Dragons - Dive into epic tabletop games & creative challenges - Chat about your favourite books & anime - Meet new people, have a blast, and pick next months theme!

Norfolk County Public Library Port Dover Branch - 713 St. George Street Port Dover

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23

Leather Wrap Bracelet Workshop

3 p.m - 4:30 p.m

Craft a stylish, one-of-a-kind accessory perfect for any occasion. This workshop provides step-by-step instructions to help you master the art of bracelet making.

Norfolk County Public Library Port Dover Branch - 713 St. George Street Port Dover

FRIDAY, APRIL 25

Shine Bright: Diamond Art Workshop for Teens

4 p.m - 5 p.m

Discover the joy of Diamond Art, a relaxing and creative hobby where you craft stunning artwork by placing colourful resin rhinestones on a sticky canvas.

Norfolk County Public Library Delhi Branch - 192 Main Street of Delhi

Free clothing giveaway

6 - 8 p.m

St. James United Church 150 Colborne St. S.

SATURDAY, APRIL 26

Bayham Historical Society

2 p.m

Invites you to attend "Mennonite History in Elgin County".

Text Barb to reserve your seat 519-550-3454 or email to bayhamhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com. No admission fee!!!

6209 Plank Rd Vienna

Free clothing giveaway

8:30 - 11 a.m

St. James United Church 150 Colborne St. S.

OPEN JAM

1 p.m - 10 p.m

Last Saturday of every month.

Everyone is welcome to bring an instrument or just come out and listen to the music.

Free event

The Wagner Memorial, Teeterville Legion Branch 526

3890 Teeterville Road, Teeterville, Ontario

SPRING CLEAN-UP

8:30 - 11:30 a.m

Waterford Heritage Trail will be hosting our Annual Spring Clean-up. You are more than welcome to join us. Meeting at the Old Train Station in downtown Waterford.

FRIDAY, APRIL 25

RIVERSYDE'S GOT TALENT

7 p.m

There's a lot more to our TEAM than you know! So come on down and see our SHOW! Friday Fun Nights in the Café

83 Sydenham St. Simcoe

FREE CONCERT

7:30 p.m

Featuring the Haldimand Norfolk Concert Band. Come and enjoy great music in the beautiful acoustics of the church sanctuary. Light refreshments will follow.

Waterford United Church, 135 Main Street

SATURDAY, MAY 3

Book and Bake Sale

8:30 a.m - 12 p.m

St. James United Church 150 Colborne St. S.

MONDAY, MAY 5

BINGO NIGHT

7 p.m

Doors open 5:30 p.m - Early Bird 6:30 p.m

Presented by ABEL Enterprises.

abelenterprises.ca

Simcoe Legion

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7

Elections & Members General Meeting

7 p.m

Members only. Please bring your card to vote. Not a member contact us to join. For More Information call, the Legion at 519-443-5588 or

<https://www.teetervillelegionbranch526.ca> The Wagner Memorial, Teeterville Legion Branch 526

3890 Teeterville Road, Teeterville, Ontario

SATURDAY, MAY 10

Simcoe and District Horticultural Society Plant and Garage Sale

starting at 8:30 a.m

Located at the Junior Farmers building parking lot.

MONDAY, MAY 12

BINGO NIGHT

7 p.m

Doors open 5:30 p.m - Early Bird 6:30 p.m

Presented by ABEL Enterprises.

abelenterprises.ca

Simcoe Legion

SIMCOE ADVOCATE PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS WITH US! HERE'S HOW:

Deadline: Monday prior
at 3 p.m. Contact:
info@simcoeadvocate.com

- The Simcoe Advocate Community Calendar allows non-profit organizations to promote their free admission community events at no charge. Event listings can include the event name, date, time and location as well as contact information (ie phone number, email address or website).
- If your event is not free admission or you would like to include more details than stated above, the Simcoe Advocate offers the following options for promoting your community events:
 - Coming Events Word Ad in Classified section (50 word max.) - \$10 + hst
 - Coming Events Boxed Word Ad in Classified section (50 word max.) - \$15 + hst
 - Display Ad - Sizes begin at a Small Classified Display ad (3.3" x 2.5") - \$35 + hst

CLASSIFIEDS

Email to inquire: info@simcoeadvocate.com


ANNOUNCEMENTS

BI-WEEKLY PUBLICATION DATES

APRIL 24, MAY 8, MAY 22

JUNE 5 & JUNE 19

DEADLINE IS THE MONDAY PRIOR AT 3 P.M.

 INFO@SIMCOEADVOCATE.COM

FOR SALE

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

COMING EVENTS

RIVERSYDE 83'S COMMUNITY KITCHEN
SPRING FEVER IN THE KITCHEN - Join Chef Elliot, Riversyde 83's very own Red Seal Chef, in the Community Kitchen. Cooking experience is not necessary.

THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 2025 - 11 am to 2 pm
Smoked Salmon Cakes with Lime Chipotle Aioli

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2025 - 11 am to 2 pm
Chicken Piccata with Israeli Couscous Salad
To register, email churchoutserving@gmail.com. The cost of each class is \$56.50. Classes are limited to 10 participants.

MEMORIES AND MILESTONES

Share them with your local community.

Let us help you honour and celebrate every chapter of life – from anniversaries to obituaries, and everything in between. Commemorate the moments that matter in the

SIMCOEADVOCATE

Let us help create a meaningful announcement: info@simcoeadvocate.com

HELP WANTED

BOOKKEEPER

Proficient QuickBooks.
Excel, Office Duties



Part-time to start.
Seniors also welcome.

Resume to:
chatham.resources@gmail.com
519-952-0313

QUIZ ANSWERS

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Diamond | 5. Edward Teach |
| 2. Lake Superior | 6. Seven |
| 3. Cable News Network | 7. Yale |
| 4. Franklin D. Roosevelt | 8. Madagascar |
| | 9. 300 |
| | 10. Thailand |

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

HELP WANTED

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

WE ARE HIRING

JOIN OUR TEAM AS A NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING SALES REPRESENTATIVE!

Are you a motivated self-starter with a passion for sales and marketing? Do you thrive in a flexible work environment where you can set your own schedule? If so, we have the perfect opportunity for you!


Location: Work from Anywhere!
Schedule: Your Own Schedule
Type: Commission


About Grant Haven Media: At Grant Haven Media, we are committed to delivering top-quality news and information to our readers. As a leading newspaper company, we take pride in our dedication to journalistic excellence and community engagement. As we continue to grow, we're looking for enthusiastic individuals to join our dynamic sales team.


If you are interested, contact Heather Dunbar at: heather@granthaven.com


SIMCOEADVOCATE

Why Advertise In Our Service Directory?


COST EFFECTIVE


ENGAGED AUDIENCE


TRUSTWORTHY MEDIUM


TARGETED DEMOGRAPHIC

BOOK YOUR SPACE TODAY!

More Eat & Drink Norfolk highlights




Kim Popky, left, and Crystal Hipson from The Apple Place at Eat & Drink Norfolk. (CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)



Friday's Eat & Drink Norfolk crowd reached 1,000 at the CIBC Aud.





Ana Tavares and Laura Kuchma from Hounds of Erie Winery at Eat & Drink Norfolk. (CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)



Colin Walsh for Haldimand-Norfolk

Putting our community first




Mark Carney is taking action to put money back in the pockets of Canadians and build a stronger economy.

- **Monday:** announced Canada's most ambitious housing plan since WWII
- **Tuesday:** cancellation of Carbon Tax came into effect
- **Wednesday:** released plan to protect agrifood workers and build a stronger agrifood sector
- **Thursday:** announcement of Canada's response to fight unjustified U.S. tariffs
- **Friday:** a plan to protect Canada's national identity by strengthening CBC/Radio-Canada
- **Saturday:** a plan to cover costs of apprenticeship training for skilled trades workers.

Pierre Poilievre on the other hand, spent the week repeating his slogans, spreading negativity, and following President Trump's playbook.

Negativity won't win a trade war or bring down the cost of groceries. Pierre Poilievre is the wrong choice at the wrong time. On April 28th, let's vote Carney and Walsh, and let's build Canada strong.

Make sure Haldimand-Norfolk has a voice that truly represents us.



web: www.colinwalshliberal.ca
email: votecolinwalsh@colinwalshliberal.ca
office: 29 Water St. Simcoe ON
phone: 519.410.2727

authorized by the official agent for Colin Walsh